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## **Risks of unsustainable tourism development in vietnam**

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### **Abstract**

This article is intending to analyze several risks of the unsustainable development in tourism industry in Vietnam. Vietnam's tourism sector is booming and contributing significantly to the national economy. Thus, the tourism sustainable development is important for sustainable development in the national economy. The risks of tacking or loosing sustainability in tourism industry will greatly damage the whole economy of Vietnam.

**Keywords:** sustainable development, tourist industry, Vietnam

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### **1. Introduction**

Sustainable development is one of the world's millennium goals and is also a leading goal for Vietnam's development. In our country, the concept of sustainable development was only accessible since the 1980s, confirmed in the socio-economic development of the country 1991-2000, by Directive 36 CT / TW of June 25 1998 of the Politburo on strengthening environmental protection in the period of industrialization and modernization of the country. At the same time, it was also affirmed through the guidelines through the Tenth, XI and XII National Party congresses, becoming important orientations for industries, including Tourism. Determining the principles of sustainable development and sustainable tourism is an important basis for the next steps of tourism.

There are many different perspectives on sustainable development, but all agreed on the following: "Sustainable development is a harmonious development in all 3 aspects: Socio-economic environment. to meet the present material, cultural and spiritual needs of the current generation without harming or hindering the ability to provide resources for future socio-economic development, do not reduce the quality of life of future generations" Thus, for sustainable development, it is necessary to simultaneously implement 3 goals: Development with economic efficiency; harmonious development of social aspects; improve living standards and living standards of population strata; improve environmental environment, ensure solid long-term development for today's and future generations. Therefore, we have chosen the topic "Risk of unsustainable tourism development in Vietnam" to analyze and propose solutions to contribute to the development of Vietnam's tourism in a sustainable manner.

### **2.Theoretical framework**

#### **2.1 Risk concept**

Risk is defined by Allan H. Willett: "risk is loss uncertainty" [1]. Risk is also defined as: "risk is the possibility of loss" [5]. In

particular, Fank H.Knight has a completely different perspective on risk when it considers "risk is measurable uncertainty" [6]. Thus, it can be seen that the unfortunate event is always associated with human activities and living environment [1].

#### **2.2 The concept of sustainable tourism**

Sustainable tourism is about meeting the current needs of tourists and the tourism area and ensuring the ability to meet the needs of future generations. Sustainable tourism requires managing all forms of resources in a way that we can meet economic, social and aesthetic needs while maintaining cultural identity, basic ecological processes, biodiversity and life assurance systems [1].

#### **2.3 The concept of sustainable tourism development**

Sustainable development is a very new concept. It reflects the trend of the era and future orientation of humanity. Different economic and environmental research organizations also offer different concepts of sustainable development. In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development published a report: Our shared future. This report has mentioned and analyzed the close relationship between environment and development. In which "sustainable development is the development to meet the needs of the present without hurting the ability of future generations" [2]. Objectives of sustainable tourism development:

- Developing, increasing the contribution of tourism to economy and environment.
- Improve social equity in development.
- Improve the quality of life of indigenous communities.
- Meeting the needs of travelers.
- Maintaining the quality of the environment [3].

#### **2.5 Principles of sustainable tourism development**

Principles for sustainable tourism development are inseparable from the general principles of sustainable development. But,

however, each industry and every field in life has its own goals and characteristics. Therefore, the tourism industry also has its own principles. Tourism is a comprehensive economic sector with clear natural resource orientation and deep cultural content, highly interdisciplinary and highly socialized. Therefore, the sustainable tourism development requires the joint and synchronous efforts of the whole society. Sustainable tourism development always aims to ensure the following three basic goals: economic, environmental and social. To ensure the above three goals, sustainable tourism development should adhere to 10 principles:

Firstly, rationally exploit and use tourism resources

The second is: limiting the excessive use of tourism resources and minimizing waste from tourism activities into the environment, this is an important principle.

Thirdly, tourism development must be in line with socio-economic development planning

Fourthly, tourism development must always be associated with conserving the diversity of natural resources and the environment.

Fifth, tourism development should focus on sharing benefits with local communities.

Sixth: encourage the participation of local communities in tourism activities.

Seventh: often exchanging with local communities and stakeholders related to tourism development.

Eighth: focusing on training and developing human resources to meet the requirements of tourism development, especially in the context of integration and development in a market economy.

Ninth: increasing promotion, promoting tourism responsibly.

Tenth: promoting research and application of science and technology <sup>[3]</sup>.

## 2.6 Environmental protection in sustainable tourism development

Sustainable tourism development is the development of tourism activities to meet the current needs of tourists and indigenous peoples, in parallel with landscape conservation, tourism resources and environmental protection for future tourism development. In order to develop tourism in a sustainable manner, the protection of environmental resources is an urgent requirement. Meeting this requirement, legal documents have been issued as a legal basis for the management, use and protection of environmental resources, including the tourism environment.

According to state management of environmental protection in tourism activities,

tourism is affirmed as one of the important economic sectors, contributing to promoting the development of the related economic sectors. Environmental Protection in tourism is receiving special attention from the Party and the State. The system of legal documents regulating environmental protection in tourism activities has been initially formed, creating a legal corridor for tourism development. The promulgated legal documents on environmental protection in tourism activities are one of Vietnam's great efforts to mobilize combined resources to link industries and localities for tourism development in view with goals and orientations for sustainable development. However, the regulations on environmental protection in tourism activities lack specific mechanisms and legal instruments to

protect the environment, and have not clarified the responsibilities of organizations and individuals involved in environmental protection and promotion measures. Incentives are needed to ensure the implementation of environmental protection regulations. These are the contents that need to be paid attention when finalizing the legal system on environmental protection in tourism. In addition, to develop sustainable tourism, it is necessary to develop policies and regulations on payment of environmental services. Payment of ecosystem services is an economic tool to help those who benefit from services. The ecosystem pays participants to maintain, protect and develop its functions. In addition, sustainable tourism is also concerned with many issues such as indigenous culture, local labor use and improvement of indigenous peoples' life, environmental education, contribution to conservation. However, the current legal framework for sustainable tourism has not fully addressed these issues, and there is a lack of supportive mechanisms to encourage individuals and organizations to participate in sustainable tourism models <sup>[4]</sup>.

## 3. Research results and discussion

### 3.1 The reality of Vietnam's tourism industry

Vietnam has great potential in many aspects to develop tourism, has abundant natural conditions, has many famous scenic spots, has a long-standing cultural tradition with many good festivals and customs, many unique historical and religious relics, unique architectural architecture, rich in human identities, abundant and intelligent labor force, hardworking and kindness. In recent years, the tourism industry has made innovations, gradually developing technical facilities, creating initial conditions to attract foreign tourists and overseas Vietnamese to visit the country, introduce the country and people and quintessence of the Vietnamese nation with international friends; partly meeting the needs for sightseeing, relaxation and entertainment of the people in the country, initially gaining certain economic results. In recent years, Vietnam tourism is on the rise, the number of international tourists coming as well as domestic tourists is increasing. Vietnam tourism is becoming more and more popular in the world as many domestic destinations are voted as favorite addresses of international tourists.

This is evidenced by the strong growth of international tourist arrivals to Vietnam at an average rate of over 12% per year (except for the decline due to the 2003 SARS epidemic (-8%) and the global economic downturn. About 2009 (-11%) If taking the landmark for the first time to launch the "Vietnam Tourism Year 1990" (beginning of the renewal period) with 250,000 international visitors, 10 million visitors have arrived so far. Domestic tourists also increased continuously during the past period, from 1 million in 1990 to 2016 reaching 35 million. The continuous growth in tourism has been boosted. expanding the scale of tourism industry in all fields, the market share of international tourists to Vietnam in the region and the world is constantly increasing. From 4.6% market share in Southeast Asia; 1.7% market share in the Asia-Pacific region and 0.2% of the global market share from 1995 to 2016 Vietnam tourism accounted for 8, 2% of ASEAN market share; 2.4% of Asia-Pacific region and 0.68% of global market share.

In addition, Vietnam's world heritage system recognized by UNESCO continues to increase in number as the focus of product development practices, attracting tourists. Products such as

sightseeing of Ha Long Bay, Hue cultural heritage, Hoi An ancient town, My Son relics; adventure tourism to explore Phong Nha-Ke Bang cave, Mui Ne, Phu Quoc beach resort, Nha Trang events increasingly attract great attention of domestic and foreign tourists. The festivals held on a large scale have become important tourism products, such as: Huong Pagoda festival, Lady Xu festival, Hue festival, Ha Long carnival, Danang fireworks festival, flower festival in Dalat. The outstanding products and values of Vietnam's destinations are gradually being formed and positioned in the target tourist markets. These are important points to form tourism-oriented tourism products in the Tourism Development Strategy. However, it has not been paid much attention to proper investment, so far only Ha Long - Cat Ba, Hoi An and My Son have brought into play the tourism potential. A number of other tourist and artificial constructions also have attraction to create products such as Son La hydroelectricity, Bai Dinh pagoda, Hai Van pass tunnel, Dai Nam general amusement park.

The continuous development of the tourism industry contributes to Vietnam's GDP, including direct, indirect and public investment of VND 584,884 billion (equivalent to 13.9% of GDP). In particular, the direct contribution of tourism to GDP is 279,287 billion VND (equivalent to 6.6% of GDP). The total contribution of tourism to the national employment sector (including indirect jobs) is more than 6,035 million jobs, accounting for 11.2%. In particular, the number of direct jobs created by the tourism industry is 2,783 million (accounting for 5.2% of total employment). At the same time, considering the structure of foreign currency revenue in service exports, the revenue of the tourism industry accounts for over 50% of service exports of the country, ranking first in foreign currency revenue in all kinds of service activities and has the largest foreign exchange revenue, across the transport, post and telecommunications and financial services industries. Compared with exports of goods, foreign currency revenue from tourism service exports is behind only four commodity export sectors: crude oil, textiles, footwear and seafood. In addition, as an "on-site export" activity, tourism brings about higher economic efficiency and creates more jobs for the society that are currently not fully calculated.

In addition to the achieved achievements, Vietnam's tourism is also facing many difficulties, some key criteria being the key economic sector has not been achieved or achieved but not yet sustainable, such as: clearly, lacking in science and not sensitive to the fluctuations of economy and politics, so when happening, it did not take the initiative and did not fully measure the impact on the guest market; The business strategy of tourism companies is unsustainable and long-term about the international tourist market, which is passive depending on a few major tourist markets; stimulating domestic tourism inefficiencies, competitiveness is still low. The cause of the above situation is besides some subjective causes such as: Policy system, management role, team capacity contingent did not meet the requirements, also due to ineffective interdisciplinary coordination; The roles and responsibilities of all levels and branches from the central to local levels have not been fully promoted; awareness of tourism development does not meet development requirements; tourism investment is limited and not effective as expected; a number of policies related to tourism are still inadequate, not timely removed difficulties for tourism

businesses to improve competitiveness and attract tourists; Security and safety issues for tourists are not guaranteed.

It can be seen that 2016 was recorded as a success for the tourism industry, but this also put pressure on 2017 with the plan of 11.5 million international visitors, 66 million domestic tourists, with total expected revenue at 23 billion USD <sup>[5]</sup>.

### 3.2 Risk of unsustainable development

Waste issues, especially plastic waste, nylon bags have become particularly hot recently. According to data from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), an estimated 1.8 million tons of plastic waste is generated in Vietnam every year, and Vietnam is one of the top five countries responsible for about 13 million tons of plastic are released into the ocean per year. In fact, the image of resorts and beaches flooded with plastic waste and nylon bags has become very popular. And of course, an important part of that is from tourism activities. But waste is just one of the existing challenges that everyone can see about the impact of tourism on the environment. According to the 2017 WEF Tourism Competitiveness Ranking, Vietnam ranks lower than the average of developing countries in Southeast Asia (which is already the worst group) in almost all contents of environmental sustainability assessment. Vietnam's weaknesses are particularly prominent in terms of air pollution (small particle pollution), wastewater treatment and the strict compliance with environmental regulations.

As the number of tourists continues to pour, the pressure on these three weaknesses will only increase. Similarly, other important environmental risks that have not been included in the WEF index, such as the world's highest level of plastic waste accumulation in Vietnam (reflect poor management of the this waste) poses a great risk to the marine and land ecosystems, "a special topic on tourism development in Vietnam in the recently released Review report of the World Bank said.

Earlier, the tourism industry's sustainable development report presented by the Tourism Working Group at the mid-term VBF Forum in 2019 also emphasized: "Waste and over-use of plastic is one of the problems in the environment. serious issues of Vietnam today. Tourists and tourism are major causes of plastic waste (albeit a small proportion of the overall scale of the problem). The tourism industry is also affected by the widespread plastic waste on beaches and in the natural environment.

In addition to environmental pressures, risks are also increasing due to excessive tourism development, which is related to the risk of overloading in service and tourism infrastructure; scarcity of human resources for the tourism industry as the supply of tourism industry labor is increasingly unable to keep pace with demand; threaten the sustainability of important cultural, heritage and natural beauty sites due to the growing tourist growth; lack of diverse products as well as tourist destinations put pressure on the most popular destinations; have not done well and effectively in promoting and building tourist brands, destinations <sup>[6]</sup>

## 4. Conclusion and recommendation

### 4.1 Conclusion

Along with the socio-economic development, tourism needs have become more and more indispensable in the daily life of people, especially in developed countries. In the general context of the world, Vietnam's economy is tending to restructure from an agricultural economy mainly to a developed economy of Industry

- Service - Agriculture. Therefore, the development of sustainable tourism in Vietnam is essential. For sustainable development, it is necessary to simultaneously implement 3 objectives: developing economically effectively; harmonious development of social aspects; improve living standards and living standards of population strata; improve environmental environment, ensure solid long-term development for today's and future generations. To ensure sustainable development, it is necessary to implement the principles to ensure sustainable tourism development, which are: Exploiting and using resources appropriately; restrict overuse of resources and minimize waste; Tourism development must be associated with conservation of diversity; development must conform to the overall socio-economic situation; benefit sharing with the local community; encourage the participation of local communities in tourism activities; regularly exchange and consult with local communities and related subjects; focus on training and raising awareness about environmental resources.

#### 4.2 Recommendation

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism shall assume the prime responsibility and coordinate with the ministries, agencies and localities in performing 6 tasks and solutions:

- Research and develop key tourism products such as sea tourism, cultural tourism, eco-tourism; To locate beach destinations with high attraction; To expand the development of new and potential tourism products such as official tourism, community tourism, adventure tourism, medical tourism, health care, golf tourism, entertainment and tourism, theme parks, event attendance, art shows.

- Strengthening training and development of tourism human resources, including managerial, administrative and occupational labor forces; Strengthening the training capacity of the system of tourism training establishments across the country; Developing the contingent of teachers, lecturers and tourist trainers. Develop policies to encourage businesses to participate in training tourism human resources; Encourage training at tourism businesses, non-public training establishments and foreign-invested establishments; Strengthening international cooperation on tourism human resource development, acquiring international advanced technology level.
- Developing tourism infrastructure and accommodation establishments with high quality and raising the quality of tourist services: Review legal regulations on tourism and related services; abolish or propose the abolition of unreasonable or unsuitable regulations; strong reform of administrative procedures; improve business freedom, increase safety and reduce business costs; Considering the progress of investment and development of existing tourism infrastructure centers and works; identify difficulties and obstacles; directly support the settlement, at the same time, encourage to accelerate the expansion of investment; Research to hire consultants (possibly foreign professional consultants) to formulate a plan to use tourism resources (nature and culture); building centers and tourist spots; bidding to build, use and develop tourism resources in the form of public-private partnership (PPP); Collaborate with the Ministries of Planning and Investment, Finance, Transport and relevant agencies to study and propose investment incentive policies for tourism infrastructure

development; To attract investment in developing large-scale and high-quality tourist products in key areas and areas of tourism development motivation, firstly in areas with development orientations to become special economic zones of the whole country; Standardize and control the quality of products and services, and conditions and amenities for tourism, ensuring safety, security, environmental sanitation and sustainable development; Continue to review and build the system of toilets, resting stations, restaurants, shopping facilities to meet the requirements of serving tourists; Enhancing connectivity and ensuring quality in the tourism product supply chain.

- Sustainable tourism development: Research, develop and issue a set of criteria for sustainable tourism development (based on good international standards and experience); Research and propose mechanisms for people and scientists to actively participate in reviewing planning, projects and monitoring compliance during the implementation process.
- Enhancing tourism promotion and promotion: Innovating and diversifying tourism promotion methods; enhance tourism promotion through encouraging international travel companies to experience tourism in our country; Encourage businesses to open tourism marketing offices abroad, participate in major international tourism fairs, advertising campaigns on international and national media, e- activities marketing; attaching importance to tourism marketing activities in source markets; Propagating the meaning and importance of connecting, cooperating, sharing benefits among partners in the tourism service chain; Compile documents and enhance training, propaganda and development of community based tourism, spreading and raising awareness of community tourism; Promote research and market database development; Develop a mechanism to concentrate resources for national tourism promotion activities, ensuring flexible operation, closely associated with industries, localities and businesses; Organize and reorganize domestic tourism fairs to avoid dispersion; focus resources, improve professionalism for national and international trade fairs; Strengthen resources from the Tourism Development Assistance Fund for tourism promotion.
- Improving the efficiency of state management of tourism; Implement strong application of criteria for evaluating tourism destinations in localities; Research and apply science and technology, develop smart tourism.

#### For the Association of tour operators

- Develop criteria for classification and ranking of Vietnam tourist guides.
- Elaborating the Regulation on organization and operation of rating guides. Develop guidelines for organizing and managing the activities of ranking Guides as Members of Vietnam Tourism Guides Association
- Organize training courses for the team of Appraisers.
- Organize ratings tour guides in key provinces and cities on tourism nationwide.
- Develop an information system for Vietnam Tourism Guides Association, which consists of 3 main parts. They are: Management System of Guides is a Member of Vietnam

Tourism Guides Association; The system supports the information that the Guides need in the practice process; Ranking Guide online

- Organize training courses to use the information system of the Vietnam Tour Guide Association
- Organizing a public-private dialogue on the development of the contingent of Vietnam Tourism Guides <sup>[8]</sup>.

#### **For travel businesses**

- For tour operators need to participate in the construction of tours, routes, tourism programs, build publications to promote propaganda, participate in supporting residents to improve technical facilities for customers. Building tourism products with unique elements will motivate tourists to come to meet the needs, avoid the boredom such as organizing festivals in the villages, recreating folk games, building Constructing traditional craft villages, organizing folk music performances and campfires.
- Schools and businesses need to equip tourism manpower with knowledge of integration, good at foreign languages, information technology, tourism operations, market knowledge and international law <sup>[9]</sup>.

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