

ABSTRACT

This study aims to increase knowledge, understanding of potential, competitive advantage and capacity of the tourism sector, to create a forum for discussion, exchange of information and experience; to enhance the research capacity of researchers from national tourism organizations, from academia and from the private sectors in the sub region, and to create useful information which could support tourism policy-making. The Mekong Region is defined here to include only Lao PDR, Cambodia and Thailand.

An introduction to the Project begins the report followed by a background on tourism relations among the three countries under study. The study provides tourism forecasts for the next five years for Lao PDR, Cambodia and Thailand and an analysis of the competitive advantages in tourism of the three countries. The impact of SARS in 2003 and the stability of the tourism sector were also examined.

In this report, the experience of Community-based tourism planning and implementation in the three countries was researched. Lao PDR identified strengths and weaknesses of the practice. In Cambodia, researchers endeavored to identify good practices for community-based tourism development of three selected case studies. In Thailand, seven cases studies were examined to indicate good practices in tourism management.

The final chapter reveals the impact of community-based tourism on income distribution. The results of the studies showed that tourism had contributed to a more unequal distribution of income.