



MTSRR BRIEFING NOTE #3

Destination Development

MYANMAR TOURISM STRATEGIC RECOVERY ROADMAP (2020-2025)

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This short document provides a briefing paper on the theme of Destination Management, Destination Management Organisations, and Destination Management Plans, and provides concise recommendations on how to further develop DMOs in Myanmar.

INTRODUCTION

Government, through the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism has committed to supporting the decentralization of tourism management of new and existing destinations through the formation of accountable Destination Management Organisations (DMOs).

This will put the management of destinations at the local level, and ensure democratic input with DMOs being chaired by the Pyithu Hluttaw MP responsible for the destination. The intention is to lead to inclusive destinations that are managed through inputs from all citizens, as well as the tourism-related private sector. It will also better equip local decision making for new destination development, infrastructure priorities and encourage local entrepreneurship.

Initial steps have been made with the creation of DMOs, however the current structure of the new DMOs represents more of a committee than an actual institution, and steps need to be made to find options of sustainably financing DMOs, as well as to ensure they really do inclusively support the management of destinations, and do not end up being another form of top-down government.

The Ministry will need to continue to develop DMOs to ensure inclusive input from Township/District level with a clear strategy for DMO composition, roles and function, and how they are overseen by RTCs and the Ministry, but not with a heavy regulation, but in a way that allows local innovation and employment is promoted to support new destination development sustainably.

To improve regional buy-in, as well as support from the Development Partner organisations, the Ministry could open up a communication panel to discuss how DMOs could be further set up and strengthened in Myanmar. This should also include consultations with the private sector, infrastructure stakeholders, and relevant government departments.

Of key importance will be maintaining the overall purpose and focus of DMOs, which ultimately is to collectively improve tourism overall in Myanmar to become more competitive than neighbouring countries, be more inclusive by increasing local employment and allowing more MSMEs to enter the market with the minimum of bureaucracy, and more sustainably managed. This might take some time, however DMOs will be better in the long-run if they are set up well at this stage.

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT DEFINITIONS

Destination management is a 'holistic' approach to the development, management and marketing of tourist destinations. Of utmost importance is the need for different "stakeholders" to work together (Taken from MoHT (2014) *Destination Management Plan for the Inle Lake Region*).

Most simply defined, stakeholders are people that have some type of interest in an area, business or activity. Stakeholders would include anyone from Union Government to a local resident in the Inlay Lake Region.

The purpose of destination management is to ensure tourism develops sustainably and in the interests of local communities, ensure that tourism is resilient to external shocks and responsive to change in the marketplace and business environment: ever so relevant now during Myanmar's rapid development.

Destination Management

Destination Management is a process of leading, influencing and coordinating the management of all the aspects of a destination that contribute to a visitor's experience, taking account of the needs of visitors, local residents, businesses and the environment.

Destination Management Organisation

A Destination Management Organisation (DMO) should coordinate, lobby and engage the different agencies involved with tourism management, for example Hotels, Transport Infrastructure, Tourism Businesses and so on, to provide input into strategic management. It should also provide regional promotion and marketing, tourism guidelines, a focus for training and development and business support.

A destination management organization (DMO) is "the leading organizational entity which may encompass the various authorities, stakeholders and professionals and facilitates partnerships towards a collective destination vision" (*UNWTO Guidelines for Institutional Strengthening of DMOs*)

Destination Management Plan

A Destination Management Plan (DMP) is a shared statement of intent to manage a destination over a stated period of time, articulating the roles of different stakeholders and identifying clear actions that they will take and the apportionment of resources.

A Destination Management Plan is a tool that identifies product, infrastructure and social needs to allow growth in tourism, the value of products, provide a strategic direction for growth and to manage sensitive areas; highlight conservation and development issues and needs and to provide a framework for development support.

Destination Management Plans help to:

- ◆ Coordinate Government Agencies, regional forums, private sector businesses and community groups that are involved in delivering the diverse range of attractions, facilities, services and infrastructure that form part of and/or support the Visitor Economy.
- ◆ Monitor and manage the impacts (both positive and negative) of tourism.
- ◆ Prioritise and allocate resources to achieve sustainable growth.
- ◆ Access development funding support from donors as well as encouraging sustainable investment and promotion by the private sector.

WHO ARE THE TOURISTS?

The words "tourism" and "tourists" mean different things to different people. The UNWTO provides the following statement:

Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes.

This includes "leisure" travellers or holidaymakers as well as business travellers, those on religious pilgrimages and people visiting friends and family, as they all use parts of the tourism industry and visitor economy.

These people are called visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which imply tourism expenditure. (<https://www.unwto.org/glossary-tourism-terms>)

MYANMAR DMOS – RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ Begin an open and frank consultation with key destination stakeholders on how DMOs in Myanmar should be developed, considering structure and composition; role and function; financing, and DMO governance.
- ◆ Openly seek genuine expertise and support from Development Organisations to learn of other practices across the world, citing examples that work well, especially ones that may be adaptable to the Myanmar context.

- ◆ Commit to developing DMOs to as locally-based institutions with well-trained and motivated full-time staff to oversee governance, financial planning and implementation in conjunction with relevant organisations,
- ◆ Seek support from government funding structures, private sector, and development partners for the development of a long-term financial and capacity building programme for DMOs.

- ◆ Begin a process of consultation to develop common standards and guidelines to oversee DMOs and expand and upscale the skills and capability in tourism appropriate for the destination.
- ◆ Seek support for each DMO to develop functional Destination Management Plans, following suitable Destination Management Planning models.

REFERENCES

1. MoHT (2014) *Destination Management Plan for the Inle Lake Region*, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism
2. World Tourism Organization (2019), *UNWTO Guidelines for Institutional Strengthening of Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) Preparing DMOs for new challenges*, UNWTO, Madrid
3. World Tourism Organization (2020), *Glossary of Tourism Terms*, available <https://www.unwto.org/glossary-tourism-terms>

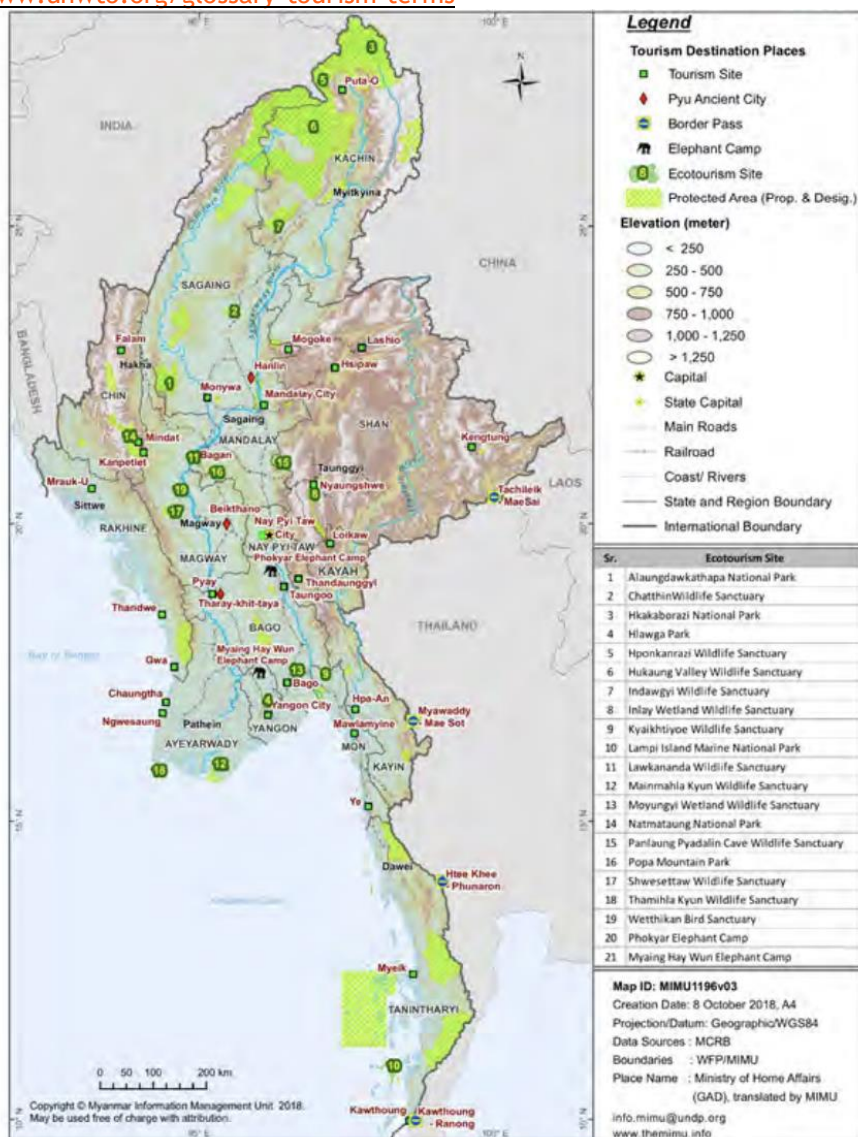


Figure 1: Myanmar Tourism Destinations