

MIKE SHARROCKS CONSULTANCY

Tourism Feasibility • Development Planning • Urban Design • Urban Regeneration • Environmental Appraisal

Vietnam

TOURISM STRATEGY FOR BAC KAN PROVINCE

For the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Global Environment Facility, 2010

The Pro-Poor Partnerships for Agroforestry Development Project (3PAD), which commenced in May 2009 and would extend until 2014, was financed mostly by loan and grant funding from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Bac Kan Province, located in northern Vietnam and close to the Chinese border, was selected as the project location because of its high poverty levels and its concentration of ethnic minority groups. It includes one of the best-known nature reserves in the country, Ba Be National Park (NP). The key objective of the 3PAD project in this mountainous area was to achieve sustainable poverty reduction for rural communities.



A review of tourism at the national and regional level was initially undertaken so as to provide a context for proposals. Tourism attractions in the province were visited and assessed, with recommendations outlined for improvements. A brief SWOT analysis was also set out which helped to identify a number of key issues such as: the weak level of wildlife conservation and environmental protection; the poor quality of visitor accommodation and catering facilities; weak development control; and, the inadequate management of visitor attractions.

The tourism strategy outlined the goals and timescale; market positioning and strategic approach; key product themes and target markets; and, proposed tourism attractions, routes and circuits. Some key policies and actions were recommended that needed to be undertaken, together with priority projects, which could contribute towards poverty alleviation and environmental conservation.



Mike Sharrocks was commissioned to prepare a tourism strategy for the province. This focused on community-based tourism and ecotourism, under Component 3 (sustainable environmental opportunities) of the 3PAD programme. The strategy needed to establish a clear link between tourism and conservation and was part-funded by IFAD and also by Global Environment Facility contributions. It would form the guiding document for tourism in Bac Kan Province for the next five years. Whilst the focus of the strategy was on the stunningly beautiful Ba Be NP area, as the prime visitor destination, it would also aim to increase opportunities for sustainable tourism throughout the province. This would include the participation of ethnic minority tribes such as the Tay, Dzao and Hmong.



Priority projects aimed to encourage greater visitor numbers to Bac Kan, with Ba Be NP as the main draw, and to link these to strengthening environmental protection activities, deepening community involvement, broadening the number of attractions, improving visitor facilities and developing livelihood opportunities throughout the province.

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