



20th Tourism Working Group Meeting

13-14 September 2007

Lijiang, Yunnan Province, People's Republic of China

Meeting Summary

I. Introduction

1. The 20th Tourism Working Group Meeting (TWG-20) was held in Lijiang, Yunnan Province, People's Republic of China. The chairmanship of the TWG meeting was turned-over by Mr. Pham Quang Hung, Director General, International Cooperation Department of Viet Nam National Tourism Administration, Chairman of 19th Tourism Working Group Meeting (TWG-19) held in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam in March 2007, to Mr. Luo Mingyi, Director General of Yunnan Provincial Tourism Administration, PRC. The meeting was attended by representatives from national tourism organizations (NTOs) of Cambodia, PRC (Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region), Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam, as well as representatives of ADB, ESCAP, UNESCO, SNV Netherlands Development Organization, Tourism Trade Report Weekly, and Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office (MTCO). Representatives of municipal and provincial tourism administration offices in Lijiang and Kunming also attended as observers. The list of participants is in [Appendix 1](#).

2. The objectives of the meeting were to: (i) discuss operational concerns pertaining to the MTCO; (ii) review the initial work plan of the Project Coordinator, MTCO; (iii) review the progress of the seven priority programs of the GMS Tourism Sector Strategy; (iv) discuss the preparations for the GMS Tourism Ministers' Meeting in January 2008; and (v) discuss the preparations for the tourism exhibits at the Third GMS Summit in March 2008.

II. Opening Session

3. Mr. Zhang Jianzhong, Director General of Policy and Regulation Department, China National Tourism Administration, Mr. Cui Zhitao, Deputy Secretary General of Yunnan Provincial Government, and Mr. Ji Honglongjia, Executive Vice Mayor of Lijiang, gave welcome remarks during the Opening Session.

III. Agenda Item 1: Discussion and Approval of the Minutes of the 19th GMS TWG Meeting

4. The TWG-20 Chairman, Mr. Luo Mingyi gave brief remarks, after which he requested the participants to briefly introduce themselves.

5. The meeting adopted the Agenda of TWG-20 which appears as [Appendix 2](#). The meeting also formally approved the Minutes of the 19th GMS TWG Meeting held on 29 March 2007 in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. A copy of the Minutes of TWG-19 is in [Appendix 3](#).

6. UNESCAP representative suggested that for future meetings, draft minutes could be circulated to participants within one week after the meeting, requesting them to send any proposed changes by the fixed deadline date. Then, the revised report incorporating all suggested changes would be sent

out to the participants. If there were no additional comments or suggestions on the revised report within the fixed date, it could be considered as a final report. This procedure will enable the participants to have the final report much earlier without waiting for the next meeting.

IV. Agenda Item 2:

A. Introduction of MTCO Institutional Framework and Operational Guidelines by Mr. Alfredo Perdiguero, ADB

7. Mr. Alfredo Perdiguero, ADB, presented the proposed MTCO Institutional Framework and Operational Guidelines. He emphasized that the various features of the framework are not new concepts as they are already described in the GMS Tourism Sector Strategy. He then highlighted the following points:

- a. The Institutional Framework outlines the basic platform through which various institutions in the GMS shall work and cooperate with one another at various levels, namely GMS Tourism Ministerial level, Tourism Working Group level, Advisory Board level, Private Sector Partnership level, and National Working Group level.
- b. The Operational Guidelines which provides the modus operandi of subregional cooperation in support of the GMS Tourism Strategy, also (i) outlines the various committees (Screening, Development Advisory, Private Sector Advisory, and National Tourism Working Group Committees) that will provide advice and input to the TWG and the MTCO; (ii) describes the various meetings (Ministers, TWG, and Mekong Tourism Forum) to be organized under the framework of GMS tourism cooperation as well as their nature and technical arrangements; (iii) outlines the different arrangements for the administration, disbursement, accounting, auditing, and reporting procedures of the MTCO fund supported by annual contributions from the GMS countries and marketing and promotion funding; (iv) sets out the MTCO office and management procedures, including the recruitment of MTCO staff and their respective duties and responsibilities; (v) describes the national implementation arrangements of priority programs and projects; and (vi) procedure for amendments to the operational guidelines.

8. Mr. Perdiguero stated that the TWG is one of, if not the, most successful and mature working group in the GMS Program as it has established its own secretariat and established its own fund to support the MTCO out of annual contributions from the member countries.

9. In response to Viet Nam's query on the funding of staff seconded to MTCO, Mr. Perdiguero clarified that seconded staff are not funded by MTCO funds. GMS countries could consider seconding qualified staff to MTCO at their expense (ideally, one from each country) to contribute their own ideas and expertise.

10. **Decision:** The Meeting adopted the Institutional Framework and Operational Guidelines (copy in [Appendix 4](#)) with an additional input as suggested by Ms. Christine Jacquemin, i.e., that the private sector group, once it is established, be represented also in the TWG, to facilitate the dialogue between the private sector and the working group.

B. Recruitment of MTCO Director by Mr. Don Ross, representative of the MTCO Director Pre-Selection Committee

11. Mr. Don Ross, representing the pre-selection committee and appointed by TWG on 7 July 2007, outlined (i) the roadmap and timeline for the recruitment process for the new MTCO Director; (ii)

the detailed terms of reference for the position – emphasizing the Director’s critical role as the TWG’s bridge with the private sector particularly on marketing aspects, (iii) the specific tasks to be discharged; (iv) tenure of the MTCO Director; (v) the budgetary outlay to support the operations of the MTCO and services of its staff; and (vi) a proposed advertisement notice to announce the availability of the position.

12. Mr. Ross noted that the time frame for recruitment of MTCO Director, i.e., 1 February 2008 is very tight and considering the high expectations from the position, the pre-selection committee and the TWG are confronted with the challenge of being able to meet the tight time frame and select the most highly qualified candidate. He presented Plan A to proceed despite time constraints, and Plan B to consider extending the contract of the Senior Advisor to the MTCO, Mr. Peter Semone, to allow him to carry on from 1 February to 31 December 2008, and build the foundation for an Executive Director, establish the marketing plan, set-up partnership arrangement with the private sector, and revive the Mekong Tourism Forum while allowing the Screening Committee to proceed with its selection process. He emphasized the momentum that the TWG has gained on several fronts.

13. Mr. Ross also pointed out that one item needs to be added to the TOR of the Executive Director, i.e., that there should not be a conflict of interest with the position. He emphasized the need for an efficient communication system so that the Executive Director could be immediately reached wherever in the world he/she might be.

14. In light of differing views from the TWG members on the option to take, Mr. Perdiguero suggested that the working group consider the past experience with the previous Executive Director and noted that the salary for the position is too low and the amount of contributions from member countries is limited. With the low compensation package and the high expectations from the position, the selection cannot be realistically done in 6 months for someone with strong leadership. He suggested that Peter Semone be requested to prepare a draft marketing strategy/plan with concrete ideas by 30 November 2007, make a presentation in early December 2007 at an ad hoc TWG meeting. Then the TWG can decide on whether or not to extend his contract. He also urged the GMS countries to consider putting in more money to support the MTCO and pay for the Executive Director.

15. **Decision:** In consideration of the various suggestions made by the participants, the meeting agreed to (i) proceed with the recruitment of the MTCO Executive Director based on the proposal made by Mr. Ross, advertise the position as soon as possible, collect the CVs of candidate, pre-selection committee to screen and arrive at a short list of candidates before end of November 2007 and present about 5 short listed candidates at the ad hoc TWG meeting in early December 2007 for final selection by TWG; (ii) Peter Semone to prepare the marketing strategy/plan, send the draft to TWG members by the last week of November 2007, and make a presentation to TWG in early December 07; and (iii) TWG to decide in early December 2007 on whether to finally select a new Executive Director or extend the contract of Peter Semone until December 2008 on part-time basis.

V. Agenda Item 3: Implementation of priority projects under GMS Tourism Development Strategy and Work Plan by Project Coordinator, MTCO.

16. The Working Group welcomed Ms. Christine Jacquemin who has been seconded with the support of the French Government to ADB to assist MTCO as Project Coordinator starting July 2007 until July 2009.

17. Ms. Jacquemin, Project Coordinator, MTCO, apologized on behalf of the French for the delays in her arrival and gave a brief presentation on her educational and professional background. Afterwards, she discussed her expected role at MTCO, principally to assist in coordinating the

implementation of the Tourism Strategy, and her proposed work plan for the last quarter of 2007 and the whole year of 2008. She outlined her work plan consisting of the following: essentially to collect all available information on the current status of the projects and determine what are the priorities in liaison with lead countries according to a certain set of criteria; what is possible to be done; evaluate/assess the interest and commitment of the identified lead country as well as the feasibility of each project in consultation with the member countries through field visits to be undertaken by Ms. Jacquemin between October and mid-November 2007; determine the sustainability of the projects, including problems and constraints to their successful implementation. She described the expected output, i.e., a first selection of projects classified into 3 categories in the order of priority. By the end of November 2007, she would finish writing the status report and in early December 2007 present the first draft of the status report to TWG to get further comments and finalize the selection of prioritized list of projects that could be realistically implemented in the short term, and presented to GMS Tourism Ministers Meeting in January 2008. The year 2008 will focus on the implementation of Category 1 projects. The project coordinator will assist in the elaboration of proposals for submission to potential donors, monitor and evaluate each project through quarterly updates, assist the countries to negotiate the implementation agreements and memoranda between the participating NTOs and the development partners, provide technical inputs as and where necessary, especially on sustainability, and prepare quarterly reports to TWG. Ms. Jacquemin emphasized the critical role of each country in their communication with her and sharing of information to ensure the success of her work plan. A copy of her report is in [Appendix 5](#).

18. **Decision:** The TWG members agreed to put on record their appreciation to the French Government for its support to the MTCO and assured Ms. Jacquemin of their support.

19. Lao PDR and Viet Nam representatives recalled that under the GMS Tourism Strategy, the lead countries were assigned to prepare detailed proposals for submission to prospective donors. This has not been done, what has been done is to organize a few activities. They requested Ms. Jacquemin to assist in formulating and elaborating project proposals.

20. Representative of Myanmar thanked Ms. Jacquemin for the comprehensive presentation and noted that Myanmar has no leading role in any of the projects and would appreciate the efforts of the other countries as lead so that Myanmar could also benefit from the projects.

21. UNESCAP representative mentioned that since the launching of the Greater Mekong Subregion Tourism Sector Strategy, there have been a number of accomplishments with regard to 28 priority projects. He suggested that a concise project status report highlighting major accomplishments be prepared by MCTO and periodically updated. Such a report will be very useful when approaching the private sector and donor communities to seek their cooperation.

22. Mr. Perdiguero noted the joint efforts of the French Government and ADB to support the tourism development agenda of the GMS countries. He confirmed that Ms. Jacquemin was now ADB staff and would assist the countries. He emphasized the responsibility of the lead countries to provide leadership in the implementation of the projects. He clarified that project concept papers have been prepared for each of the priority projects but that these concept papers need to be further developed into detailed project feasibility proposals not only for purposes of presentation to prospective donors but also to respective ministers in the GMS countries for the inclusion of these projects in their national programs and allocation of resources. He noted that Ms. Jacquemin has clear ideas on how to proceed with the difficult task ahead and urged the countries to extend their help and support to ensure the success of her work.

23. The Chairman expressed the hope that Ms. Jacquemin could assist in generating additional resources.

VI. Agenda Item 4: Presentation of Progress Reports on the Seven Priority Programs of the GMS Tourism Sector Strategy

24. The Chairman requested Mr. Perdiguero to assist in leading the discussion of this item. Mr. Perdiguero suggested that progress reports be done by lead countries on a program basis and invited countries and the development partners to give additional inputs.

25. Lead countries/entities for the strategic programs of the GMS Tourism Sector Strategy gave brief progress reports on the following programs/projects.

(i) Marketing and Product Development Program

26. Mr. Perdiguero noted that as the marketing plan is yet to be developed by Mr. Semone, there is no progress report for this item yet.

27. Lao PDR representative briefed the meeting on the Lao Eco-tourism Forum held in July 2007 which aimed to promote high quality ecotourism-related products and services that showcase the natural and cultural heritage of the Mekong region and increase business opportunities. About 400 sellers and buyers, delegates and media from the 6 member countries attended as well as Singapore, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. Consequent to the Mekong Tourism Investment Summit Held in Luang Prabang in 2006, Lao PDR has noted reported increase in the number of visitors and increased occupancy in hotels and guest houses, especially in Luang Prabang and Savannakhet.

28. Representative from Cambodia reported that they have prepared a draft Sub-decree for a Tourism Marketing and Promotion Board. This Sub-decree was finalized within the MOT and has now been forwarded to the private sector for comments. Their comments will be incorporated in the final text of the Sub-decree that will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval.

29. Guangxi representative informed the meeting about the China-ASEAN forum held recently on tourism development. As ASEAN will be a channel for marketing and there is a good platform for ASEAN and GMS to cooperate, Guangxi suggested that GMS meeting be held in conjunction with ASEAN meeting. Several provinces in Viet Nam are involved in a network mechanism mutually set up by Guangxi and Viet Nam. HCMC-Guangxi marketing arrangement would further promote tourism in these destinations. Guangxi suggested that tourism facilitation in the GMS countries, especially visa exemption, should be done as soon as possible under the leadership of the GMS to establish more simplified procedures for access in border areas. Guangxi looks forward to strengthening cooperation with the other GMS countries besides Viet Nam.

30. Yunnan representative proposed that GMS countries cooperate in marketing in other country destinations and stressed the need to expand and strengthen cooperation between provincial areas. He mentioned that this year, the China International Tourism Fair will be held in Yunnan Province and that the Fair could serve as an effective platform to showcase the whole region as a single destination. He expressed Yunnan's willingness to extend cooperation with other countries.

31. Mr. Perdiguero noted that the marketing strategy to be developed by Peter Semone for the special ad-hoc TWG meeting will identify about 4 specific projects for implementation. A detailed marketing plan will be presented in December 2007 and he urged the countries to discuss with Mr. Semone their ideas on marketing the GMS as a single destination. A meeting could be organized later with the private sector on how to move forward the identified initiatives and also on how to spend the \$25,000 marketing fund available at MTCO.

(ii) Human Resource Development Program (regional level)

32. Guangxi representative reported that under the Strategy, Guilin has been chosen as a base for training staff from GMS. Guilin Institute of Tourism, the only one in China that prepares professionals in tourism hospitality, aspires to become no. 1 in the world and is seeking experts from WTO. After organizing a forum in July 2007 with the assistance of WTO and PATA, the Institute is organizing another forum on tourism education in December 2007 for which a proposal has been submitted to WTO. Experts have been requested to redesign the curriculum in tourism hospitality in addition to experts and scholars from Hongkong Polytechnic University on tourism management. With the completion of its facilities, the Institute is expected to play a more important role in the region in international tourism hospitality training.

33. UNESCAP reported that the Network of Asia-Pacific Education and Training Institutes in Tourism (APETIT) consists of 248 tourism training institutes and national tourism organizations in 44 countries in 44 countries, many of which are in the GMS countries and constitute 40% of total APETIT members. Through this network, tourism training and advisory services can be provided within the APETIT framework with APETIT experts acting as resource persons. He encouraged the GMS countries to fully utilize the opportunities available from APETIT. Details about its programs can be accessed at its website <www.apetit-network.org>.

34. UNESCO requested the Director of the Guangxi Institute to consider including in their curriculum programs heritage and environmental protection subjects. Ms. Jacquemin supported the idea and suggested that a common course on sustainable tourism development issues be included in all tourism related university / college courses and training courses and should be a core course in training courses on cultural sustainability of tourism regarding cultural and natural heritage management. She also suggested that information be disseminated to the GMS countries on how to apply and if scholarships are available.

35. Mr. Perdiguero reported that ADB, under the Phnom Penh Plan for Development Management (PPP), has organized 2 tourism training programs for GMS government officials from the environment, culture, and tourism sectors and that another one is to be organized next year. Each course was attended by 24 officials (6 from each country).

(iii) Heritage Conservation and Social Impact Management Program

36. Lao PDR reported as lead country for the program that it has organized training of guides in cultural heritage sites. In collaboration with UNESCO, Macao Institute of Tourism Studies, and UNESCAP a curriculum for training of guides in cultural heritage sites has been developed and training conducted in October 2006. Focal points responsible for translation of curriculum module in respective languages and the conduct training at the national level have also been designated. National training had been done in Thailand and Viet Nam. A training workshop on cultural tourism sites management and guiding will be organized in October 2007 in Champassack.

37. Viet Nam informed the meeting that UNESCO and UNESCAP have provided Vietnam with support for organization of a national workshop in Hoi An Town. VNAT has been translating the curriculum into the Vietnamese language and that once finalized, the curriculum module will be used in the tourism institutes in Viet Nam as a good reference.

38. Cambodia informed the meeting that the Ministry of Tourism is preparing for the UNESCAP/ UNESCO Training of Trainers Workshop on Cultural Tourism Sites Management and Guiding in Siem Reap. UNESCAP representative reported further on the progress of UNESCAP/UNESCO

Training-of-Trainers Workshops on Cultural Tourism Sites Management and Guiding being held in all six GMS countries. Two workshops were successfully held in Hoi An on 22-27 July 2007 and in Bangkok on 30 July-4 August 2007. Preparations are underway for workshops in Cambodia, China, Lao PDR and Myanmar. These workshops are conducted based on two sets of training manuals developed by UNESCAP under French funding and UNESCO and will contribute to strengthening GMS countries' training capacity for cultural tourism sites management and guiding. UNESCO noted that this is an important opportunity to involve not only the guides but also the communities. Manuals have been prepared and customized for individual countries. One particular heritage site is selected and training is focused on that site. Local tourism office, local heritage and cultural office are involved, and contents of the manuals are prepared by local experts.

39. UNESCO representative drew the attention of the meeting to the COMMIT process on preventing human trafficking, involving country level commitment through an MOU signed by the GMS countries in 2004. One of the several areas of intervention under the MOU is to strengthen regional cooperation to prevent human trafficking. She mentioned that a study had been carried out in Cambodia and Thailand on tourism and human trafficking, "Sex, Sun and Heritage – Tourism Threats and Opportunities: a report on Best Practice on Tourism and Trafficking", and that a workshop will be held on 5-6 November 2007 in Bangkok, Thailand to be attended by the GMS countries, focusing on tourism and trafficking in relation to child sex tourism. She stressed that as implementation of the tourism strategy proceeds, the GMS countries need to address also the negative aspects of tourism development and the protection of the vulnerable segments of the population. She mentioned that Cambodia had taken a pro active stand on the issue.

40. Lao PDR reported that a socially responsible tourism manual is being developed jointly with Cambodia and Viet Nam with funding support from MTDP. Mr. Perdiguero urged the other GMS countries to contact Lao PDR as soon as possible if they are interested in participating in this project. He also mentioned the GMS Core Environment Protection Program (CEP), which covers also tourism as an instrument to protect the biodiversity environment of the GMS. Cambodia has been identified as a pilot country. He urged the other countries to contact the GMS Environment Operations Center (EOC) in Bangkok if they are interested to get involved.

41. UNESCAP is assisting the GMS countries in raising training standards of education and training institutions offering tourism and hospitality management and guiding courses through the provision of a training manual and the conduct of national workshops.

(iv) Pro-poor Tourism Development Program

42. SNV representative announced that SNV will be conducting a number of studies on poverty reduction along tourism routes in the GMS, on how tourism can make meaningful contributions, with the goal of identifying suitable interventions. First focus is the East-West corridor, to be followed by other research in the southern and northern corridors. Another study has recently been completed together with the MPDF for Kratie, Cambodia. He invited the participation of the countries in this research especially Thailand as an important source market and destination for regional travel. A conference on "Poverty reduction Impact Measurement in Tourism Chain Development". A workshop will be held in Phnom Penh on 12 December 2007 focusing on the value-chain approach for identifying and developing poverty reduction opportunities through tourism.

43. Ms. Jacquemin suggested that MTCO could assist in disseminating publications and even serve as central depository for tourism publications in the GMS as long as the budget allows, and that the mekong tourism website could be used to link directly to online publications and manuals to provide free and easy access for all in order to disseminate good practices and training manuals..

44. UNESCAP announced that it has launched a Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in Asia and the Pacific, Phase II (2006-2012). Within this framework, a series of capacity building activities are being organized, one of which is an Experts Group Meeting on Enhancing the Role of Tourism in Socio-economic Development to be held on 18-19 October 2007 in Bangkok, to review the role of tourism in socio-economic development and poverty reduction and consider monitoring procedures for the implementation of the Plan of Action. Invitations have been sent out to all GMS countries to attend with financial support from UNESCAP.

45. Mr. Perdiguero mentioned that under the Mekong Tourism Development Project (MTDP), 2 provinces in Cambodia, 4 provinces in Lao PDR, and 2 provinces in Viet Nam are being supported in developing pro-poor community based tourism products and that the Project is moving very fast in Lao PDR and accelerating in Cambodia and Viet Nam. Lessons will be derived upon project completion and shared with the other countries. More pro-poor tourism interventions are to be supported under a new ADB-funded project to expand the scope of the pro-poor community based tourism products which will probably include Lao PDR and Viet Nam.

(v) Private Sector Participation Program

46. Cambodia reported that they have set up a public-private sector working group for tourism that meets every month, co-chaired by the Minister of Tourism and the private sector. Twice a year the Prime Minister chairs a meeting of representatives of the different sectors with relevant ministries, which includes the tourism private sector.

47. Mr. Perdiguero informed the meeting about the Tourism SME Forum held in Ho Chi Minh City in March 2007 and attended by about 250 representatives from SMEs and the banking sector on how to attract financing for tourism SMEs. The Forum provided an interesting dialogue on problems confronted by SMEs and could serve as a good starting point that MTCO could build on to move the agenda forward together with Cambodia as lead country for this particular project.

(vi) Program to Facilitate the Movement of Tourists

48. On the single visa scheme being worked out between Cambodia and Thailand, Thailand informed the meeting that their Ministry of Foreign Affairs is working on the details of the procedures for implementation in the future. Mr. Perdiguero recalled that the concept of the GMS single visa originated from TWG about 4 years ago. He requested both countries to get more information on the status and update MTCO.

49. Mr. Ross suggested that in order to further facilitate travel, the GMS countries could consider a project on signage translation into GMS languages as the problem of signage is a major source of complaint from foreign tourists who cannot read the signs especially in railway stations and other public transport areas. Mr. Perdiguero mentioned that ASEAN is already working on the signage issue, and thus GMS may not need to work on this anymore. Thailand clarified that the standardization of signages has been started in ASEAN under the auspices of the ministries of transport. Viet Nam informed that at a recent ASEAN transport group's meeting in Viet Nam, the issue of common tourism signage was brought up. Hence it was decided that the issue would no longer be tackled under the GMS program.

50. On improvements of border checkpoints, Mr. Perdiguero requested MTCO to look closely on the status in the various countries, in consultation with the GMS countries, and prepare a database on existing arrangements for visa on arrival at which particular border points, which countries do not

need visa, etc. in order to clarify the current picture. He mentioned that under the cross-border trade facilitation agreement, protocols and annexes have been signed by the countries, awaiting ratification by parliaments. This will provide enormous opportunities for travel by cars and buses and will have a big impact on tourism. MTCO could in future report on the advantages and on bus companies moving, not only airlines.

(vii) Priority Tourism Zones Development Program

51. **Project 21: Tourism and Infrastructure Feasibility Study and Development Along Coastal Route of the Southern Tourism Corridor Project** (Project 21). Cambodia reported on the project, involving Cambodia, Thailand, and Viet Nam. A working group meeting was held on 24 August 2007 in Sihanoukville, Cambodia to consider joint cooperation in the development of a new GMS destination based on the southern tourism corridor. The first task was the designation by the 3 countries of provinces to form the boundary of the southern tourism region. The 3 countries also identified border posts. Product includes the 3 Ss attractions: Sun, sea, and scenery. Vast array of attractions will require marketing under a new name, e.g., the Mekong Coastal Triangle or Mekong by the sea. The meeting also decided on common signage. On scenic route audit evaluation, the forecast is that private car ownership in the GMS is to rise more than 1,000%, opportunity therefore exists to carry out a touristy analysis of the GMS transport corridors to plan their sustainable development. Cambodia will soon organize a workshop to share information on methodologies with the other countries. Invitations will be disseminated to the GMS countries as soon as details are available.

52. Relatedly, on **Project 18, Development of the Tourism Potential of the North-South Economic Corridor – the Golden Quadrangle Area**, Mr. Perdiguero mentioned that ADB plans to support the Northern Corridor in Lao PDR and East West Corridor in Viet Nam.

53. **Project 20: Tourism Development Plan with Infrastructure Support for the Implementation of the Emerald Triangle Area Tourism Zone**. Thailand reported on tourism development of the emerald triangle area tourism zone. A meeting of the working group was held in May 2007 in Ubon Ratchathani Province, Thailand, and covered such topics as facilitation of travel among participating provinces, tourism destination development of participating provinces along the border (each country proposed tourism destination linkage with the other countries), promotion and marketing (logo of the emerald triangle has been developed and circulated for approval by participating countries), human resource development. Thailand organized a training on “Community-based Ecotourism Development in the Emerald Triangle” in June 2007 in Ubon Ratchathani Province as a pilot project. The training provided an opportunity for 18 participants from Cambodia, Laos and Thailand to learn about theories and concepts of CBET from lectures and to have a first-hand experience from actual practices in the communities. Thailand plans to continue and expand this kind of training to more countries in the region in late 2007. Thailand plans to explore tourism destination in the emerald triangle in 2008 in order to develop tourism cooperation.

54. Cambodia reported that an earlier proposal submitted to UNDP through WTO for a plan on the emerald triangle has not progressed in the last 3 years.

55. **A. Project 18: Development of the Tourism Potential of the North-South Economic Corridor – the Golden Quadrangle Area** and **B. Project 27: Shangri-la-Tengchong-Myitkina Tourism Development Zone** or Western Yunnan-Northern Myanmar Tourism Zone. Mr. Qi Yongjiang, Project Officer of GMS Tourism Cooperation of the Yunnan Provincial Tourism Administration, PRC, presented the progress report on the two projects for which Yunnan Province is the designated leader. He mentioned that a Route Plan of Cross-border Travel in Upper Reach of

Mekong (the Golden Quadrangle Area) and a Route Plan of Cross-border Travel in Western Yunnan-Northern Myanmar are being developed. The planning of these routes has been carried out since 2006, supported by China National Tourism Administration. Two specialist groups were fielded to the Golden Quadrangle Area and Mandalay and Myitkyina in Northern Myanmar in September 2007 to undertake site investigations that served as basis in formulating cross-border travel routes plans and guidelines for tourism development in these areas. Amendments to the route plans will be done in October 2007, to be followed by preparation of English-translation version. The official version is targeted to be finished by November 2007 and the results of the plan are to be presented subsequently to CNTA, Ministry of Hotel and Tourism of Myanmar, ADB and MTCO. To ensure the success of the project, Mr. Qi called upon the GMS countries to extend their cooperation and support in carrying out on-the-spot investigations, in collecting basic materials from local tourist authorities in relevant areas, in providing inputs and advice for further refining the plans so that they reflect the ideas of all member countries, and ultimately in jointly implementing the plans. He also informed the meeting that a field trip to Mandalay and Myitkyina was undertaken a few days ago and there is a plan to conduct a field trip to the Golden Quadrangle soon.

56. Mr. Perdiguero suggested for Yunnan to consider establishing a working group for the Golden Quadrangle project and requested MTCO to assist in facilitating meetings of the working group under the leadership of Yunnan.

57. Ms. Jacquemin mentioned that MTCO is organizing a calendar of events on tourism including trade fairs, workshops, seminars, TWG meetings, etc, in the GMS and requested the countries to send MTCO all relevant information on the events, dates, and venues as soon as possible so that MTCO could communicate and disseminate to other parties as well. This would allow better planning and consequently better attendance from key players and partners and avoid overlapping of meetings that prevents good attendance.

58. Myanmar noted that the Western Yunnan- Northern Myanmar Tourism Zone is important to Myanmar and emphasized the importance of sharing information and experience.

59. Myanmar, PRC (Yunnan), Lao PDR and Thailand expressed support for the quadrangle project as well as for the creation of a working group. Yunnan will soon organize a meeting to discuss further the quadrangle project together with the other 3 countries and will invite MTCO.

60. On the Golden Quadrangle Zone, Viet Nam commented that focus should be on the branding and marketing through tourism fairs.

61. **Guangxi-Northeast Viet Nam Borderlands Tourism Zone** (Project 28). Representative of Guangxi Province reported on GMS Tourism Development in Guangxi. He gave a brief introduction of tourism development in Guangxi which has developed cooperation with ASEAN members and established an important platform for tourism cooperation and communication with ASEAN GMS countries. Guangxi is abundant in tourism resources, has well developed transport infrastructure and tourism reception and service facilities, and has succeeded in attracting a great number of tourists both domestic and international. In 2006, Guangxi was the 9th most visited province by inbound tourists and the 14th for generating inbound revenue. Since Guangxi's membership in GMS cooperation, Guangxi has actively promoted tourism cooperation with GMS. Under the GMS Tourism Sector Strategy, Guangxi is taking the lead in 4 strategic items. Guangxi and Viet Nam have achieved clear developments regarding the border region tourism zone and a number of events have been carried out and still planned in the future. Guangxi's Tourism College has achieved qualifications to provide tourism training and aims to further develop into the highest professional tourism talent training base in the GMS region. Among others, the college has sent teachers to tourism schools in Viet Nam and foreign students mainly from Viet Nam have studied at the school.

62. Viet Nam supported ADB's suggestion to consider developing bilateral agreement between Guangxi and Viet Nam in order to activate the flow of tourists between the two destinations. ADB suggested for Guangxi to take the lead in organizing a workshop addressing the impact of tourism on ethnic minorities and their traditional cultures. The workshop could serve as part of of Guangxi's lead role in the project "Saving the Soul of Our Ancestors". UNESCO and MTCO agreed to provide support.

63. **Project 22: Tourism Sector Development in the Cambodia-Lao PDR-Viet Nam Green Development Triangle Area.** Viet Nam reported on the Project Field Visit to Green Development Triangle for tourism product development. The target output is to develop tourism products of the Green Triangle in the short-term and a master plan for this area in the long-term. A detailed project proposal was presented to the meeting. Viet Nam outlined the project location, rationale, scope and activities, target participants in the field visit and workshop to be organized under the project, budget requirements (with Viet Nam contributing \$15,000 in cash for field visit, brochure production, and workshop organization, and Cambodia and Lao PDR contributing in kind). Viet Nam requested ADB's support to tap MTDP funds allocated for Viet Nam for this activity. Time frame is from November 2007 to April 2008. On 4-5 October 2007, Viet Nam is organizing a project inaugural meeting with Cambodia and Lao PDR, with the theme "Three Countries – One Destination." Final project results will be reported to the next TWG meeting.

64. Cambodia and Lao PDR confirmed their support for and participation in the project. ADB suggested that the project countries also try approaching the Japanese Government for possible support on top of that available under MTDP.

65. Copies of progress reports and other presentations are in [Appendix 6](#).

Agenda Item 5: Progress Report on Preparations and Proposed Agenda of the GMS Tourism Ministers' Meeting, Bangkok, 21 January 2008

66. Representative of Thailand informed the meeting that Thailand is hosting the ASEAN Tourism Forum 2008 in Bangkok in January 2008 and would like to take advantage of the occasion to organize back-to-back a GMS Tourism Ministers Meeting. Thailand proposed that on 20 January 2008, the GMS Senior Officials of tourism could meet first and then report the following day to the Ministers' Meeting about the work done by the GMS countries and future directions in tourism development in the region. He outlined the general program and agenda of the Ministers' Meeting, a copy of which appears as [Appendix 7](#). Thailand proposed that the Ministers' Meeting Agenda would focus on 2 major items: marketing plan and detailed project implementation plan to be presented by MTCO. The Ministers' decisions on these 2 major items would be reflected in the GMS Tourism Ministerial Statement to be adopted at the conclusion of the meeting. Thailand proposed to plan the GMS Tourism Ministers' Meeting for about 1 ½ hours to take a look at the overall tourism development policy. The Ministers could also discuss on plans for future meetings.

67. ADB suggested for MTCO to circulate their outputs around November 2007, so that the ad-hoc TWG meeting in December 2007 could give their comments and provide sufficient time for MTCO to make the necessary refinements in time for the GMS Tourism Ministerial Meeting. On the Ministerial Meeting Agenda, ADB suggested the inclusion of the viewing of the GMS tourism video after the welcome addresses by the Thai Minister of Tourism and ADB Vice President and statements of the other GMS Tourism Ministers. He volunteered to give a 5-minute overview of the GMS tourism strategy to be followed by the respective presentations by Peter Semone and C. Jacquemin on their outputs.

68. Decisions: The meeting arrived at the following agreements:

(i) Thailand as host will prepare the revised Draft Agenda for the Ministerial Meeting for the consideration of the ad hoc TWG meeting in December 2007.

(ii) GMS countries shall exert efforts to ensure actual attendance at the Ministerial level.

(iii) Thailand and ADB will jointly prepare the Draft Ministerial Statement for the consideration of the other countries. Thailand and ADB will coordinate closely regarding the media strategy. It was noted that the results of the Ministerial meeting will provide inputs to the 3rd GMS Summit Declaration.

(iv) The agenda of the ad-hoc TWG meeting in December 2007 will cover (a) two reports of MTCO; (b) revised Draft Agenda and Draft Ministerial Statement for the GMS Tourism Ministerial meeting; and (c) decision on recruitment of MTCO Executive Director. Lao PDR informed the meeting of its plan to organize also an MTDP meeting immediately after the ad-hoc TWG meeting. In view of holidays during the 5, 6, and 7 of December, it was suggested that Lao PDR consider organizing the ad-hoc TWG meeting in the morning of 3 December 2007, to be followed by the MTDP meeting in the afternoon.

Agenda Item 7: Preparation of Tourism Exhibits for the Third GMS Summit.

69. Lao PDR reported that the venue for the Summit has not yet been finally decided, thus the space available for the tourism exhibits is yet to be determined. Proposed content of the exhibition would revolve on the theme "Ecotourism (Nature/Culture Based Tourism)", consisting of:

- Map indicating the highlights of tourism products in each country. Requirement: which attractions each country would like to feature, and to provide pictures in CD before 15 November 2007 for consolidation by Lao PDR.
- Panel describing the 7 priority programs under the tourism strategy. Requirement: information from lead countries and from MTCO, with pictures.
- 7 booths (for each of the GMS countries plus Yunnan and Guangxi) made from bamboo to display ecotourism products including handicraft. Requirement: agreement and confirmation from each country who will be responsible for decoration and the products to be displayed (this will be confirmed later by Lao PDR).

70. Yunnan and Guangxi requested Lao PDR to provide detailed information about the requirements so that the countries could make adequate preparations. Guangxi also proposed that CNTA coordinate both Yunnan and Guangxi preparations.

71. ADB suggested for Lao PDR to prepare a one-page concept paper for circulation to the countries for their feedback. It was noted that the Summit presents an excellent opportunity to showcase what has been done in tourism development in the GMS as there will be wide media coverage and the presence of the Heads of Governments.

72. Thailand suggested to select a theme meaningful to society e.g., tourism to address global warming, tourism to contribute to poverty reduction. Ms. Jacquemin suggested that TWG could perhaps link up with EOC regarding CEP satellite materials that could perhaps incorporate tourism-related materials on environment.

73. SNV agreed with Thailand that sustainable tourism supporting social development (or poverty reduction) could be a strategic message that could be highlighted by the exhibits. ADB supported Thailand and SNV ideas and suggested for Lao PDR to take a clear theme which could be

sustainable tourism supporting poverty alleviation and supported by visual materials to be provided by the countries.

74. The Chairman suggested that all the ideas could be presented in vivid and graphic displays.

75. **Decision:** It was agreed for Lao PDR to prepare a concept paper and suggest options based on the views made at the meeting. Countries are to send materials to Lao PDR before 15 November 2007, either on tourist destinations, or on social development and environment-related tourism topics. On the item regarding the booth, internal consultations will be done by Cambodia while the other countries agreed to send one person at their respective expense to man their respective booths.

Agenda Item 7: Date and Venue of the 21st TWG Meeting

76. The Meeting agreed in principle to hold the 21st TWG Meeting in March 2008 in Yangon, Myanmar, subject to official confirmation by Myanmar. Should there be any constraint on the part of Myanmar, Myanmar was requested to communicate with MTCO in order that appropriate coordination could be done by MTCO with Thailand as the next prospective host of the meeting.

77. In conclusion, the Chairman recapitulated on the meeting's key decisions, namely:

- adopted the minutes of TWG-19;
- adopted the MTCO Institutional Framework and Operational Guidelines;
- reviewed the work plan of the Project Coordinator, MTCO and agreed to provide the necessary information and materials for her reference in preparing a status report of GMS tourism projects, and a detailed implementation plan of prioritized projects under the Tourism Strategy.
- reviewed the status and provided additional inputs on the priority projects under the GMS Tourism Strategy;
- discussed and reached agreement on the preparations for the GMS Tourism Senior Officials' Meeting on 20 January 2008 to be followed by the GMS Tourism Ministerial Meeting in the morning of 21 January 2008 in Bangkok;
- discussed and reached initial agreement on the preparations for the tourism exhibits for the Third GMS Summit in March 2008;
- agreed to hold an ad-hoc TWG meeting on 3 December 2007 in Vientiane, Lao PDR to (i) consider the draft MTCO reports on the marketing strategy and project status and detailed implementation plan; (ii) decide on the recruitment of the MTCO Executive Director; and (iii) consider the revised Draft Agenda for the GMS Tourism Ministerial Meeting and Draft Joint Ministerial Statement (draft Statement to be jointly prepared by Thailand and ADB).

78. ADB congratulated the Chairman for his excellent guidance of the meeting and expressed gratitude to the organizers in Lijiang for the efficient arrangements and the warm hospitality. It was agreed that the draft Summary Report of the Meeting would be provided to the participants the following day and also be circulated later to the GMS countries for their further review and comments.

79. The Chairman expressed appreciation to ADB for its guidance and assistance and his gratitude to all the participants, the Provincial Government of Yunnan and the city of Lijiang, and the organizers of the meeting.
