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Douglas Hainsworth: I would not say that conserving the environment and quickly spreading benefits in an equitable manner is a utopian vision – but it is certainly a challenge!
Interview on page 3

Director's Cut: *International Nationalist Games?*

As the TV overdose which goes by the name of World Cup comes to an end, one wonders if all this cacophony, greener - we are told - than any other previous sports event, is suitable for an already polarized and tense world. Flag-waving, painted faces, hymns, drums and other tribal rituals, tabloid brawls between rival sets of drug enhanced and push the lava of national hatreds to the surface. is just a small vent to the volcano of inter-national prevent intra-national conflicts. Perhaps. But there conflicts between and within nations, including Three such inches are the eco-projects that won our the sustainable tourism development that Mr. Douglas Hainsworth, interviewed on page 3, is coordinating in Vietnam, long a theatre of war – indeed the frontline, and now, more or less, a stable, developing country, open to peaceful visitors. And as you prepare for your paid annual summer leave, keep in mind that this would not be possible, less than a century ago – a mere tick in time by universe standards, just like the perceived duration of your leave ☺.



Perhaps this is how the world really feels and football conflicts. Or even it could be providing the glue to are far more civilized ways to prevent cultural Ecotourism. And the world can progress, inch by inch. annual Ecolodge Awards. Many more inches comprise

Antonis B. Petropoulos

[More Director's cut](#)

ECO-PHOTO: 'NO CARS'



'No cars' allowed in the narrow streets of the fortified old city of Rhodes, one of the best preserved and most visited medieval cities in Europe, and a Unesco World Heritage Site. No cars that is, unless you live there, you have special mobility needs, you own a shop, you make a delivery, or even if you are an early bird visitor, between 06-09:30 am.

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ECOCLUB Activities

ECOCLUB.com - International Ecotourism Club celebrated its 7th Anniversary by holding the annual Ecolodge Awards and funding eco-projects in Ecuador, Guatemala and Malaysia.

To celebrate its 7th anniversary, ECOCLUB.com - International Ecotourism Club announced today the results of its third annual eco-project competition, the "ECOCLUB.com Ecolodge Awards 2006" which aim to fund community and environment-supporting projects, organised and implemented by genuine Ecolodges around the world. The project details were posted online in May 2006, scrutinised by ECOCLUB.com Members, and the three winners were chosen democratically by Member vote in June 2006.

Presenting the Awards at a live on-line ceremony, ECOCLUB.com Founder, Antonis B. Petropoulos, said: "Building on the success and experience of previous years and thanks to the enthusiastic support of our growing Membership, this year we were able to increase the grant amount to Euros 2,000 (US \$ 2,560) so as to fund a third, additional eco-project. ECOCLUB.com stands for thinking globally and locally, and for acting locally and globally" Voting took place by email throughout June, and following a tightly run contest between seven worthwhile projects, results are follows:

The 1st Prize, (Euros 850), will fund the Building of a Rural Andean Recycling Centre, by [Black Sheep Inn](#) of Ecuador, who received 28.9% of the vote.

The 2nd Prize (Euros 650) will fund the Rescue of Fishermen's Small Boats in Lake Atitlan, Guatemala by [Eco Hotel Uxlabil Atitlan](#) (26.7%).

The 3rd Prize (Euros 500) will fund a Tree Planting Project by [Sukau Rainforest Lodge](#) of Malaysia. (13.3%).

The First Prize Winners, Black Sheep Inn proposed to help the village of Chugchilán high up in the Andes, turn its waste into a resource by creating a sustainable Recycling Centre.



Accepting the 1st Prize, the proprietors, Andres Hammerman and Michelle Kirby, said: "Chugchilán and Black Sheep Inn want to thank ECOCLUB.com and voting Members for making this recycling centre possible. Step-by-step, working together, we can sustain our planet and our minds. People inherently need land, but must work to sustain it, so that land in turn will sustain them. As promised, we will keep ECOCLUB.com Members informed of the projects' progress."

The Second Prize Winners, EcoHotel Uxlabil Atitlan, proposed to improve 30 old and unsafe cayucos, fishermen's small boats, to preserve a Lake Atitlan tradition and an income source.



Accepting the 2nd Prize, Manager Francisco Sandoval, stated: "Thanks to the confidence of ECOCLUB.com members, at the end of August, cayucos – the small fishermen boats of San Juan La Laguna, in Lake Atitlan, Guatemala, will be safer and colourful. With this project we seek to rescue a tradition, increase the pride of its carriers. In August we will hold a two-day feast with local painters and fishermen restoring and painting 30 cayucos. With pictures and transparent bills we will document the process."

The Third Prize Winners, Sukau Rainforest Lodge, proposed to rehabilitate a section of the river bank near their Lodge, by planting a diverse range of tree species, to provide corridor for migrating wildlife and fruiting trees to attract more birds and animals.



Accepting the 3rd Prize, Mr Willie Ki, Marketing Coordinator, said: "We are very blessed to have had this wonderful support from ECOCLUB.com. Implementing a Tree Planting Project is not hassle-free and there is always obstacles, including financial support. We truly appreciate this reward of Euros 500 and we shall make full use of these funds to continue our project which we consider imperative to conserve our dear environment".

The winning projects implementation and completion is closely monitored and details, including photos, will be made available on-line at www.ecoclub.com, the world's most popular ecotourism portal. The first installment of the Award funds (50%) will be paid in July. The full completion of each project is a pre-condition for the payment of the second instalment (50%) of the Award funds. The funds for the Awards are exclusively sourced from Membership dues and ecoproduct sales at the [ECOCLUB.com Shop](#)

For details on the ECOCLUB.com Ecolodge Awards

► <http://www.ecoclub.com/awards.html>

THE ECOCLUB INTERVIEW

DOUGLAS HAINSWORTH

Senior Advisor, Pro-poor Sustainable Tourism, SNV-The Netherlands Development Organisation), Vietnam



Douglas Hainsworth started his tourism career in the hospitality sector, working in the hotel industry as an opportunity to follow his interest in skiing. After several years working in many different position with as many as three employers at a time, and not enough time to go skiing, Douglas decide to return to school for a well earned break. There he followed his interest in the natural environment into a degree in Geography/natural resource management. Later he pursued his interests in human development into an MA in community and regional planning. His interest in the dynamics and potentials of the tourism sector remained, and these studies provided an opportunity to combine interests in sustainable resource management, social economic development with tourism planning and development.



Douglas’s career now includes experience in the tourism and development sectors in Southeast Asia, India, Central and North America. In pursuing his interests in tourism as a tool for local development he has worked with bilateral and multilateral development agencies, INGOs, the business sector and as a volunteer while accumulating a range of experiences from working with local communities to national-level programs. Currently a Senior Advisor with SNV (The Netherlands Development Organization) he is assisting the Government of Vietnam in developing more sustainable forms of tourism that contribute to poverty reduction and other social economic development goals.

SNV (Web: www.snvworld.org) is a Netherlands-based, international development organisation active in more than 30 countries from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America, with more than 700 advisors working with approximately 1,300 organisations. SNV’s services combine technical advice with capacity building and institutional development support to organisations and governments in developing countries to reduce poverty and support sustainable development.

The SNV Asia Pro-poor Sustainable Tourism (PPST) Programme is active in Nepal, Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam with more than 30 advisors actively working with a wide range of partners and initiatives supporting sustainable tourism development as an instrument for poverty reduction.


SNV has been supporting sustainable tourism development in Vietnam since 2001 and is now working in eight provinces and the national-level. SNV’s clients and partners include tourism authorities and other relevant departments at all levels of government, as well as with training, education, and research institutions, tourism businesses and associations, local NGOs and mass organizations.

The Interview follows:

☀️ In the world’s collective memory, Vietnam is a special, highly-charged place. Did this in any way attract you here, and how do you feel, as an outsider, developing something as constructive as pro-poor tourism in a country with a long history of not so constructive interventions by outsiders?

Some of my earliest childhood images from our television was the reporting on the Vietnam war, or the “American War” as it is known over here on the nightly news. This had a profound effect on my as I remember battle accounts and numbers of casualties as an incongruities juxtaposition to the sports scores that would follow. Then in my teen years the news brought stories of the “Boat People” coming to our country escaping the hardships of their homeland for a treacherous voyage into uncertainty. Vietnam had created a fascination deep within me. I was almost breathless with excitement as I landed in Noi Bai airport in 1996 for my first visit. I found a country visually familiar yet filled with surprises. There was a vibrancy in the air, a dynamic energy of optimism every where I turned. Most of all I was taken by the warmth as welcoming spirit of the Vietnamese people themselves. Everywhere I travelled I was greeted by enthusiastic curiosity, genuine appreciation and wonderfully hosted. It was clear that after a prolonged period of political and economic isolation, the people where truly thirsty to make contact and learn about outsiders such as myself and to get the development process started.

Equally apparent to me was the huge potential for tourism development in general, and more specifically how future tourism development could support social economic development and the pressing need to conserve and celebrate the rich array of tourism resources. Indeed, at this point already tourism development had started to catch fire, and with the resources available, the drive of the people, the increasing ease of travel and considerable market interest – it was clear that this fire was ready to explode.

 ***Open to western tourism just over a decade ago, Vietnam experienced rapid tourism growth of around 10% annually, reaching 3.5 million foreign tourists in 2005, probably through the encouragement of package tourism to purpose-built resorts/enclaves. Is Vietnam going too fast and perhaps in the wrong direction? Will policy-makers be able to both preserve the environment and quickly spread benefits to all citizens in an equitable manner, or is this a new utopia?***


The initial wave of western tourists was comprised mostly of packaged groups and backpackers. The government at that time was much more interested in the packaged groups, partially as they were easier to “manage” and the backpackers appeared to offer fewer benefits and were more inclined to “wander off on their own”. However, western tourists represented only a small fraction of the tourism arrivals at that time, and even now. Of much greater importance has been the influence of the regional market, and more recently the domestic market. Much of Vietnam’s initial tourism development came through state owned enterprise and joint venture developments with partners from the region (China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan) and these developments reflected the interests of these markets. For these reasons it is true that much of Vietnam’s initial tourism development has been focused around resorts, cities and other popular destinations.

A combination more open visitation and investment policies, a rapidly emerging business sector, opportunistic investors, and a lack of adequate policies and regulations has to some degree resulted in a boom of poorly planned, purpose-built tourism development.

The emergence of the domestic tourism market is another important force shaping the tourism landscape of Vietnam. As economic prosperity is reaching larger segments of the society the numbers of Vietnamese people able to take a holiday are increasing at an exponential rate, more than doubling in the last five years alone. Many people are taking holidays for the first time, finally having the opportunity to visit famous places in their country or enjoy a relaxing time at the beach. It is not surprising that tourism product and services are similar to those found in other emerging tourism markets; these first time holidayers want to relax and have fun. Consequently, the demand for resorts, family hotels, entertainments complexes that are readily accessible by larger numbers of customers is what the domestic market is demanding, and the sector is supplying.

Indeed, there are certainly examples where this rapid and poorly planned development has resulted in the degradation of the tourism resources and unfavourable circumstances for local residents. However, partially as a result of this, the risks of such near sighted development is increasingly recognized by decision and policy makers and mechanisms for improvement are gradually taking place, as are examples of more responsible tourism development. You are starting to see an increase in the diversity and sophistication of tourism products, including boutique hotels, international standard resort spa, more opportunities to enjoy homestays, and improvements in the quality and variety of ecotourism activities.

I wouldn’t say that conserving the environment and quickly spreading benefits in an equitable manner is a utopian vision – but it is certainly a challenge. There is still great potential for tourism to further improve the quality lives for millions of people and to conserve, restore and celebrate the quality and special attractions here. It is obvious that it is in the best interest of all the parties to pursue a sustainable and responsible path of development. What is needed is a strengthening of inter and inter-sector cooperation, transparency and accountability in the planning and development process, greater local involvement in tourism planning and development, awareness raising for all involved, adoption of responsible business practices, and for tourists to become better informed about the travel choices they make. Easily said... challenging yes, but still achievable.

 ***In cooperation with the World Tourism Organization, SNV Vietnam is currently assisting the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT) to acquire its first Law on Tourism. This must be unique as few countries, indeed communist ones, have had the benefit of not having their tourism laws exclusively drafted by local officials. So, what common pitfalls are you telling them to avoid? Are they listening?***

It was an exciting opportunity and a true privilege to support VNAT, together with the UN-WTO, in drafting Vietnam’s first Law on Tourism. This was a task that VNAT took very seriously and they strived hard to come up with a regulatory framework to reign in, but not to strangle, this economically important and poorly regulated sector. In drafting the first law on tourism VNAT sought to achieve standards of international best practices, and also to ensure that the law would reflect the principles of their National Development Strategy and their pursuit of the VN MDG’s (Vietnam’s version of the Millennium Development Goals that included added targets relevant to Vietnam’s development priorities).


There were a number of key tenants that all parties involved sought in incorporate into the new law, including: decentralized decision making responsibilities to permit local regulations for local conditions; much greater emphasis on multi-stakeholder consultations and collaboration in tourism planning and development, and stronger roles for local involvement in tourism planning, development an management; and recognition of tourism not only as an important economic “spearhead” but also a tool for wider social-economic development including poverty reduction, and of course the necessity to manage tourism resources sustainability.

Incorporating all of this into the law was of course was not entirely easy. Much of what we were trying to achieve involved a relaxation of the still present tendency towards centralized planning that would delegated more planning authority to lower levels of government. In order to support more opportunities for integrated and consultative planning plenty of awareness raising and lobbying was required to enhance the typically too narrow understanding and lack of appreciation of the tourism

sector by other relevant and seemingly more important, ministries. Engaging the business sector and making sure that the interests and ideas of local communities were also heard was another challenge necessary to address.

During the law drafting SNV supported a number of stakeholder consultation processes to garner wider inputs. These were always lively sessions, especially when we were working with the business sector. For them it was a rare opportunity to discuss their opinions on the existing and future tourism regulations directly with the law makers - and I can tell you that they made the most of this opportunity by making many constructive suggestions. It was a very reassuring sign when the law drafters listened, and took many of these good suggestions onboard.

The end result of this process was the Law being passed through the National Assembly on its first reading which is seldom ever done. But this work has not finished with the passing of the Law. SNV is continuing to support VNAT with the implementation, or “rolling-out”, of the Law to ensure that the results of all this work are reflected “on the ground”.

 *In relation to your current field of work in Vietnam, pro-poor tourism, who is the typical visitor to poor villages? a businessman looking for prospects, a student preparing their thesis, a holiday maker on a package to a multinational chain venturing out on an organized optional tour, or a backpacker haphazardly visiting mountain tribes? Which visitor do communities prefer and who would you prefer at this stage?*


To date, most of SNV’s PPST initiatives in Vietnam have focused on the mountainous areas inhabited by the ethnic minority groups, of which there are 53 different groups, each with their own language, customs and beliefs. The ethnic minority people also represent some of the poorest and most disadvantaged segments of society. In addition to the magnificent cultural value of these people, the regions they inhabit also offer fantastic mountain settings. This combination of tourism development potentials and poverty reduction necessities provides obvious opportunities to better utilize tourism as a tool for local development. Much of our work in these contexts involves a community-based planning approach that often capitalizes on the magnificent scenery and fantastic cultural values as features of the tourism products, which often includes trekking, cultural activities, and overnight stays in traditional houses. These products attract a range of different visitors.

There is no standard type of visitors to our projects. We received independent or small groups of backpackers, to international and local student groups, visiting officials, researchers, groups travelling with international and local tourism operators. We really have no preference of “who” are visitors are, as long as they share our interests in responsible travel. Personally, I would like to see much more of the domestic tourism market experiencing our projects. It is ultimately the domestic market that will shape the future of Vietnam’s tourism sector and it would be great to see a continued appreciation from the domestic market of the value and need to conserve the environmental and local cultural diversity.

SNV is also expanding the range of tourism contexts where we are working. While the mountainous, remote regions represent important opportunities for our work, in some ways it is only the tip of the iceberg in that these products cater to a relatively small segment of the overall tourism industry. There are also very important opportunities to work within the mainstream tourism context to further enhance the poverty reduction opportunities and of course support more sustainable development in larger and well established tourism centres. Once such programs are in effect then there certainly will not be any single typology of tourist supporting our initiatives.

 *Is a centrally planned or a market-based economic system more conducive to developing pro-poor sustainable tourism, and how are changes in Vietnam affecting your work?*

The previous centrally planned government was not doing too many favours for the majority of people here. Opening of the markets has been fundamental in increasing the standard of living for the majority of people here. That said, there is still certainly evidence of commercial interests being favoured over those of the citizen. But the politics of Vietnam does retain a socialist orientation that does make our work easier. Not too much donor attention to date has focused on tourism - so it has not yet attracted the attention of unscrupulous tenders as had other sectors such as infrastructure, energy, and even agriculture. Although we would warmly welcome, and we continually lobby for great donor attention to the tourism sector as it is still often overlooked or taken for granted given its important contributions to social-economic development and sustainable resource use.


 *These days international 'donors' increasingly want to see tangible results or even a return for their money, while competition is increasingly fiercer even between regions of the same country. From your experience as advisor to local municipalities, what do donors want to see in “pro-poor” tourism projects? Credible or incredible promises?*

Like most other development sectors, tourism is under pressure to show results – especially in terms of poverty reduction – perhaps more than other sectors as tourism is still relatively a new kid on the block and still has to prove itself compared to other more established sectors such as agriculture or forestry.

Donors are increasingly looking for projects that have high impacts at the beneficiary level, especially poverty reduction impacts. This does provide certain challenges for our sector, considering that tourism’s positive impacts are typically confined to those that are economically measurable. In other cases household earning from tourism are important supplemental income sources important in providing additional sources of income to keep a household safely above the poverty line. Tourism’s vast

linkages and high local multiplier effects also make accurate tracking and measuring of tourism economic impacts difficult to ascertain.

Donors are also looking to support projects that provide strong indications of sustainability. As far as proving their sustainability projects need to demonstrate strong local ownership and sufficient capacity building as well as realistic potentials for achieving financial self sufficiency.


 *Of the following four options, which in your experience, is more relevant for village communities wanting to introduce tourism in Vietnam: should they (a) become individual micro-entrepreneurs, (b) organize and bargain collectively as a community (c) be 'sheltered' by NGOs and within protected areas (d) hide and wait for future waves of more enlightened tourism or some other option?*

A quick and easy answer would be that there is no one preferable option, and that they all are potentially relevant give each any particular situation or context. In general I would have a preference for options (a) and (b), (c) however could be an interim measure, and even (d) a pragmatic choice in some contexts.

I am a big proponent of the “proactive” approach to development that puts the beneficiaries in a leading, decision making position. Options (a) and (b) do present favourable options, depending on the characteristics of a community. Identifying and working closely with local champions, committed individuals with their community’s interest at heart, is often a key to the success of a project. Such individuals are often natural entrepreneurs that lead the way and create opportunities for others to benefit from or follow. In other cases these individuals can be effective in mobilizing community groups, which also has its advantages and challenges. While we generally try to establish community groups to support more equitable representation and engagement in tourism activities and to ensure a wider and more equitable distribution of benefits it is often not practical to engage the entire community directly in tourism. Usually we try to setup community development funds or other mechanism that ensure tourism related benefits are spread more widely throughout the community to reach those who are not directly involved in tourism.

SNV does not advocate a sheltering approach, preferring to act more as “back stoppers”, we provide the communities with the skills and understanding required to defend their position and take advantage of tourism development opportunities and put the up front to engage with the other stakeholders. We feel this is important to create local ownership and responsibility to the project and it greatly enhances local pride, confidence, social capital, and empowerment. This being said, we do remain in the background as long as necessary to provide assistance when/where necessary.

Certainly not every community capable of attracting tourism is potentially ready to deal with tourism. Unfortunately however, it is not always the community that makes this choice. Communities need to be effectively organized and adequately prepared to host tourists, make decisions about tourism development, and take on important roles to support the tourism development process. This requires a certain level of community cohesion and social capital that can be built upon to fend off exploitation and take a proactive stance in engaging in tourism. If communities are not ready and willing to host tourism, other development options need to be found.

 *The Greater Mekong Sub-Region Tourism Project is touted as a major boost to sustainable development & tourism, and perhaps more importantly, cross-border cooperation in an area with centuries of neighbourly strife. Your organization is providing advisory services to the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT) in support of this complex project. What should be done so that this ambitious cross-border project does not end up as one more (dead) White Elephant?*

Certainly the ADB’s Greater Mekong Sub-Region Tourism Project is an ambitious and important initiative. SNV is supporting the current MTDP Mekong Tourism Development Project in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. We have also been broadly involved in the development of the new GMS Tourism Strategy. The ADB is clearly one of the most important development partner supporting poverty reduction and sustainable development through tourism in the region. The cross border, single destination vision that underpins this project is vitally important to all the partnering countries involved. Yet this still maybe the biggest stumbling block to get over. GMS member countries will be asked to relax nationalistic interest and recognizing that supporting a cohesive direction to support the GMS, with all its diversity intact, as a single destination that will enhance benefits to all the member countries. This of course is easy to state, and much more difficult, but certainly not impossible, to achieve. In the contexts of international relations, national-boarder security, tourism is often viewed as a minor concern. Much lobbying is needed to be done to raise the profile of tourism as a highly important development sector who’s interests and needs must be addressed in order for the full potential can be realized. It is my feeling that those countries that embrace this vision first will be the first benefit – perhaps this will be the impetus for others to follow.

 *War Heritage & World Heritage: What is the state of Vietnams’ tangible & intangible World Heritage (like Quan Ho folk singing). Are enough measures in place to protect it from rapid industrialization & irresponsible tourism development? Is unexploded ordinance and other war 'heritage' a problem for Tourism in National Parks?*

Vietnam is very proud of their 4 UNESCO World Heritage designated sites and 2 World Heritage Intangible Cultures designations. However, it is typical that once these site are designated by UNESCO waves of tourist arrivals always follow. Of

these sites, some have been managed well, and others have proven to be more of a challenge. Probably Vietnam's most famous World Heritage site is the fantastic lime stones towers in Ha Long Bay, and as huge and important as this site is it is currently struggling under the wait of tourism pressure. The Ha Long Bay Management Board is doing the best they can in such circumstance, but they are up against very strong special interest groups and complex/convoluted planning and management structures. While Ha Long Bay is still a "must see" in Vietnam and well worth the trip, many Vietnamese tourism officials also recognize that one of their leading sources of national tourism pride is in serious danger. At the other end of the spectrum could be the ancient town of Hoi An. While Hoi An has under gone similar increases in tourism arrival since its designation as a World Heritage site it has benefit from a more proactive planning approach, and it is fair to say a much more cohesive and transparent planning context. The local authorities, together with the support of UNESCO, have worked hard to ensure that the traditional features of the ancient and once very important trading town have been resorted and conserved. Development of satellite tourism activities near the town and at the nearby beach have served to both increased the length of visitor stays while reducing pressure on the ancient town center. Although Hoi An has changed significantly since my first visit, it still remains one of my (and many others as well) favorite spots having retained much of its charm.

Two other World Heritage sites (My Son, and Phung nha- Khe Bang caves) were also areas of heavy conflict during the American war, and required extensive de-mining efforts before these sites were ready for visitor. While there is still some de-mining activities going on in some pockets of nearby regions this does not affect tourism activities and they are entirely safe to visit.

 *Tourism monuments related to past wars. Do you see them as productive or counter-productive in terms of building intercultural understanding? Are they used as free-entrance showcases of national glory or tourist cash-cows?*

Vietnamese are both humble and proud of their past and historical sites from various periods of conflict are popular places visit. The amazing system of VC tunnels at Cu Chi is one of the most visited tourism attraction in the country – by both international and domestic tourists.

Veterans from America and their allies are still coming to Vietnam in regulars numbers, many seeking closure to tragedies past, some looking to give back, some even end up staying or developing connections that bring them back on a regular basis. Many Vietnamese veterans also partake in similar forms of travel, often in groups of ex-comrades, visiting places they knew at a different time. Vietnamese peoples have a wonderful ability to put things in the past, and keep them there. While they are proud of their past, they are forward looking.

I see these historical sites as overall beneficial and important reminders of meaningless atrocities of war (much needed today). Having experienced too much already, most Vietnamese people are staunchly opposed to armed conflict of any level and in any context. It is true that some sites still use a lot of propaganda. But this can provide some interesting insights into the different perspectives of this conflict, as well as interesting phrasing. After all, who are we to say that terms such as "imperialistic invaders" are inaccurate?

 *If you were to choose the most authentic or successful example of pro-poor / sustainable / ecotourism project in Vietnam what would that be and why?*

There are certainly quite a number, and it would not be fair to mention just one. While few perfect models exist anywhere, there are some initiatives that do warrant special mention. Here is a quick list, starting with some of SNV's own.

SNV's CBT initiatives in TT Hue and Sa Pa have proven that local people can be effective, even excellent, partners in the tourism development and planning process, and the a range of important local development benefits can be made available through tourism development. These initiatives are proving to be very valuable as demonstration projects and are receiving much attention as models to consider, and even influence tourism planning in other regions.

I would also mention that the Law on Tourism is very important in creating the right policy context at the highest level to support sustainable tourism development that contributes to poverty reduction and other social economic goals.

KOTO and Hua Sua restaurants are two very successful initiatives that target disadvantage street youth to give them vocation training in for the restaurant sector. Their graduates are in high demand by the top establishments. Providing opportunities for once destitute kids to now help bring their families out of poverty has also worked to dispel the myth that the poor and disadvantaged can not benefit from training and attain stable employment.

Sun Spa resort in Quang Binh Provinces provided subsidized vocational training together with Hue Tourism College for approximately 300 local youth to secure jobs at their resort. Instead of taking a more conventional route of hiring non-local graduates from training institutions located in the big cities, Sun Spa has avoided typical problems of high staff turnover rates and is served by enthusiastic, loyal employees.

 *Finally, how optimistic are you about the overall course of tourism development in Vietnam? What worries you and what encourages you?*

One has to remain optimistic, right, and yes I genuinely am. However, this optimism is still balanced by some concerns. Vietnam needs to recognize its own strategic tourism advantages and highlight these. In the past too much attention has been given to developing tourism based on existing models in the region – attempts to duplicate what is seen as successful in other locations does not best serve Vietnam's unique tourism development potential. Vietnam has an untapped wealth of tourism resources (culture, history, landscape, people, artefacts) that, with some exceptions, are still of very high quality. While I have to admit that I am sometimes discouraged to see some of these resources eroding, I also believe that this has provided some valuable lessons of how tourism should not be developed. The more important players in Vietnam's tourism industry are recognizing the importance of conserving these resources and their value for the future of the industry. Key results will come when the sector/industry and the government find the common ground and create effective policies, program, partnerships and incentives. Shortsighted planning can no longer be repeated to the detriment of other locations. Enough lessons exist already of what should not happen. A growing number of examples exist of what can be achieved. I do believe that the right balance can be found to bolster a dynamic tourism sector that celebrates the unique qualities of Vietnam while conserving and enhancing the resources, and making significant contributions to social economic development. I believe this because of; the pride of the Vietnamese people in their country, coupled with their ingenuity and drive, the government's socialist orientation is also an advantage for balancing economic development with the greater needs of the people, and the market is both maturing and becoming increasingly informed and conscious with tourism business and tourists themselves seeing the necessity to conduct themselves in a responsible manner. However this day is still sometime off in the future, and I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to be working in Vietnam for SNV at this time.

 **ECOCLUB: Thank you very much.**

UPCOMING EVENTS – July 2006

Members, plan ahead by checking the full listings at <http://www.ecoclub.com/events>

5-7 July: Seminar-Workshop on Sustainable Tourism Development and Poverty Alleviation, Institut supérieur international de tourisme de Tanger (ISITT, Morocco)

► http://www.world-tourism.org/regional/africa/events/morocco/prog_en.pdf

7-9 July: National Greenbuild & Eco Show, Sydney, -AUSTRALIA

Three day trade and consumer show focusing on Greenbuilding, Sustainable Living, Permaculture and the Environment.

► <http://www.ecoshow.com.au>

11-13 July: Leisure, Tourism & Renewal Conference, University of the West of England, Bristol, UK

Conference themes are: Environmental sustainability and the place of leisure and tourism Social and cultural spaces of leisure and tourism Economic regeneration through leisure and tourism Academic renewal in leisure and tourism studies.

► <http://www.leisure-studies-association.info/LSAWEB/2006/Main.html>

23-28 July: Managing Heritage Attractions for Sustainable Tourism, Institute for Tourism Studies, Macao, CHINA

The objectives of this one week programme is to provide an opportunity for participating students to share their cultural experience and to understand how heritage management practices can enhance sustainable tourism at key heritage attractions.

► <http://www.ift.edu.mo>

25-26 July: CSR in the Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Industries, CSR Asia, SINGAPORE

The conference is aimed at helping organisations to improve their social and environmental impacts. It will discuss the challenges and opportunities in sustainable development, particularly for the Asia Pacific region.

► <http://www.csr-asia.com/upload/tourismconference.pdf>



ECO – JOBS

A selection of ecotourism –related vacancies with July deadlines, available to our [Members](#).

Deadline	Country	Job Title
July 5	USA	Recreation Planning Internship
July 5	USA	Parks/ Wildlife/ Recreation Magazine Editor
July 5	Mexico	Indigenous Conservation NGO Executive Director
July 7	UK	Sustainable Tour Operator Marketing Officers (2)
July 7	UK	Sustainable Tour Operator Marketing Manager
July 7	UK	Adventure Tour Operator Sales Consultants
July 7	UK	Field Expedition Management Assistant
July 7	Comoros	Conservation Project Co-ordinator Internship
July 7	Indonesia	Development Agency Country Manager
July 10	USA	Outdoor Travel Programmes Coordinator
July 10	UK	Tourism Partnership Marketing Manager
July 10	UK	Tourism Development Manager
July 12	Australia	Reserves Officer
July 12	Spain	Sustainable Development Protected Areas Coordinator
July 13	UK	Visitor Center Development Manager
July 14	Bulgaria/Greece	Biodiversity Conservation Programme Project Leader
July 14	Switzerland	Protected Areas Project Officer
July 14	UK/Mongolia	Conservation Research Internship
July 14	UK	PR/Communication Manager Expedition NGO
July 14	USA	Sustainable Development Ventures Intern
July 14	USA	Mountain Preserve Environmental Specialist
July 15	Canada	Tenure Track Outdoor Recreation
July 15	Thailand	Marketing Development Community Tourism Programme
July 15	Mexico	Field Biology Education Intern
July 15	New Zealand	Tourism Scholarships
July 18	Vietnam	Conservation Technical Advisor
July 19	Tanzania	Tourism Project Team Leader
July 23	Ethiopia	Biodiversity Conservation Project Leader (incl Tourism)
July 29	Brazil	Protected Areas Specialist
July 25	Germany	Sustainable Development Internships (3)

ECO – PROJECTS

A selection of ecotourism-related consultancy and other opportunities with July deadlines, available to our [Business Members](#)

Deadline	Country	Description
CONSULTANCY/ BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES		
July 4	Kazakhstan	Senior Biologist Expert Sustainable development/Biodiversity
July 10	Belize	Tourism Small Business Assessment Expert
July 10	Belize	Small Tourism Business Expert
July 12	China	Biodiversity Awareness Programme Expert
July 15	Pakistan	Short Term Technical Specialists incl Tourism
July 15	Cameroon	Protected Area Environmental Specialist
July 15	Worldwide	Sustainable tourism certification Feasibility Study
Aug 1	Bolivia	Environmental Study

Aug 11	Latin America	Sustainable Tourism Development Consultancy
Nov 29	Vanuatu	Tourism networking and investment opportunities in the South Pacific
ASAP	Caribbean	Community Tourism Consultant Short Term
ASAP	Albania	Ramsar Site Assessment Consultants
ASAP	Romania	Protected Areas Experts
CALL	Australia	Sustainable Tourism Investment Oportunity
CALL	Germany	Organizing Ecotourism Roundtable
CALL	Worldwide	Tourism Heritage Experts
CALL	Mediterranean	Local Authorities Partnership Program & Ecotourism
CALL	Trinidad	Funding Requested for Ecotourism Project
CALL	Grenadines	EcoResort Investment Opportunity
CALL	Poland	NGO seeks partners for ecotourism
CALL	Worldwide	Call for Cases for presentation at 'Destinations 2006' Event in Brazil
CALL	Worldwide	Call for tourism proposals
CALL	Worldwide	TV Producer seeks success cases
ECOTOURISM FUNDING AVAILABLE		
July 12	Greece	Agrotourism Grants
July 27	Greece	Agrotourism Grants
July 31	Greece	Agrotourism Investment Grants

FOR SALE

Saba (Caribbean), USD 850k, 7 Rooms, Built 1995
 Details: <http://ecoclub.com/realestate/elmomo>

ECOCLUB, Year 7, Issue 81, June 2006:

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