



“The New Horizon”

"The next s-curve of Thai tourism"

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Dr. Chuwit Mitrchob, Deputy Director General, Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration

- Tourism Authority of Thailand expects up to 30 million visitors in 2023. Despite that, the future of Thai tourism should be focusing on quality and responsible tourists, who are likely to be bigger spenders and are more susceptible to sustainability options, namely, an option to support the local community and culture or lodging that are lessening environmental impact despite the higher dollar amount.
- Several surveys also indicate a strong interest in sustainable travel options. For instance, a survey from Expedia Group shows that 74% of consumers would choose a destination, lodging, or transportation option that is committed to supporting the local community and culture, even if it was more expensive.
- In 2023, Thailand is ranked 1st in ASEAN, 3rd in Asia, and 43rd in the world for Global Sustainability Index achievement. In terms of sustainable tourism management, the term “Global Sustainable Tourism Council (“GSTC” - a technical arm of the United Nations) provides a framework and practice of sustainable tourism criteria.
- Koh Mark Island & Bo Suak Community are some of the top global sustainable destinations recognized and awarded by International organizations. In addition, the Tourism Authority of Thailand has recently launched a Sustainable Tourism Acceleration Rating campaign, to further encourage and promote sustainable tourism goals.

Ms. Latchida Apaphant Executive Vice President, Airports of Thailand

- AOT currently operates six International airports across Thailand including; Suvarnabhumi, Don Muang, Phuket, Chiang Mai, Hat Yai, and Chiang Rai, which all accommodate more than 80% of Thai's air traffic in 2019, the airports accommodated approximately 143 million passengers; by the end of this year, AOT expects the number of passengers to be roughly at 100 million passengers. In 2024, AOT expects the number of visitors to reach 153 million passengers, higher than the pre-pandemic's figure.
- Currently, Suvarnabhumi Airport is capable of accommodating 45 million passengers per year, with the current expansion plan, its capacity should be increased to 60 million passengers per year, For Don Muang, its current capacity should increase from 30 million passengers to 45 million passengers per year. Such expansions should be able to accommodate the increasing number of tourists in the future. The current expansion plan of Thai's major airports is more than sufficient in terms of capacity to support the potential growth of visiting tourists.
- In the context of government intervention/ support, a strategic committed direction and policy is crucial to further drive the Thai tourism industry. For instance, the transportation infrastructure of second-tier cities should be one of the focus policies to facilitate the ease of logical factors to visitors and also distribute the economic benefit throughout the country. Another example that a government could provide assistant is lifting limitations of certain visa applications or approval a new flight route.

Dr.Tanupol Virunhagarun, Chief Executive Officer, BDMS Wellness Clinic

- According to the World Health Organization ("WHO"), in recent years, NCDs (non-communicable diseases) are becoming a more prevalent cause of death globally, accounting for roughly 70% in 2020 and 2022. Such phenomenon has triggered the awareness of NCDs, self-wellness consciousness, and preventive medicine approach, which all provide a positive prospect to wellness tourism.
- Wellness tourism usually includes the following; healthy eating, healthy living, rejuvenation & relaxation, good sleep & physical activity, meaning & connection, authentic experiences, and disease prevention. According to the 2023 Global Travel Trends Report from American Express Travel, top activities include exploring hiking/beach trails, visiting a private beach, and getting a massage or facial.
- The Global Wellness Institute predicts that the wellness economy is expected to grow 9.9% annually between 2020-2025. Thailand is currently ranked number 4 in Asia in terms of wellness tourism, led by China, Japan, and India. Thailand's competitive advantages include an immersive culture, generous hospitality, and quality medical centers.
- BDMS group provide comprehensive healthcare solution, from preventive, and curative, to habituation, which covers the complete continuum of the healthcare spectrum. In addition, BDMS Wellness Clinic's

strategic direction also includes the expansion in strategically located provinces such as Chiang Mai, Phuket, Udon Thani, Korat, Samui, and Hua Hin.

- In recent years, several global institutes and media have constantly awarded Thailand to be among the top visiting destination in different categories, namely wellness destination, “workation”, retirement, “Best City”, etc.
- The future theme of Thai Tourism needs collaboration from all stakeholders both public and private sectors to promote Thailand not only to be known for a place of “relax” but also for “healthy” at the same time. With such an aligned goal, it should uplift the country’s economy as a whole and provide prosperity to industry across the board.