

Case Study 1: Mannar Improving Competitiveness in Tourism (MIC Tourism) Background Information

Mannar District is located in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. The district geographically consists of an island which connected to the mainland. Fisheries and agriculture are the main livelihood of local communities in the district. There are also several natural resources which lends the district favorably to eco-tourism and several agencies, including the International Finance Cooperation (IFC) have supported the development of eco-tourism plans and infrastructure for Mannar.

During the early stage of the ASSET project, the project experienced difficulty to identify and secure private sector partnerships for employment creation this is because of the limited number of established private sector companies in the district. For this purpose of employment creation, the hospitality & tourism industry was identified has having high potential as an employer and to contribute to natural resource management through eco-tourism.

During the ASSET tourism focused exposure visit to the Philippines (from July 24-31 to the Philippines) several persons from government, civil society and the private sector in the Northern province participated. The key goal of the benchmarking visit was to learn best practices from industry experts in the field of hospitality and tourism management. The seven-day visit to the Philippines was hosted by the Tourism Industry Board Foundation, Inc. (TIBFI) together with the Department of Tourism (DOT) of Philippines. The exposure visits also included visits and interaction with the PIC Tourism (Philippines Improving Competitiveness in Tourism) Project based in Bohol Island, Philippines. The result of the exposure visit to PIC Tourism project in Philippines was a pilot tourism model in Mannar Island named MIC Tourism (Mannar Improving Competitiveness in Tourism).

Major Learning from PIC Tourism to MIC Tourism

Learning on Tourism destination marketing Core component – AAA (A-Accessibility, A-Accommodation, A – Attraction)

Tourism Components	Bohol, Manila, Philippines	Mannar, Sri Lanka
Accessibility	Using domestic flights for quick access to Island tourism	Can facilitate seaplane facilities for quick accessibility
Accommodation	Available more eco-friendly boutique type hotels with quality services	Need to improve human resource developments towards quality services Need more exposure visits & capacity building trainings for hoteliers in the area of eco-tourism & community tourism, etc.
Attraction I. Destination animal	Tarsier	Donkey

II.	Local Handicraft	Palm tree based products	Palmyrah tree based products
III.	Historical tourism	Spanish Fort, Intramuros, Rizal park Spanish churches	Mannar Dutch Fort, Doric house Thiruketheswaram Hindu temple, Madhu church
IV.	Religious Tourism	Bird watching, Coral watching	Similar bird watching, coral watching available, Adams bridge
V.	Adventure Tourism	Boat riding, kite serving, serving	Boat riding available, other entertainments need to be facilitated through private sector service providers
VI.	Entertainment	Halo Halo traditional food & Bamboo dance	Palmyrah corich, Parathnatiyam dance etc
VII.	Food & Culture		

Bohol Hoteliers Association main vision is to promote sustainable tourism that continually meets globally competitive standards to make Bohol a preferred destination. Marketing their destination is the main objective rather than promoting individual hotels. This collective approach is expected to create more employment opportunity and increase economic growth in the sector.

Activities Carried Out / Achievement in MIC Tourism

Model Introduction

The MIC Tourism model was presented to various stakeholders for example at the Mannar district tourism development consultative committee chaired by Government Agent (GA) and co - chaired by the district chamber of commerce. Other members from government department, private sector & hoteliers. It was presented to the tourism central ministry secretary in the presence of the Canadian High Commissioner & local media representatives

Human Resource Development

- ✓ MIC Tourism hotel school was established to conduct diploma level hotel management courses with the collaboration of IDM Nations Campus. This hotel school was established under the premises of the operational hotel in order to create the industrial exposure for trainees during the training period based on learning that was gained from Philippines exposure (Bayleaf Hotel in Manila has the hotel school under the hotel premises same as MIC tourism hotel school establish at Hotel Ahash in Mannar)

- ✓ Conducted a *boat rider course* for coastal area unemployed youth with the collaboration of Ocean University of Sri Lanka, and provided certification to conduct boat service for tourist on coral, birds & mangrove watching. This is the first professional boat operational course organized in the district.
- ✓ Collaborated with the Uniterra project to provide a Canadian volunteer specialist in customer care services to support hotel owners in Mannar district. Further volunteer needs were agreed upon with the Mannar district Chamber of Commerce in the areas of food preparation, marketing and communication material development, housekeeping, Chamber development, handicraft improvement, bird watching, etc.
- ✓ Organized star hotel exposure visits & in house training for H&T trainees and also managerial trainings for hotelier with the collaboration of Swiss institute.

Destination Marketing

- ✓ Developed a tourism promotion song with the collaboration of Mannar district chamber of commerce. This would mainly help in promoting Youth transformation & Community acceptance towards Hospitality & Tourism sector in Mannar district and also act as an added value for the district's tourism destination marketing.
- ✓ Developed a video documentary for district tourism promotion with the collaboration of Mannar district chamber of commerce
- ✓ Developed a district tourism map with the support of Canadian volunteer which will contribute to tourism promotion.
- ✓ Established a billboard for district tourism promotion & youth transformation
- ✓ Agreed with the MIC Tourism consultative committee to organize a photography competition for youth to promote Mannar tourism destination which is currently implemented by the International Finance cooperation (IFC).

Sustainability

MIC Tourism model is owned by Mannar district tourism consultative committee chaired by Government Agent (GA) and co- chaired by the Mannar district Chamber of Commerce. Most of the destination marketing activities involve partnering with the Chamber of Commerce and human resource development activities are led by the private sector.

MIC Tourism model presented to Tourisms consultative committee & Canadian High Commissioner



MIC Tourism Hotel School opening



H&T Trainees star hotel exposure visit organized by Swiss Institute



MIC Tourism promotional song Shooting

