



### Best Practice Summary Lang Son City, Vietnam

<b>Country:</b>	Vietnam
<b>Local Government:</b>	Lang Son City
<b>Type:</b>	Municipality
<b>Best Practice Title:</b>	Public Participation in Tourism Planning and Development
<b>Aspect of Governance:</b>	Thematic Area 1: People Participation in Planning and Decision Making
<b>Reported By:</b>	Association of Cities of Vietnam (Project team)
<b>Start Date:</b>	February 2005
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://acvn.vn/">http://acvn.vn/</a>

#### **Description:**

##### **Background**

Lang Son is city with a population of around 90,000 people, situated in the mountains near the Chinese border. The town has a substantial potential for tourism due to this proximity to China and the beauty of its surroundings. However, there was no plan to develop tourism in existence before 2005 and any efforts were isolated and not well coordinated.

However, with the support of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) in partnership with the Association of Cities in Vietnam (ACVN), Lang Son started the project described below in February 2005. It was running until February 2008 and was so successful that it has become a best practice worth sharing.

##### **Objectives:**

1. To involve the community in tourism planning and development;
2. To improve the capacity of the Lang Son City government and the

community in participatory tourism strategy development and planning;

3. To strengthen gender balance in local governance.

### **Results Achieved and Relevance to Public Life**

- The quality of tourism services and management in Sang Lon City has improved;
- The capacity of city leadership and staff has improved in terms of managing, analysing, forecasting, developing and implementing city development strategies and work plans;
- The gender balance was strengthened.

### **Main Activities**

The project is divided into three activity phases:

- 1) Assessing the base situation and carrying out surveys;
- 2) Research and analysis;
- 3) Implementing a participatory tourism development strategy that includes the launch of the 'clean city programme', as well as capacity building.

### **Activity Phase 1: Survey Period**

Three survey missions were carried out by representatives of FCM to identify the problems and to determine the scope of the basic cooperation with Lang Son. During the first trip in March 2005, the Canadian delegates collected information, assessed the status quo and discussed the potential for tourism development in Lang Son. During a second trip at the end of June 2005, FCM was aiming to get a deeper insight into the potential for tourism development and was also introducing the experiences of Ubon (Thailand) where a similar partnership with FCM had led to some good results. The third trip was a return visit: delegates from Lang Son travelled to Fredericton in Canada in November 2005 to gain experiences and to draft a cooperation plan.

### **Activity Phase 2: Research and Analysis**

Based on the experiences from these three survey missions, six technical missions were scheduled during 2006 and 2007. These were aiming at:

- Improving the capacity of the local government;
- Mobilising community participation;
- Improving the provision of services related to the planning and development of tourism;
- Applying information technology to support travel management;
- Capacity building for 'supporting skills' such as producing brochures, guidebooks and maps;
- Monitoring and evaluating that the project was going according to plan, that the objectives were met and the implementation timeline followed through.

As part of this phase a workshop on 'clean restaurants' took place, where representatives of the Canadian city of Fredericton and the Thai city of Ubon provided information to and shared their experiences with regard to business

efficiency and service quality with restaurant owners in Lang Son.

### **Activity Phase 3: Implementation Period**

This phase was actually running parallel to the technical missions and consisted of Lang Son City applying the lessons learnt and skills developed in their city through the following activities:

- Development of a strategy for tourism development with the participation of the local community;
- Organisation of promotional activities, such as:
  - TV adverts;
  - Participation in tourism marketing fairs;
  - Producing brochures and guide books in English, Chinese and Vietnamese;
  - Producing a tourist map of Lang Son, identifying locations of interest to tourists, such as the tourist information centre, attractions, hotels and restaurants;
- Erecting signposts for tourists as well as information signs in the main tourists attraction;
- Establishing tourists information centres at 3 strategic locations in the city;
- Developing the tourist attractions;
- Implement the programme called 'clean restaurant' to raise awareness of the need for food hygiene and to develop standards and health regulations;



Tam Thanh Pagoda in Lang Son