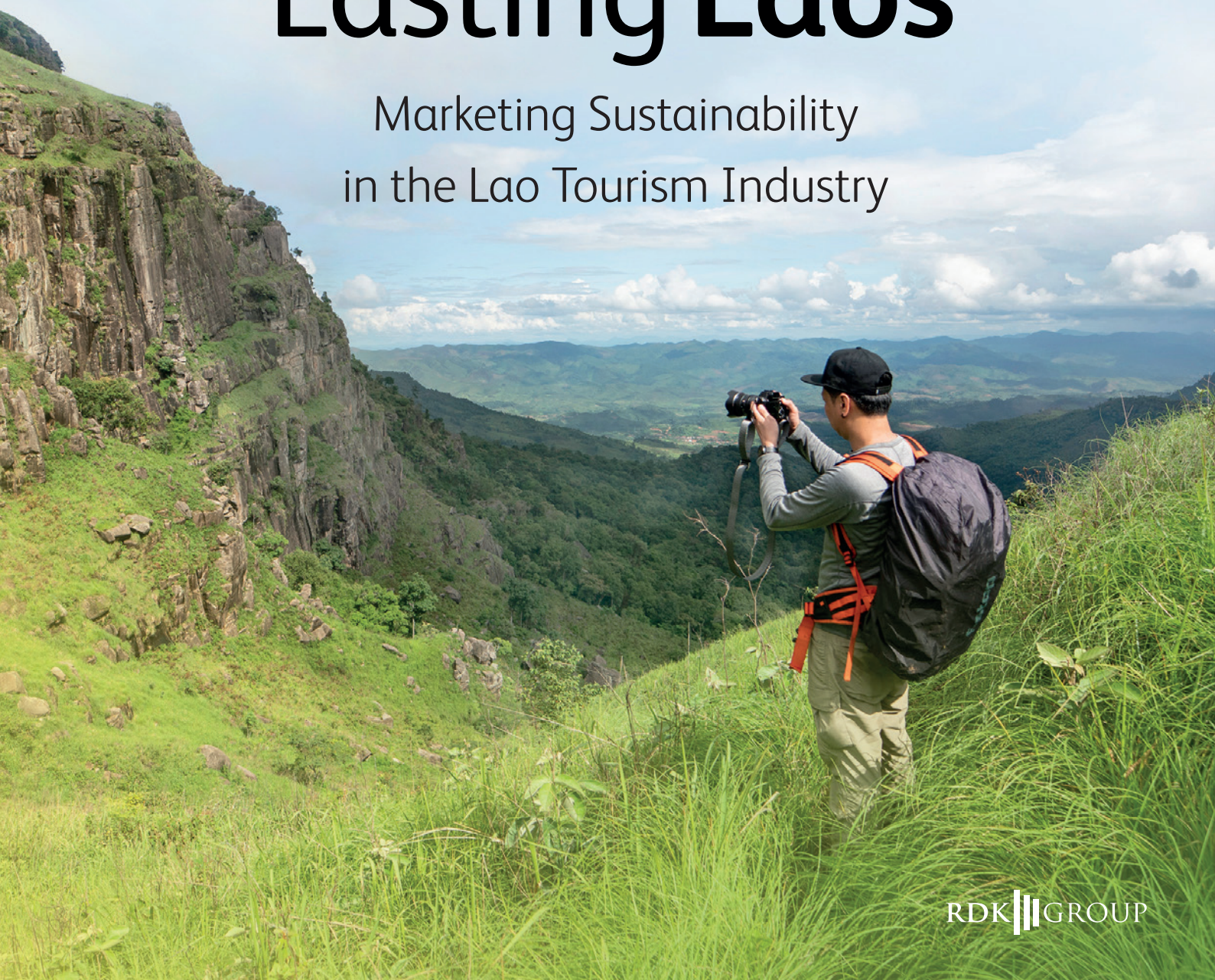




# ລາວຍືນຍາວ Lasting Laos

Marketing Sustainability  
in the Lao Tourism Industry



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# Introduction

Sustainable tourism provides a rewarding experience for tourists, allowing them to make a positive impact while enjoying new travel experiences. By choosing tourism services that incorporate sustainable consumption and production (SCP) practices, visitors can make a positive contribution to the communities and environment of their chosen destination. As more and more tourists opt for sustainable tourism packages and programs, it becomes necessary to properly certify tour operators and other players within the tourism supply chain, and to promote their initiatives with a comprehensive marketing strategy that will reach and engage the right audiences. This marketing strategy will help to effectively promote the economic and environmental value of sustainable tourism in Laos by facilitating and marketing certifications and encouraging adoption of SCP practices by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Laos.

# Research



# Sustainable Certification Programs in Laos and the Region

Certification is a way to signal to target consumers that a company has been verified as possessing a characteristic of higher quality or value than those that lack the certification. Under sustainability certifications, it is hoped that businesses can reap economic rewards from business longevity and a higher value added to their products and services. Certification can convey a sense of exclusivity and higher moral status to the consumers, which can drive higher demand for such certified products and services.



## Travelife

One such sustainability certification is the Travelife Certification. The Travelife certification programme consists of standards which are supported by the global travel sector as the leading sustainability system for the tourism industry. Travelife is a leading training, management and certification initiative for tourism companies and accommodations committed to reaching sustainability throughout their supply chain.

A brief analysis of the Travelife logo and what it symbolizes is pertinent. The Travelife leaf and hands key visuals coming together to form a silhouette of tree branches symbolize the harmonious balance between humankind and nature, which brings home

the point of sustainability in tourism. The colors (green and orange) and warm typeface are used not only to express a commitment to professionalism while being friendly and approachable, but also promotes green environmentalism. The bolded LIFE text manifests the idea of life, not only for tourists but of nature and host communities. Travelife's main goal is to confer to the bearer of the certification a sense of higher responsibility towards the environment and community and increased value to their business while imprinting in the consumer a feeling of both entertainment and moral satisfaction.



## Brand Laos

The Brand Laos certification program is aimed at certifying certain “niche” Lao products that can be easily exported to international markets. It is expected that branded goods with a seal of quality and ethical trading certification will appeal to consumers who will happily pay more to ensure they are providing a benefit for producers and service providers at each stage of the value chain. The program is being implemented by the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) in part-

nership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), who have jointly set up the Branding Lao Promotion and Development Facility, which will research the expectations and requirements of international consumers. Armed with training and certification, producers and exporters of Lao products should reap larger benefits by marketing to higher-spending consumers who prefer more ethical and sustainable products.



## Eco-Fair

Vietnam's „Eco-Fair“ label is a certification awarded to producers implementing sustainable production practices and product innovation in the food supply chain. The project, “Promotion of supply and demand of Eco-Fair Agri-food processing products in Vietnam” (Eco-fair), is funded by the EU under a SWITCH-Asia grant. It began implementation in 2020, and hopes to reduce barriers to the establishment of a certified

eco-fair supply chain in food-processing in Vietnam. Among the objectives of the project is to raise awareness of sustainable consumption and promote the Eco-fair label.

The project maintains a Facebook Page with a limited number of followers, placing a greater focus on online courses through the funzi.mobi platform, as well as media releases and television commercials.



## Lao Safe

The LaoSafe program is an upcoming pilot certification program supported by the Skills for Tourism Project and jointly implemented by the Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism (MICT) and the Ministry of Health (MoH). It will incorporate international good practices to provide accreditation to businesses in the tourism sector, highlighting the efforts of businesses in the five subsectors (accommodations, F&B, transport, tour guides, aviation) that have made strides in prioritizing health and safe-

ty. The program seeks to build confidence among international tourists in regard to Laos' readiness to open its borders in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. The travel bubble created by LaoSafe certified businesses is meant to create an ecosystem within which tourists can feel clean and safe when traveling in Laos. The regional marketing plan consists of a purely digital strategy that encompasses video, content, and public relations marketing through social media, news websites, and travel blogs.



# Laos Tourism Campaigns

The following section provides a review of the ongoing tourism marketing campaigns within Laos and the region.



## Luang Prabang – Handle with Care

This project, funded by the EU SWITCH-Asia II Program, was aimed at bringing together tourism, hospitality, and handicraft stakeholders in Luang Prabang to promote a more sustainable tourism industry for the world heritage city. It called on the private sector to increase the provision and consumption of sustainable tourism products and protect cultural heritage, as well as ensuring responsible use of natural resources.

Under the campaign, handicraft producers were supported with a special “Handmade in Luang Prabang” label to differentiate their products from factory-made

substitutes, while events and exhibitions were held, such as the Sustainable Tourism Solutions Expo. The project also supported Lao participation at ITB Asia and ITB Berlin.

Marketing by the project included a project Facebook Page that garnered over 2,000 followers, and a focus on events, print media, and signage to be hung in hotel rooms and at restaurants. Meanwhile, the *Handmade in Luang Prabang* label was promoted separately with its own Facebook Page (290+ Followers) and an article in the Champa Meuanglao airline magazine.





## Luang Prabang Timeless Campaign

The Luang Prabang Timeless campaign commenced in 2011 as a project funded by GIZ. The campaign’s Facebook Page and Instagram Account promote the “timelessness” of the city of Luang Prabang by connecting the city to its ancient heritage. The

campaign appears to have lost steam likely due to the pandemic but could share some common ground with the upcoming Lasting Laos campaign, allowing for alignment and cooperation when tourism restarts.



## Laos “Simply Beautiful” Campaign



Financed by the ADB Tourism Infrastructure for Inclusive Growth Project to support the Lao PDR Tourism Strategy and Destination Management Plan 2016–2018, the Laos Simply Beautiful campaign crafted the following key messages centered around four concepts that are considered beautiful in Laos or its culture:

*Beautiful in Manner:* promoting the people of Laos as friendly, well-mannered, and charming

*Beautiful in Culture:* showcasing the beauty of traditional culture

*Beautiful in Nature:* experiencing the pristine beauty of nature

*Beautiful in Food:* presenting the beautiful variety of delicious, traditional foods

The Simply Beautiful campaign strategy placed a focus on experiences to stimulate demand to increase the average length of stay among visitors. It hoped to attract both domestic and foreign visitors through the use of short films, a cartoon character campaign mascot, campaign songs, as well as commercials deployed on social media and television. Campaign administrators maintain active social media presences and a website. The Simply Beautiful Facebook Page, has 24,000+ Followers, while the Instagram account boasts 38,000+ Followers. Both of these prove a good springboard for augmenting the reach of Lasting Laos campaign activities.



## Lao Thiao Lao Campaign



Launched in September 2020, the Lao Thiao Lao campaign aims to promote domestic tourism in Laos by placing a focus on social media channels (namely Facebook (60,000+ Followers) and Instagram (4000+ Followers)) and using the influencers within them. The key messages of the campaign are in the primary hashtag call to action, *thiao lao thiao leuy*, which means “travel Laos travel now,” broken down into the content themes *lor long lui*, or “explore, try, adventure.”

With a primarily young target audience, the campaign feels youthful, energetic, and

fun. Special offers, giveaways, and prizes in the form of in-kind sponsorships from the private sector have become a mainstay of the campaign and a way to attract new audiences. There is potential for alignment with the Lasting Laos campaign in terms of reaching a domestic audience. The newly invigorated domestic travel industry is propelled by youth who are sympathetic to environmental concerns, as evidenced by content included in the campaign that addresses the impact of tourism on the environment and host communities.

## Luang Prabang 555 Campaign

The Luang Prabang 555 campaign was launched to encourage tourists to visit the five mountains, five rivers, and five hills of the province, introducing certain activities as part of Lao New Year festivities. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, these activ-

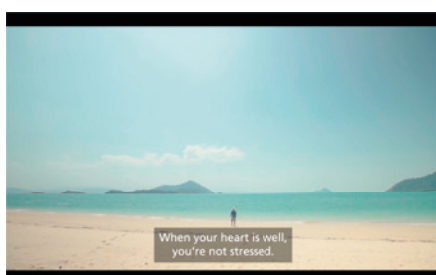
ities were canceled. The campaign had no notable key messages, while its strategy revolved around event-based marketing combined with the hashtag #555luangprabang.

# Regional Sustainable Tourism Campaigns

While sustainable and responsible tourism appear to be making headway in the region, such efforts have typically been led by proactive stakeholders ahead of national governments. Despite this, it is interesting to note that Laos ranks higher than all other ASEAN nations in the Sustainable Travel Index Rankings 2020 released by Euromonitor International (see Annex B), with the country developing sustainable tourism development policies as early as 1999. Similarly, ecotourism has become a popular label for certain tourism activities in Laos, however without official accreditation the benefits may seldom remain with the protected areas or communities concerned.



## #SustainableThailand Campaign



Launched recently, this video marketing campaign conducted by the Tourism Authority of Thailand in partnership with GLP Films, seeks to showcase Thailand's commitment to sustainability by highlighting the stories of community leaders such as conservationists, mahouts, and villagers providing homestay experiences. The key messages of the campaign include protection of cultural and natural heritage, sharing experiences that are meaningful and environmentally friendly, and benefiting local communities in a tangible way. A strong focus is placed upon video content distributed across digital/broadcast channels, while media articles and write-ups draw attention to the campaign.

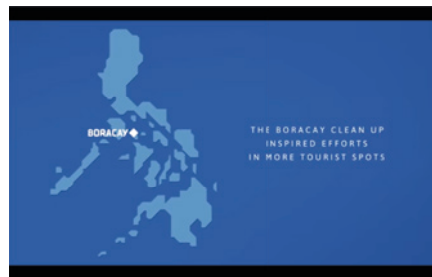
The #SustainableThailand hashtag appears approximately 100 times on Facebook, and over 400 times on Instagram. By this measure, the campaign appears unsuccessful, although according to the producer, a wider campaign is yet to be established in collaboration with influencers and travel experts. The first video under the campaign can be viewed at the producer's YouTube channel.

## Boracay #MoreFunForever Campaign



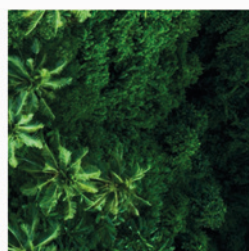
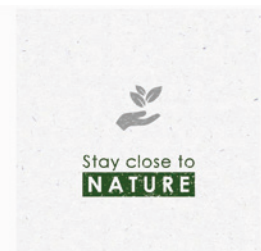
After closing the island to tourists for six months in 2018 following environmental problems caused by over-tourism, the Philippines Tourism Promotions Board embarked on a sustainable tourism campaign for Boracay under the hashtag, #MoreFunForever, which relied on crowdsourced (user-generated) images and video on social media by tourists themselves; the idea being that zero commissioned footage equates to a smaller carbon footprint.

The initiative was aligned with a greater national campaign called *It's More Fun in the Philippines*, and as a user-generated campaign, the #morefunforever hashtag was used over 5,000 times on Instagram and Facebook. This shows that aligning a smaller, sustainable tourism campaign with a larger, national tourism campaign can boost awareness and help to promote concepts or aspects of sustainable tourism that relate to both campaigns.



## The Bali Pledge

Inspired by the world-famous Palau Pledge, the Bali Pledge is an online campaign developed by the private sector tourism businesses asking tourists to pledge to help preserve the holiday island, to explore mindfully, and to respect local communities. The campaign draws heavily on the Balinese spiritual philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana*, with the key messages revolving around living in harmony with the environment, the community, and the spirit of Bali. It is an entirely digital campaign featuring a website and Facebook Page (548 Followers).



# Tourism Trends and Key Tourist Markets

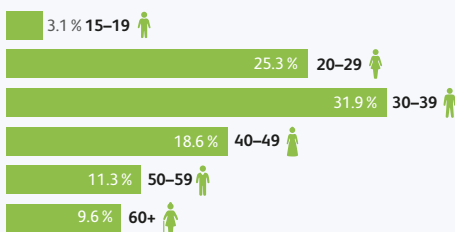
The next section outlines key market findings from the 2019 Statistical Report on Tourism in Laos by the Tourism Development Department, under MICT, and the SUSTOUR baseline study, which were analyzed for detailed statistical insight into the country’s tourism landscape.

## Six important dimensions to categorize tourists who visited Laos in 2019 and 2020



### I. Biographical data of tourists in Laos (2019)

Age



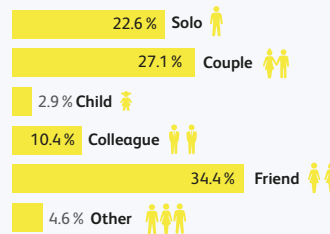
Sex



Source: Statistical Report on Tourism in Laos 2019



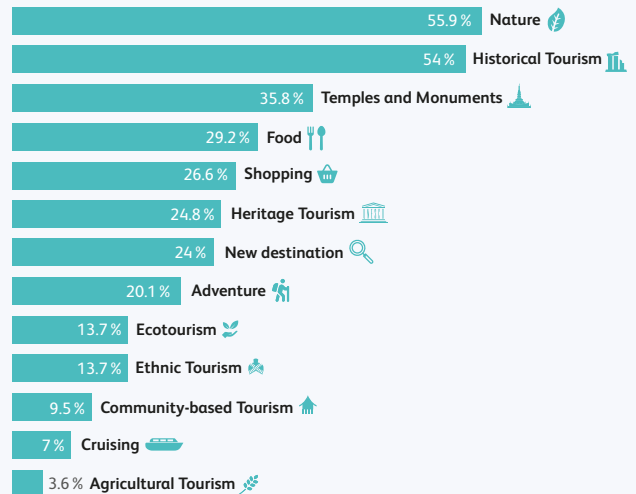
### II. Accompanying Persons



Source: Statistical Report on Tourism in Laos 2019



### III. Travel Interests



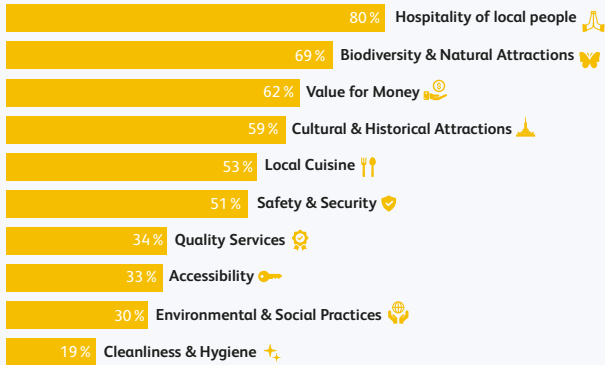
(Participants marked more than one choice.)

Source: Statistical Report on Tourism in Laos 2019





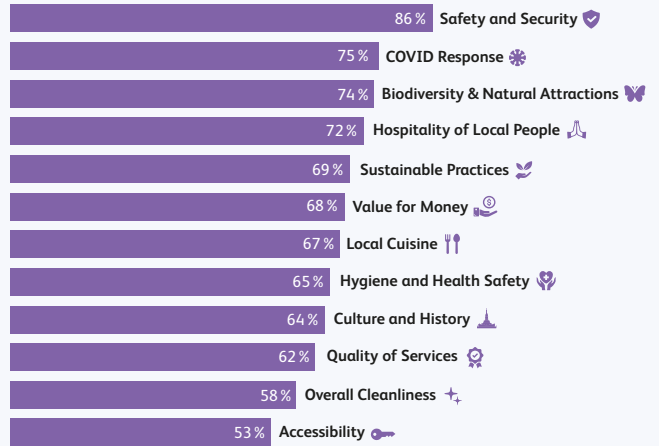
IV. Responses of “Above Average” Travel Experiences in Laos from International Travelers



Source: Baseline Study (SUSTOUR Laos Project)



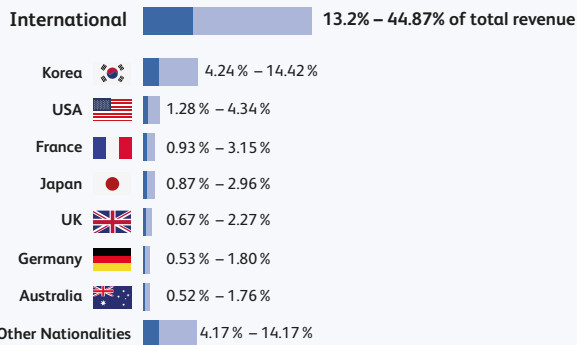
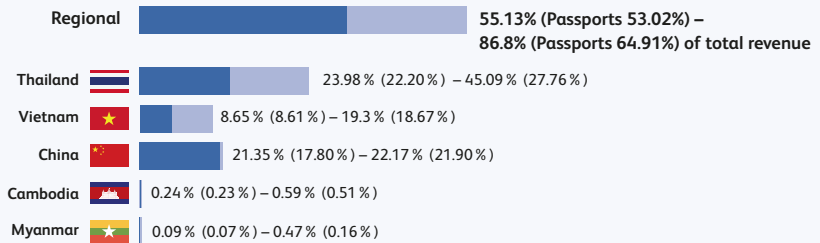
V. “Very Important” and “Most Important” Values in Selecting Next Holiday



Source: Baseline Study (SUSTOUR Laos Project)



VI. Percentages of Tourism Arrivals and Revenue by Nationality (2019)



Source: Statistical Report on Tourism in Laos, 2019

After looking at the numerical composition and large-scale characteristics of tourists to Laos, we can segment key target audiences based on this information. The most influential tourists (in terms of both numbers and spend) have historically been Thai, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, a composite “Western” group, and the

domestic Lao market. In interviewing tourism experts both in the domestic and regional tourism sectors, deeper insights on various tourist behaviors along different spending levels within these six national markets were collected and outlined below.

 Thailand



**Lower spend:** Middle-aged from Northeastern and Central Thai provinces, who travel to Laos via tour buses across the Lao-Thai Friendship Bridges to see main sites, looking for affordable, value-for-money tourism services. Very low-level of English. Low-medium proficiency of social media mobile-natives.



**Middle spend:** (35 and under) who fly from Bangkok to experience another destination close to home (similar culture). Much more social media savvy.



**Upper-middle spend:** Very social media savvy looking for beautiful Instagrammable places. Can be environmentally conscious. Enjoys learning about culture. Prefers areas with modern facilities (4 star hotels).



 Vietnam



**Lower spend:** From border provinces in Northern and Central Vietnam, often migrant labor coming to find work in Laos, or simply crossing through to Thailand



**Middle spend:** From urban areas to do business, visit relations, group touring in central and southern Laos, and visit casinos



**Upper-middle spend:** Social media savvy and looking for Instagrammable places. Prefers areas with modern facilities (nature-based, instagrammable experiences, and 3–4-star hotels)



 China



**Lower middle spend:** Large tour groups that come by plane from cities where there is a direct flight to Laos; often use Chinese-owned businesses. Value for money tourists. Travel via bus groups or internal flights. Very low-level of English.



**Middle/Upper-middle spend:** Pay large sums for food and souvenirs. Often involved in business activities in Laos or visiting family.

 **South Korea**

  18–35

**Younger middle spend:** Tourists mostly from urban areas (18–35 years old). Social media savvy, Instagram and blogs on Naver.com. Influenced by popular Korean travel TV shows. Enjoys soft adventure activities. Will try local foods, but still prefer to have some Korean meals. Functional level of English. Backpackers and flashpackers on annual one-month trip abroad.

  36–65

**Older middle spend:** Middle class from urban and suburban areas (36–65 years old). Often not very experienced tourists. Low level of English ability. Travel in budget group tours with tour leaders. Typically visit main highlights, and possibly do some golfing. Prefer mostly Korean meals.



 **Western**  
(EU, North American, Australia)

  18–30

**Younger middle spend:** 18–30 aged backpackers who frequent VV for affordable fun, carefree partying, socializing with others. Stays in affordable hostels and guesthouses (some Airbnb); likes homestays. Highly adventurous, yet budget conscious. Very social media savvy (mobile and desktop proficient). Looking for places to chill out (Vang Vieng, 4000 Islands)

  40+

**Older middle spend:** 40+ middle-class couples and families. High purchasing power. Very educated and environmentally and culturally respectful. Happy to pay a premium for an exclusive experience. Stays at 4 star hotels and above (VTE, LPB)

 **Laos**  
(Domestic Tourists)



**Lower spend:** Often travel by bus (for long distances) or drive their own motorbike (for shorter distances). These travelers mostly go to visit family or to work. They will often stay with friends or relatives instead of hotels. Almost no disposable income.

**Middle spend:** Like to travel in groups with friends, sometimes by private car or by plane. Very social media savvy and like to take selfies/groupies at well-trodden popular locations. Will stay together in guesthouses or budget hotels. Often dine cheaply so can splurge on other aspects of travel.

**Upper-middle spend:** Travel in smaller groups or couples. Enjoy self-drive options and flying. Very social media savvy and aim to imitate popular influencers. Able to splash out for trendy exclusive hotels, cafes, and restaurants. Look for beautiful places to relax in. Usually prefer travelling abroad.





# Effective Marketing Communication Channels

Interviews and desk research revealed that a multi-channel marketing strategy would be best to effectively reach members of each source market group. This would require a balanced communication plan that factors in regional social media preferences in combination with well-timed traditional print media releases, advertorials, and earned media. Asian travel specialist Gary Bowerman states after Covid-19:

“I don’t think the channels will have changed a great deal, but engagement strategies will need to be more nuanced and creative. Certainly, short video and live streaming have become more sophisticated and diverse during lock-

downs. Travel marketers will likely be saturating the same channels with their promotions, so making campaigns more interactive, participative, and gamified may be the best way to inspire travelers.”

An online travel agency manager, who wished to remain anonymous, adds:

“In addition to video options, thought-provoking social media posts, native advertising web articles, and crowdsourced competitions will be important for us to expand our reach in the Asian markets moving forward.”



Marketing of sustainable travel options in Laos has also been effective in drawing attention to the country.

**“After becoming the first tour company in Laos to achieve Travelife certification in 2016, we were able to gain more business from foreign markets, through our marketing to travel agents and at travel trade shows. They appreciated that there were new, different, and sustainable experiences to do in Laos. Now during Covid, we are still offering responsible experiences through online channels, but to the domestic market, which is also beginning to understand its value,”**

said Andrea Vinsonneau, Product Manager for EXO Travel Laos.

To capture the attention of travel agents in source countries, a combination of both online (emails, press releases to industry news media, and webinars) and in-person marketing (via trade shows, familiarization trips, and sales visits) are most common. Mobile messaging apps and their desktop counterparts are becoming increasingly popular modes of private communication. Apart from the global WhatsApp and Messenger, follow-up of emails can take place on Kakaotalk (for Korea) and Zalo (for Vietnam).

For tourism promotional purposes, some of the best events to attend are travel trade fairs, which offer the opportunity to meet with travel agents, influencers, media, and consumers from around the world. These events include but are not limited to ITB in Germany, Singapore, and China, and World Travel Mart in the UK. Apart from events, regular coverage in both digital and print media focused on the travel trade is also effective. Some of the most important English digital travel news media in the region include TTR Weekly, TTG Asia, Travel Weekly Asia, Skift, and Travel Daily News Asia. Regional airline inflight magazines such as Champa Meuanglao, Fah Thai, Sawasdee, Heritage, and Silver-Kris are known in the media industry for their immersive reading experience with proven higher brand recall (compared to digital mediums).

## Regional Social Media Platforms

While Facebook and YouTube are easily the leading global social media platforms, certain platforms have gained popularity among countries in Southeast and East Asia, while major western platforms are banned in China altogether. Ensuring that the campaign message is delivered across all relevant platforms in each country is essential to maximizing overall reach.

## Social Media Preferences in Source Markets

	Total Population	Total Social Media Users	#1 Platform	#2 Platform	#3 Platform	#4 Platform
<b>Thailand</b> 	69,880,000	55,000,000	 YouTube 94.2%	 Facebook 93.3%	 Line 86.2%	 Facebook Messenger 77.1%
<b>Vietnam</b> 	97,750,000	72,000,000	 YouTube 92.0%	 Facebook 91.7%	 Zalo 76.5%	 Facebook Messenger 75.8%
<b>China</b> 	1,440,000,000	930,800,000	 Weixin 73.2%	 Sina Weibo 47.1%	 Kuaishou 45.1%	 Douyin 41.1%
<b>Korea</b> 	51,290,000	45,790,000	 YouTube 85.9%	 Kakaotalk 80.1%	 Instagram 57.5%	 Facebook 55.4%
<b>Western (USA)</b> 	332,000,000	240,000,000	 YouTube 81.9%	 Facebook 73.4%	 Instagram 56.6%	 Facebook Messenger 55.7%
<b>Laos</b> 	7,169,000	3,100,000	 YouTube 95%	 Facebook 93.5%	N/A	N/A

To effectively reach audiences in source markets, it will be necessary to connect with marketing agencies who have in-depth knowledge in each country that can assist in establishing in-country social media pages and handle advertising accounts to reach local audiences. China has its own ecosystem of home-grown apps: Weixin is known as WeChat outside of China, Weibo is

similar to Twitter, Kuaishou is a short-form video app, and Douyin is another short-form video app known as TikTok outside of China. Meanwhile, in South Korea, the Kakaotalk messaging app is one of the most popular social media platforms, however Korean FITs tend to visit the “social search engine” Naver Blog to search for travel information.

# Effective Response Strategies and Marketing Insights Relevant to COVID-19

While COVID-19 is likely to affect the world for years to come, it will be important to use accurate and clear messaging about all aspects of COVID-safe travel in Laos.

Interviews suggest travelers will value destinations that have easy-to-understand policies regarding visas, quarantine, testing, and vaccinations, crowd control at tourist attractions, the availability of green spaces and nature-based activities, open-air dining options, self-drive travel, and most importantly, the appearance of high standards of cleanliness and safety for all tourist amenities.

Thailand's SHA, Singapore's SG Clean, UAE's Go Safe, Portugal's Clean & Safe, Switzerland's Clean & Safe, Sri Lanka's Safe & Secure, and Laos' own soon-to-be-launched LaoSafe Programme are apt examples of national attempts to portray a hygienic atmosphere to foreign tourists.



Year	Projected Tourist Arrivals
2021	1,016,041
2022	1,077,004
2023	N/A
2024	N/A
2025	1,433,016

When regional borders reopen for tourism, Southeast Asian tourism researcher Dr. Jaeyeon Choe O'Regan posits:

**“The younger demographic will be more confident to travel first, while elderly people might still hesitate to travel even in the post pandemic period.”**

Tourism marketing consultant Hannah Pearson also adds:

**“Travel agents are going to be an important of-fline channel. With all the different entry and returning policies, travelers will turn to trusted sources, such as travel agents, for guidance on entry procedures. And they will also hope that by booking with travel agents, if the worst happens again, they will be better looked after.”**

Looking ahead, the Tourism Development Department of MICT projects the following, marking a clear belief that recovery to 2019 tourism levels will not be immediate.

A hiker with a backpack and helmet is walking through tall grass towards a waterfall in a forest. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light. The hiker is in the lower left foreground, wearing a light-colored helmet and a backpack. The path leads towards a large waterfall cascading over rocks in the middle ground. The background is filled with dense trees and foliage. The overall mood is adventurous and serene.

# Strategy

# Campaign Concept Ideation & Marketing Strategy

The next section will outline the proposed campaign concept and strategies.

## Concept: *Lasting Laos*

Sustainable tourism can be defined as tourism that respects the environmental resources of the area, the socio-cultural essence and long-term viability of the place, and which contributes to the economic development of communities in that area. To make the idea more understandable, it should be broken down into actionable practices. **These practices should mirror the standards upheld by both the Travelife and LNCCI-supported local supplier certifications.** Once the practices are clearly articulated, the campaign promotes them by connecting their adoption to something of high value to each target group.

First, it is helpful to lump the target groups into two meta groups differentiated by goals: **local MSMEs** and **international travel agents (and OTAs)** on the one

hand and **free independent travelers (FITs)** and **domestic tourists** on the other. The campaign sees businesses as sharing a common goal – how to achieve a *lasting* business, while FITs and domestic tourists have the goal of wanting to gain *lasting* memories from their travel experiences.

### Key Target Groups & Interests:

- Local MSMEs wish to see their businesses last for as long as possible
- ITAs and OTAs wish to provide sustainable travel options in an un-touristed location
- International and domestic tourists want to gain memories of their travels that **last** as long as possible



Secondly, after having identified each target meta group as desiring things that possess longevity and long term viability, we arrive at the conceptualization of “**lasting**” as the primary keyword to anchor the rest of the concept. The entity that appears to be most appropriate in linking the two groups and their desires together is the country, Laos. The idea of Laos is something that both groups, businesses and tourists, have a deep interest in wanting to “last” and extend indefinitely into the future. Thus, the concept of a “*Lasting Laos*” weaves together a holistic narrative that appeals to not only local and foreign desires, but also enshrines economic and environmental values. The alliteration in English also adds a melodious finish to the aural composition of the concept name.

Thirdly, once we have established that “*a Laos that lasts*” is in the interests of the stakeholders related to the campaign, we can then begin to elaborate on how each target group can achieve it. Enter *Travelife*. The international certification should be shown as the link between businesses and their future economic goals (a Lasting Laos is good for business). For FITs, Travelife-certified businesses are the pathway to many experiences that produce lasting memories (a Lasting Laos is a good travel destination).

A poll was conducted among members of the “Tourism Professionals in Laos” Facebook group to determine the most popular concept title. “Lasting Laos” was the most popular title with 52 votes.

With “**Make Better Choices for Sustainability**” as the tagline, the **Lasting Laos** campaign aims to promote SCP practices as the future of business and brand the country as a sustainable, cultural, and green destination for years to come. It is a campaign that inspires positive emotions, ensuring continual preservation of Laos’ natural beauty and guaranteeing lasting rewards.

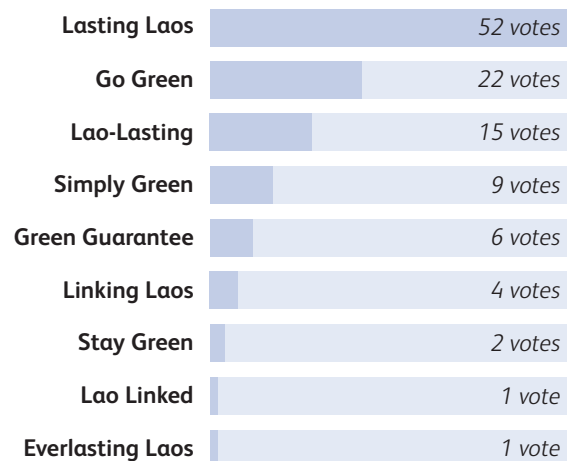


# Lasting Laos ລາວຍືນຍາວ

## Make Better Choices for Sustainability

ທາງເລືອກທີ່ດີກວ່າ ສູ່ຄວາມຍືນຍົງ

### Facebook Poll



#### Primary Color



#### Secondary Color



The key messages for the target groups are outlined below:

**Local MSMEs**

**Key Message 1:** Sustainability certification will help create a Lasting Laos.

**Key Message 2:** Travelife certification will help sustain your business.

**Key Message 3:** Travelife certification will improve revenue.

**Key Message 4:** Travelife certification will get you recognized by the international community.

**Online & International Travel Agents**

**Key Message 1:** Choosing certified businesses will help create a Lasting Laos.

**Key Message 2:** Choosing certified businesses will improve revenue by enhancing your customers' travel experiences.

**Key Message 3:** Choosing certified businesses will upgrade your corporate status and image as a credible company.

**FITs & Domestic Tourists**

**Key Message 1:** Choosing certified companies will help create a Lasting Laos.

**Key Message 2:** Choosing certified companies will help you gain a higher moral satisfaction.

**Key Message 3:** Choosing certified companies will help you find more entertaining ways to discover a country.





## From Strategy to Content Implementation (Abstract Narrative Model)

**Overall Strategy:** Use narrative storytelling and visual imagery in tandem. Juxtapose and correlate images of a SCP practice (Travelife Partner Standard) with a Lao nature tourism site, cultural practice, or historical artefact that is preserved as a consequence.

The latter are things that are directly marketed by the local MSME (and potentially the ITA/OTA) as part of its tourism business (the preservation of which should

be in their economic interest). Such images could be complemented with a longer form narrative of how the SCP act contributes to the preservation of Laos' marketable green tourism assets. The expectation is that the text coupled with the visual imagery will appeal to target audiences in a manner that makes them want to align their behaviors towards sustaining that which is marketed.



### For Local MSMEs:

[insert SCP practice from Travelife Partner Standard] → [insert key message]

**Key Message 1: Sustainable certification will help create a Lasting Laos.**

[Have your company contribute to nature-protection organizations] → [to conserve the nation's wildlife]

*Example:* By supporting nature-protection organizations such as Wildlife Conservation Society or Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife, you will be contributing to the conservation of the nation's biodiversity which can serve our future for generations to come.

**Key Message 2: Travelife certification will help sustain your business.**

[Ban single-use plastic within your company] → [increase the longevity of existing tourism services]

*Example:* By banning single-use plastic within your company, you will be contributing to the reduction of microplastics in water sources, which will allow you to continue offering services in Khammouane's blue lagoon that are healthy and pristine.

**Key Message 3: Travelife certification will improve revenue.**

[Offer bicycle tours] → [explore a previously untapped market for sustainable tourism services]

*Example:* By offering bicycle tours that leave a minimal carbon footprint, you are tapping into a new market of tourists that increasingly wish to enjoy the crisp, fresh air of Southern Laos.

**Key Message 4: Travelife certification will help you get recognized by the international community.**

[Travelife] → [gain increasing attention from international tourists and agencies]

*Example:* If you are awarded the internationally-recognized Travelife certification, you will be on the radar of high-end regional and international tourism players and stakeholders who will want to do business with you.



### For ITAs & OTAs:

[insert certified local based MSME and its SCP practice] → [insert key message]

**Key Message 1: Choosing certified businesses will help create a Lasting Laos.**

[Certified local MSME and its SCP practice] → [how you are contributing to sustain a country into the future]

*Example: By choosing to send clients on a Homestay Trekking Tour of certified Green Discovery, you are supporting the continuation of the livelihoods of ethnic minorities in Luang Namtha.*

**Key Message 2: Choosing certified businesses will improve revenue streams by enhancing your customers' travel experiences.**

[Certified local MSME and its SCP practice] → [increase the longevity of existing tourism services]

*Example: By choosing to partner with EXO Travel, a company that invests heavily in the training of their tour guides, you will be able to offer new and enhanced travel experiences in Laos. Let your guests take delightful strolls around majestic temples of Luang Prabang, and EXO's professional guides will help them to discover the place where historical Lao Kings were once crowned.*

**Key Message 3: Choosing certified businesses will upgrade your corporate status and image as a credible company.**

[Certified local MSME and its SCP practice] → [enhanced company credibility and social standing]

*Example: By choosing Soutchai Travel, you are signaling to the world at large that you are protecting the rights of women and children, which not only enhances your business prospects with like-minded industry businesses but also increases your stature vis-a-vis regional media.*



### For FITs and Domestic Tourists:

[insert Lao MSME implementing SCP practice from TravelLife Partner Standard] → [insert key message]

**Key Message 1: Supporting certified companies will help create a Lasting Laos.**

[Certified company that implements SCP practice] → [help a local culture and people last long into the future]

*Example: Bask and dine at Kualao, a restaurant that serves authentic Lao food in an ambience that flawlessly reincarnates the romantic and sophisticated atmosphere of early colonial French Indochina. Help to ensure that the food, culture, and history of Laos is not forgotten.*

**Key Message 2: Supporting certified companies will help you feel morally fulfilled.**

[Certified company that implements SCP practice] → [achieve moral virtue by consuming services of companies that do virtuous things that have positive benefits]

*Example: Travelife-Certified EXO Travel protects children's rights by not arranging school/orphanage visits. Rather, they encourage young children to flourish and prosper, by going to music school to become talented instrumentalists and dancers that keep timeless traditions and rituals alive.*

**Key Message 3: Supporting certified companies will help you find more entertaining ways to discover a country.**

[Certified company that implements SCP practice] → [engage in new, fun, daring, adventurous activities]

*Example: Certified EXO Travel contractually obligates its partners and suppliers to protect biodiversity. Book a ziplining tour package with them and enjoy swinging with the endangered gibbons in the trees of Dong Houa Sao National Protected Area.*

## More Content Examples

### Internal Management: Environment & Community Relations

**Ban single-use plastic** → reduces microplastics in waters → keep Khammouane's blue lagoon clean and clear

### Excursions & Activities

**Support local communities** → so we could continue to enjoy the rare and unique food of a local ethnic group

### Destinations

**Don't sell archeological artifacts** (e.g. boycott Buddha image souvenirs) → so we don't dishonor the spirit of Buddhism

### Customer Communication and Protection

**List product information clearly and accurately** (locally sourced) → ingredients of local foods are properly itemized → so that sustainably-sourced delicious dishes are honorably presented and served



**Desired Outcome 1:** Local MSMEs understand the link between adopting SCP practices (and for ITAs and OTAs, it's about choosing the local MSMEs that have adopted those SCP practices) and their future economic livelihoods. They make the connection between their actions and their future, and apply for a sustainability certification (for ITAs and OTAs, it's preferring/selecting certified local MSMEs to resell).

**Desired Outcome 2:** FITs are attracted by the appeal of new, greener, more fulfilling sustainable experiences offered by certified local MSMEs and wish to travel to Laos and support them.

# COVID-19 Tourism Recovery & Response Strategies

Competition to capitalize on the built-up demand for travel will be intense, as nations rush to appeal to potential visitors.

Here is a Seven-L approach for Lasting Laos:

**LIMIT uncertainty for tourists by focusing on safety, cleanliness, amenities.** The soon-to-be launched certification campaign, *LaoSafe*, which has video, social media, and PR components, presents myriad opportunities for alignment and cooperation.

**LINK up with travel agents.** Promote travel agents as reliable intermediaries for tourists who can provide support should circumstances suddenly change.

**LEVERAGE digital channels.** Reach younger and tech-savvy audiences with digital marketing (public facing: Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok; private facing: WhatsApp, Messenger, email). These options are affordable, scalable, targetable, and offer real time feedback, adjustment, and measurability.

**LINGER with long-lasting media.** Select content that has a long expiration date (i.e. Twitter posts have a shelf-life of 18 minutes, Facebook posts 5 hours) since the duration of open international leisure travel is uncertain. Focusing on media channels with staying power ensures the content will continue to have life (and online searchability) beyond the project timeframe.

**LAY the groundwork for organic coverage.** Build relationships with foreign media players for complimentary earned coverage of the campaign.

**LIAISE with local experts.** Capitalize on messages already being promoted by international organizations and trusted experts to create synergy and amplify reliability and credibility to a wider audience.

**LEAN on the expertise of regional marketing agencies.** It takes years to develop in-country marketing knowledge and dynamics. If the budget permits, seek communications insight from locally-based and experienced firms of key tourism source markets.

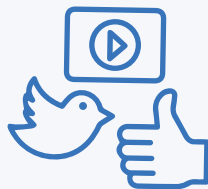
# Platform Selection (Communications Channels)

The concept is sufficiently robust to allow for the key messages to appeal to the greatest range of people possible within the tourism industry. What should be differentiated are the content and communications channels, tailored and chosen for different cultural-linguistic markets. This is to maintain a consistent and unified campaign identity that cuts across nationalities. **In other words, the strategies and content pieces would remain the same but would only be adapted into the language and used in local channels of the target market.**

## Social Media

*Formats:* Social posts (video, photo, status update)

*Channels:* Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok



### Benefits:

- “Humanizes” the campaign
- Easily scalable and hugely cost-effective
- Instant feedback and engagement from audience
- Provides numerous statistical and longitudinal metrics that give invaluable marketplace insight
- Owned media allows full control of campaign voice

### Strategy 1: Spark emotional reaction through visual storytelling

- Showcase images that show the future of a Travelife SCP practice being implemented (e.g. don’t hire a child, instead, let him become a great Khaen instrumentalist)
- Post a video that shows what happens when a local MSME adopts Travelife SCP practice (e.g. Exo Travel selects invests in its tour guides so they could tell the world about where the former Lao Kings had once been crowned – Xieng Thong Temple LPB)
- Include no more than two hashtags

### Strategy 2: Drive public engagement and user content generation

- Display a photo of a good SCP practice and ask how the public can do the same (e.g. if everyone were to use biodegradable packaging, what would happen?)

- Post a status update, asking how the public is helping to make a Lasting Laos
  - Use prizes and online giveaways to incentivize participation

### Strategy 3: Embed core messages in content

- Post an intriguing/inspiring fact (e.g. did you know that the average person in Vientiane produces xxx kilos of garbage per day?)
- Share an informative infographic (e.g. xx % of children are working in poor conditions)

### Strategy 4: Engage key opinion leaders (human and organizational accounts)

- Video re-posting or sharing (e.g. Miss Universe Laos explains why she cycles to work and how fun it can be)
- Long-form narration and review (e.g. Duangmala Phommavong describes the enormous benefits that have accrued to EXO Travel with Travelife Certification)
- Testimonials and quotes (e.g. GM of famous local hotel explains that going green is the future and will contribute to a Lasting Laos)

### Strategy 5: Online competitions

- Win a fully-sponsored trip to Laos (e.g. answer this question to win a tour package from fully certified Travelife companies - hotel, restaurant, tour package vacation)
- Could be combined with activities under Strategy 2

## Public Relations

**Formats:** Press articles, advertorials

**Channels:** newspapers, magazines, digital blogs, news websites



### Benefits:

- PR coverage gains higher level of credibility due to perceived authenticity (physical media like newspapers/magazines tend to be trusted more readily than websites)
- Advertorials disguise advertising as news content which provides information and entertainment value
- Lasting shelf life, as content is web-searchable

### Strategy 1: Official press release

– Send official press releases via email or chat apps to local, regional, international press (digital and print). Sample content:

- Laos launches #LastingLaos campaign
- SUSTOUR launches new certification program for local tourism supply chain
- Laos moves up sustainability ranking in ASEAN
- Laos' sustainability campaign releases breathtaking images

### Strategy 2: Advertorial

– Write advertorials of varying length masking core messages in informative/entertaining content and/or hire local, regional, or international press to write/publish it on their platforms. Sample content:

- How one company in Laos is making their business last with Travelife
- How banning single-use plastic in a company made this glorious blue lagoon in Laos come to life
- Top 5 things you didn't know about how sustainable Laos can be
- Here's what everyone is saying about the LastingLaos campaign
- New breathtaking photos of Laos just makes you want to purchase the next flight to Laos after borders open
- Low Covid-19 death rate put this country on the top 10 traveler's list among the retired
- Laos: the backpackers' top post-covid heaven
- Laos: small country, big future
- Top five sustainable tourism campaigns in ASEAN
- How one country is building itself into a sustainability hub
- The top 10 certified green and fun places to visit in Laos

*\*\*Apart from select local (e.g. Laopost, Laotian Times, Tholakhong, Lao Economic Daily, Vientiane Mai, Idsala, Muan) and regional (e.g. TTG Asia, TTR Weekly, Travel Asia Daily, Thaiger, The Straits Times, VNExpress, Phnom Penh Post) media outlets, official press releases and advertorials can be published on project partner websites such as the LNCCI and Travelife websites..g. GM of famous local hotel explains that going green is the future and will contribute to a Lasting Laos)*

## Activations and Publicity Devices

Tourism Trade Fairs, Webinars, Launch Events



### Benefits:

- Meaningful interactions and relationship-building opportunity with industry-specific audiences
- Good attendance, creating a target-rich environment for lead generation through event hosting

### Strategy 1: Create a sense of exclusivity

– Make events invitation-only (when possible) to generate excitement and demand.

### Strategy 2: Offer lucky draw prizes

– Offer a prize (e.g. gift voucher) to participants at the end of the event so they stay until the end

### Strategy 3: Use a unique venue

– Host events in locations that people will remember so they associate good memories with the campaign

### Strategy 4: Personalize the experience for attendees

– Send a customized text/email to attendees to show excitement they are attending or thanking them for their attendance

### Strategy 5: The Lasting Lao Vow

– Launch a stand-alone or event-tied sweepstakes where users would be asked to sign an online form or video themselves uttering the Lao Vow (e.g. I vow to valiantly and verily protect the nation of Laos. My valourous commitment echoes the country's vox populi, and shall be held as a votive, not in vain, for the value and veracity of such shall one day vindicate the vigilant and the virtuous) on a social media post.

## Email

Newsletters, Content Produced Elsewhere



### Benefits:

- Official and personalized format grants formality and allows for email attachments (visual content made for other platforms) to easily reach target audience
- Extremely fast and cost-effective and scalable via automation software

#### Strategy 1: Send regular email newsletter

- Send a monthly (or bi-weekly) email newsletter with compiled updates of the project campaign to the mailing list; use social media platforms to create an opt-in mailing list (provide an offer to attract signups).
- Use an automated email marketing platform such as Mailchimp or ActiveCampaign to create simple newsletter templates and send to a large mailing list.

#### Strategy 2: Send emails about specific topics

- Official press release
- Travel tips
- Promotions and special deals
- Sustainable business profiles
- Other content produced for other channels

#### Strategy 3: Follow up with chat apps

- An informal but effective method of checking to see if an action has been taken on an email

## Advertising

Display Banners, Video, Page Insertions



### Benefits:

- Ads appearing in digital mediums are great for large-scale awareness
- Ads appearing in print mediums generally gain more credibility and are easier to recall

#### Strategy 1: YouTube Video Ads

- Produce videos subtitled in the target market language and promote on YouTube via geo-targeting

#### Strategy 2: Offer lucky draw prizes

- Place 2-page spread, full page and/or half-page ad insertions in inflight magazines (e.g. Champa Meuanglao, LaoSky, Sawasdee, Heritage, Silverkris, etc.)
  - Place full-page or half-page ads (e.g. Vientiane Times and Vientiane Mai Newspapers)
- end

#### Strategy 3: Website Display Banner Ads

- Rent display banner ads (still or moving) on the home page or in-article ads on travel websites and blogs (e.g. Laopost, Laotian Times, Tholakhong, Lao Economic Daily, Vientiane Mai, Idsala, Muan)

# Annex

## Recommended Influencers for Laos market

Name	Nickname	Position	Company	Telephone
<b>Tourism Personalities</b>				
Inthy Deuansavanh	Inthy	Owner/CEO	Green Discovery/LNCCI	+856 20 55521447
Duangmala Phommavong	Duang	Owner/CEO	Exo Travel Laos/ LNCCI	+856 20 55507403
Somphet Maopaseuth		Owner/CEO	Nam Kat Yorlapa	+856 20 55370385
Khen Vongthongchith		Owner/CEO	Soutchai Travel	+856 20 55340000
Patria Puyat		GM	Crowne Plaza	+856 21 908888
Tanoy Douangsouliya		Owner	Cranky-T Cafe and Bar	+856 30 5388003

### General

Bob Freeman	Bob			+856 20 22200398
Chi Chi	Chi Chi			+856 20 91114449
Keota Phonepasert	Keota			+856 2078333378
Tot Lina	Tot			+856 20 55588585

### Beauty Pageant Personalities

May Vichita	May		T8. Agency	+856 20 98811118
Onanong Homsombath				+856 20 77854724
Christina Lasasimma				+856 20 77777737
Naeng Chandaly	Ningnaeng			+856 20 29291919



## Foreign Regional Marketing Agencies

Market	Contact Person	Position	Company	Telephone	Email
Thailand	Gun Kanjanapokin	CEO	WeAreInnoSense	+66 81 695 7550	gun@wris.co
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Malaysia	Peter de Kretser	CEO	Go Communications	+60 12 210 7539	peter@gocomm.com.my
Singapore	Erin Padilla	CEO	Accela	+65 8322 7323	erin@accela.asia
China	Le Thi Mui (Ali)	Business Development Manager	AsiaPac	+84 938 091 886	le.mui@adtechinno.com
China	Deana Gao	CEO	China Gravy	N/A	deana@chinagravy.com