

# MEASURES TO DEVELOP TOURISM INDUSTRY IN KIÊN GIANG

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In the Strategy for Socio-Economic Development in 1995-2010 adopted by the Government, Kiên Giang is among provinces where top priority is given to tourism industry. In recent years, however, the development of this industry in Kiên Giang has been still based on existing resources. At microeconomic level, local companies aren't strong enough to compete against rivals from big cities and attract both local and foreign tourists. At the macroeconomic one, there has been no favorable condition for tourism companies. In this paper we want to find out measures to develop the tourism industry in Kiên Giang at the macroeconomic level.

## 1. Potentials for the Kiên Giang tourism industry

Kiên Giang enjoys certain favorable natural conditions: it is adjacent to the Gulf of Thailand and acts as a gate to the sea for some provinces in the Mekong Delta. It has also close economic relations with these provinces and cooperation in developing the irrigation system, road and waterway networks and protection for the environment. With HCMC, its tourism companies have had cooperative relations with some tourism agencies, such as Lửa Việt and Saigon-Phú Quốc.

Kiên Giang is endowed with natural conditions that could be seen potentials for the tourism industry. Đông Hồ, one of the most famous poets who have ever lived in Kiên Giang said that this province had caves like Lạng Sơn, islands like Hạ Long, mountains like Ninh Bình, river like Huế, pagodas like Bắc Ninh, mausoleums like Thuận Hóa and beaches like Vũng Tàu, Nhà Trang and Đồ Sơn. In other words, Kiên Giang is like Vietnam in miniature where a wide range of tourism products could be developed. In recent years, the provincial government and tourism

The provincial government also considered the tourism as a key industry while the central government included Kiên Giang in a group of five provinces where seashore tourism would be developed. The problem is what Kiên Giang has and can do to achieve this target.

## 2. Tourism business in Kiên Giang

a. Limits posed by the legal infrastructure: At present, Vietnam has no law on the tourism industry but some decrees and ordinances belonging to the bulk of subordinate legislation. On Feb. 20, 1999 the National Assembly issued a Tourism Ordinance and the PM issued decrees

Table 1: List of investment projects in the tourism industry in 2001-2010

Project	Size	Needed capital (VND billion)	Site
Shopping centers	3 centers	80	Phú Quốc, Hà Tiên and Kiên Lương
Hang Pagoda Resort	17.6 hectares	132	Kiên Lương
Nai Cape Resort	17 hectares	14	Hà Tiên
Sao Beach Resort	100 hectares	420	Phú Quốc
Lấp River Mouth Resort	135 hectares	200	Phú Quốc
Express Ship Rạch Giá-Phú Quốc	a 200-seater ship	28	Rạch Giá
Rạch Giá Park	52 hectares	65	Rạch Giá



authorities have mapped out different zones for tourism development based on their natural features: (1) Hà Tiên Town and Kiên Lương District; (2) Phú Quốc Island; (3) Rạch Giá Provincial Town and its outskirts; and (4) Cà Mau Peninsula.

providing necessary guidelines on this ordinance, the legal infrastructure for the tourism industry started to take shape thereby helping the industry develop healthily and reducing negative practices. At external aspect, these law documents made



foreign companies feel rather sure about investment in Vietnam and attracted more and more foreign tourists to Vietnam.

However, these documents aren't stable enough, which would cause difficulties for foreign investors in the future and lead to unfair competition between tourism agencies.

b. Planning and implementation of plans: Based on the provincial development plan, some tourist resorts have been built in Kiên Giang, such as Hang Pagoda in Kiên Lương, Nai Cape in Hà Tiên. Many projects (see the table below) have been put forward and offer to potential investors.

In recent years, a lot of public investment has been put in infrastructure projects: upgrading Provincial Roads, North-South Road in Phú Quốc, highways connecting with An Giang and Cần Thơ, Phú Quốc Airport and the system of waterways.

As for telecommunications, telephone line has reached all communes and power line 96.5% of communes. The telecommunications authority has planned to diversify and modernize its services network in the 2000s.

The Kiên Giang Tourism Company has cooperated with HCMC-based tourism agencies, Star Cruise and its counterpart in Kampot (Cambodia) to develop many new tours. This cooperation, however, is still at a small scale.

### 3. Measures to develop the Kiên Giang tourism industry

#### a. State control:

- Provincial government petitions the central government for better legal infrastructure for the tourism industry and simpler procedures for getting visa and passport because

this is one of factors that causes the first impressions on tourists and affects greatly their decision on revisiting Vietnam.

- Law enforcement is necessary but it must be done properly in order to avoid causing trouble for tourism agencies and prevent negative practices or corruption.

- The provincial government had better make regulations about the tourism business soon in order to make the state control more effective and free from corruption. In working out these regulations, full attention must be paid to environment protection and struggle against social evils. The provincial government could give top priority to projects to build tourist resorts in Hà Tiên, Phú Quốc and Rạch Giá (granting land needed for building hotels, recreational grounds and infrastructure, encouraging private investment in the industry, etc.)

- Local tourism authority had better carry out regular inspection of hotels in order to ensure quality of this service and public image of the local tourism business.

- Provincial construction and tourism authorities must keep a close watch on the construction works in tourist resorts in order to ensure they meet requirements posed by the town planning agency.

- Tourism authority must cooperate with the education service in giving training courses in hospitality and foreign languages to workers in the industry and sending young official and employees to make study abroad.

#### b. Infrastructure:

The provincial government must take measures to increase the public

investment in the infrastructure. For the time being, it could be concentrated on projects to develop airports in Rạch Giá and Phú Quốc, build express ships to take tourists to Phú Quốc, restore historical relics, build and revamp hotels, etc.

#### c. Marketing:

To attract more tourists from other provinces and abroad, the tourism authority must diversify tourism products by asking for permission to open tours from Hà Tiên to Cambodia or Laos, and cooperating with tourism agencies in HCMC and Mekong Delta provinces in developing the Mekong Delta Tour; open rep offices in many provinces and foreign countries, open a website about Kiên Giang, etc.

#### d. Investment:

- Issuing project bonds to mobilize money from the public, encouraging cooperation between state-owned and private companies to develop tourism businesses, privatizing some hotels and guest houses, giving incentives to investment from foreign companies and other provinces, etc.

- As for foreign investment, the provincial government must encourage foreign investors to build large-scale and modern facilities by introducing widely potentials and opportunity of Kiên Giang tourism industry, asking for help from market research institutions and international tourism organizations, etc.

Besides the measures at the macroeconomic level, efforts from each tourism concern to improve their performance and quality of their services are also necessary to make the tourism industry real leverage in the provincial economy. ■

