

# Enabling Sustainable Tourism Destination Development in the Lao PDR



## 1 The Situation

The Lao PDR still numbers among the world's least developed countries. A third of the population lives below the poverty level. Against this background, tourism has grown rapidly and offers significant employment and income-generation opportunities to disadvantaged sections of the populations. Southern Laos' Provinces such as Champasak are amongst these areas which do not benefit from tourism opportunities compared to Laos' Northern Provinces.

## 2 Challenges

A number of challenges are prevalent when it comes to the task of **Enabling Sustainable Tourism Destination Development** in the Lao PDR.

- Private-public sector coordination capacities and innovative models are rare
- Destination management and marketing structures and processes are weak
- Quality of services and products are low and the tourism and hospitality sector inefficient compared to neighbouring countries

## 3 Our Solution

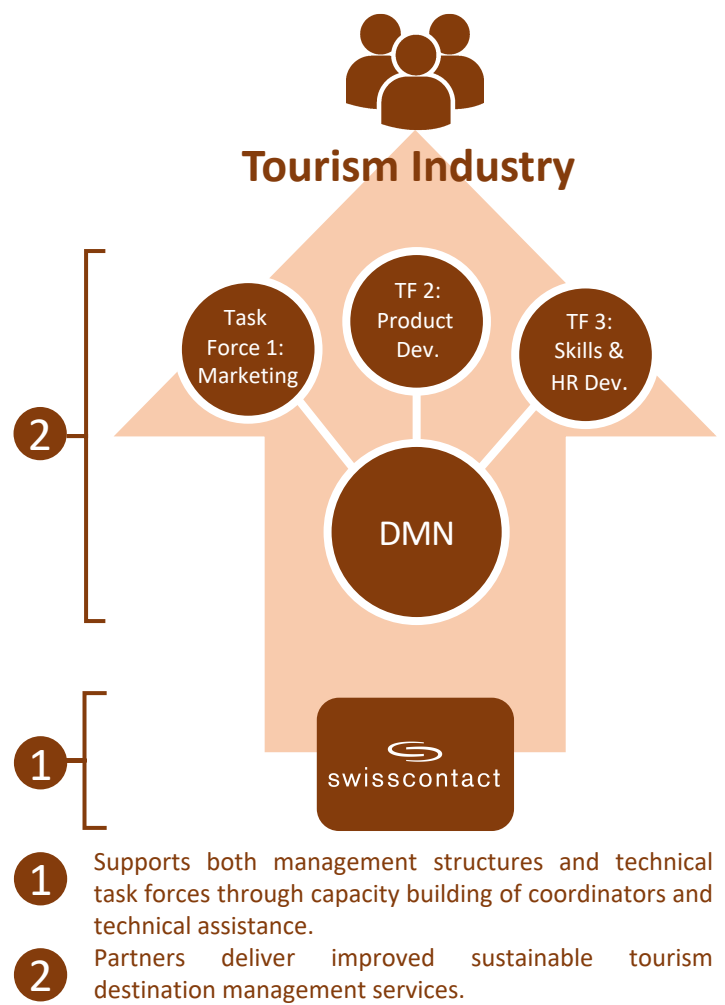
Under the Mekong Inclusive Growth and Innovation Programme (MIGIP), Swisscontact is developing innovative

### Destination Management Structures and Processes

to support improved coordination between public and private sector stakeholders in the tourism industry. In Lao PDR these take the form of **destination management networks (DMNs)** and **thematic task forces** that focus on core tourism issues.

These innovative public-private partnerships act as focal points for planning, ideas generation and decision-making in tourism. This drives better coordination of skills and resources and strengthens the the competitiveness of the tourism sector.

These act as models for sustainable destination development and management at national and sub-national level across the country.



## 4 Achievements

### The Southern Laos Destination Marketing Taskforce



has been successfully established as a private-public partnership between local business associations and the Department of Information Culture and Tourism (DICT).

The Marketing Taskforce is coordinating targeted tourism destination marketing to reach higher spending experiential travellers.



Visit the official Southern Laos webpage: [www.southern-laos.com](http://www.southern-laos.com)  
average monthly page views: 55,000

### Promoting environmental awareness and sustainable tourism

With the 'Refill Not Landfill' campaign 2018-19, the Southern Laos Marketing Taskforce has been supported to partner with an international campaigning organisation (RefillNotLandfill Asia) to pilot reduction of plastic bottle pollution and promote environmentally sustainable eco-tourism.

#### 27 Refill Stations

In Southern Laos  
Set up a refill station

#### 5 platforms

Used to promote eco-friendly SMEs

#### 4 campaigns

organised and supported by DICT

#### 200,000 plastic bottles\*

saved through refill station usage (\*300ml)



### Destination marketing targeted towards higher spending visitors

Through capacity building and technical assistance, MIGIP facilitates and empowers the marketing taskforce to deliver improved tourism destination marketing. This is targeted at higher spending potential visitors that can contribute more to local small businesses through experiential tourism activities.

The SL Marketing Taskforce has successfully established a partnership to reach regional experiential travellers by providing features on experiential tourism in the Lao Airlines in-flight magazine.



### National Destination Management Network

Drawing from the experiences in the Southern Laos, MIGIP has been strengthening national destination management, structures and processes through coaching of taskforce coordinators and establishing working operational structures.

“With Swisscontact’s support, the DMN’s effectiveness in destination development increased through better public-private collaboration in destination management.”



Thavipheth Oula, Deputy Director General, Tourism Development Department, Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism (MICT)



### The Mekong Inclusive Growth and Innovation Programme (MIGIP)

Swisscontact is currently implementing the *Mekong Inclusive Growth and Innovation Programme (MIGIP)* to focus on sustainable tourism destination development. The aim of MIGIP is a more inclusive growth in the tourism sector in Southern Laos, contributing to job creation and income generation for smaller firms.

MIGIP promotes public-private partnerships to demonstrate innovative models for sustainable destination development and management at sub-national level; and strengthens the institutionalisation of destination management structures and processes to increase the competitiveness of the tourism sector leading to more market-driven employment and income generation.

