

The project on Vietnam Tourism Association's Representative Office establishment in Japan

I. The role of the representative office (RO) establishment:

1.1 About Vietnam Tourism

- Over the past years, Vietnam tourism has developed rapidly, the number of international tourists reached 5 million in 2010 and up to 6.8 million in 2012. Income from tourism of Vietnam hits US\$4.5 billion in 2010 and reached \$7 billion in 2012, according to statistics of UN-WTO. Vietnam now has over 1,000 international tour operators, 10,000 tourist guides, over 15,000 hotels with 265,000 rooms (including 51 five-star hotels, 135 four-star hotels, 297 three-star hotels). The tourism sector generates more than 700,000 direct employees and nearly 1 million indirect laborers and it contributes about 4.5% of the country GDP. The industry has gradually confirmed the position as a key economic sector of the country.

1.2 The role of tourism promotion

- Tourism promotion is an important task of the tourism industry, including State management agencies and enterprises. In terms of tourism promotion, the travel State agencies and tourism businesses taking part into the tourism promotion under the two following methods:

+ Joining or organizing tourism events (fairs, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, road shows) to introduce natural resources and tourism products.

+ Establishment of Representative Office abroad targets to provide information, contact directly and introduce natural resources and tourism products to organizations, individuals and tourism businesses of the local country. In addition, the State bodies and travel operators also participate in tourism events to promote the country image and tourism products.

These two methods are very important and they are must-to-do works of all countries interested in tourism development.

1.3 Vietnam Tourism Association with travel promotion activities

- Vietnam Tourism Association (VITA) was founded in 2002. Vietnam Society of Travel Agents (VISTA) and Vietnam Hotel Association were set up in 2010. Vietnam Tourism Association (VITA) now has over 1,000 members with two professional associations and 34 local associations. Vietnam Tourism Association and its members have implemented tourism promotion programs and developed tourism products effectively. They also have supported State management agencies in the implementation of tourism programs and activity plans for the sector, as well as participated in policy making-up and development and human resource training.

- Association is an organization of travel businesses, when the members of the Association agreed, conditional association for project set up representative offices abroad. The operational cost of the Office mobilized mainly from business, human resources activities of the Office of the enterprise. Especially with extensive relations of the Association, the tourism business with the key markets of Vietnam Tourism, Vietnam Tourism Association will receive the support and cooperation of many businesses tourist country.

1.4 Japanese Tourism Market and objectives of the representative office establishment in Japan

a. Japanese tourism market analysis

Vietnam annually welcomes about 450 - 500,000 Japanese visitors. Economic and politic relations between Vietnam and Japan has been developing, and opening for Vietnam's tourism industry a new opportunity. It is the opportunity to exploit the Japanese tourism market more strongly. The two countries have plans to increase the number of Japanese tourists to Vietnam to 1 million in the up-coming years. Every year, about 17 to 20 million Japanese travel abroad, attracting 1 million Japanese into Vietnam every year is feasible. On the other hand, the number of Vietnamese traveling abroad also increased, the figure was over 3.5 million in 2012. It is also an opportunity for Japan to become a destination of Vietnam tourists.

b. Demand for representative office establishment of VITA in Japan

The representative office establishment of VITA is a work, that will be implemented soon. While Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT) is meeting with financial difficulties constraints in setting up the representative office, the association has co-operated with tourism businesses to implement this work.

Among the traditional tourism markets of Vietnam, the Japan is emerging as a promising market for Vietnam. However, Japanese society is an information one, it is essential to build a mechanism that provides direct information about Vietnam's travel to Japanese so as to attract them to Vietnam. That is the basic task of the representative office.

II. Objectives of the representative office establishment in Japan

2.1 The long-term goal

- Making Japan to become the leading market of Vietnam tourism through the promotion to attract Japanese tourists to Vietnam, and vice versa boost Vietnamese tourists to Japan. Raising the income ratio from the Japanese market for the industry.
- Through tourism, strengthening economic, cultural and investment exchanges between Japan and Vietnam.

2.2 The short-term objective

- Providing information about Vietnam for tourism businesses and Japanese tourists.
- Participating in trade fairs, seminars, events in Japan to introduce tourism destinations in Vietnam, tourism potential of the local areas and tourism products of travel operators.
- Organizing events to introduce Vietnam tourism in Japan to attract Japanese tourists and attracting the interest of the Japanese tourism businesses to the Vietnamese market.
- Supporting and facilitating the Vietnamese tourism enterprises to promote and introduce the tourism products, generating opportunities for them to contact with the Japanese tour operators.
- Supporting and creating favorable conditions for Japanese tourism businesses bring Japanese tourists to Viet Nam and welcome the Vietnamese delegations to Japan.

III. Functions, tasks, organization model and operation of the representative office in Japan

3.1 The function of the representative office

Representative office is a subordinate unit of the Vietnam Tourism Association and under the direct leadership of the Vietnam Society of Travel Agents. The office has a legitimate legal status in Japan, operating in the framework of the law of the host country, complying with Vietnamese laws and operation regulations issued by the Vietnam Tourism Association.

The office operates under the self-financing mechanism on the basis of the contribution of tourism enterprises, tourism promotion agencies in Vietnam and overseas; and other funds, that do not use the State budget.

3.2 Duties of the Representative Office

- Providing official information about Vietnam Travel for Japanese tourism businesses, communities and Japanese tourists. Collecting information about Japan Tourism to give to Vietnam tourism businesses in order to build up products and tourism promotion organizations.

- Representing for Vietnam Travel industry to communicate with the Japanese State authorities, professional associations, businesses and tourists to introduce Vietnam tourism, enhance mutual understanding between the tourism industries of the two countries.
- Directly organizing for tourism enterprises and the Vietnamese tourism promotion agencies taking part in tourism events in Japan (fairs, conferences and seminars) and tourism related events.
- Supporting Vietnamese tourism businesses access to the Japanese market, supporting and protecting the legitimate interests of Vietnamese tourists in Japan. Supporting and creating favorable conditions for Japanese tourism businesses access to the Vietnamese market.
- Bolstering investment attraction from Japan into Vietnam tourism sector and supporting for Vietnamese investors in Japan.
- Co-ordinating with the Vietnamese diplomatic representatives in Japan in the organization of Vietnam Travel events, often working with these agencies to update information in a bid to ensure that the operation of the office follow the direction, the Government policies in Japan rightly.

3.3 The organizational model of the Rep. Office

Association is a socio-professional organization of tourism businesses operators on the basis of voluntary participation of the businesses. So, the representative office also works under the open model, with the financial contribution tourism businesses, tourism promotion agencies.

a. Organizational model

Rep. Office has 3 main parts:

- Travel information (providing and gathering information, update the website of the representative office; publishing newsletters, magazines or newspapers).
- Tourism Promotion (participating Japanese tourism events, organizing activities that promote Vietnam tourism in Japan, investment advisories about Vietnam Tourism for Japanese firms).
- Supporting businesses to organize meetings between the two countries' tourism enterprises; introducing products; supporting directly tour sales and implementation of tourism programs for the Japanese delegation to Vietnam and vice versa; improving training for Vietnamese tourism businesses.

b. Personnel

In the first stage, the representative office has one leader (Rep. Office chief) and 3 employees (each one in charge of each work), including 1 – 2 native persons.

The staffs of representative office are mobilized from the association, the Vietnamese tourism businesses and using staffs having tourism expert in Japan.

c. Financial mechanism

- Ensure funding for the operation of representative office includes the following expenses:

+ Rent office (equipment, electricity, water, sanitation, etc.).

+ Salaries of officers, staff and administrative costs.

+ Funding for the operation of the office (information assurance, participating tourism promotion, organization tourism events).

- Funding resources are expected from as the followings:

+ Donation funds (both domestic and overseas).

+ Funds from enterprises directly involved in the operation of representative office (staff salaries, rent offices, accommodation).

+ Funding from businesses, tourism promotion agencies to participate in events organized by the Rep. Office.

+ Other lawful resources (consulting fees, exhibition fees and advertising, event organization fees, supporting fees from the business activities of the enterprises).

3.4 The operation of representative office

The operation of representative office bases on mission and organizational models of the office. The main activities of the representative office comprise:

a. Information

Representative Office acts as an information center, which provides information about Travel Vietnam to Japanese and East Asian markets.

- Developing or updating information on the website of the Representative Office, and make the website becoming the official channel, that provides information about Vietnam Tourism for Japanese tourism businesses, tourists and communities, who interested in Vietnam tourism.

- Printing and distribution of a number of publications introducing Vietnam Tourism (leaflets, maps of Vietnam, Vietnam Travel Guide Book) in Japan.

- Introduction and distribution of documents, tourism promotion publications of the local tourism promotion agencies and the Vietnamese tourism businesses.

- Receiving and answering the questions of the Japanese tourism operators and Japanese, that are interested in Vietnam tourism.
- Providing information on tourism development policies, investment policies and other policies related to Vietnam travel to Japanese tourism businesses.

b. Tourism promotion

These are the main activities of the representative office in order to attract more and more Japanese tourists to Vietnam:

- As a representative for the tourism businesses and tourism promotion agencies participated in several local tourism events in Japan (fairs, seminars, conferences and other activities) to introduce the image of Vietnam tourism, information and advertising tourism products of the Vietnamese tourism businesses.
- Organization for the Vietnamese tourism businesses to participate tourist events in Japan and the Japanese tourism businesses to participate in tourism events in Vietnam.
- Annually organize some events in Japan to attract the attention of this market for Vietnamese tourism (Road show, exhibitions, ...).
- Establishing relationships with representative offices, tourist promotion agencies of other countries to jointly organize the events, the general promotion programs in Japan.
- Implementing the investment advisor to attract investment in tourism projects in Vietnam.
- Implementing market research, in order to propose appropriate solutions to promote Japanese tourism market.

c. Tourism business support

- Supporting for the Vietnamese tourism enterprises seek partners and introduction of products, market access, participation and procedures to support the preparatory work for the organization of missions in Vietnam, Group Vietnamese tourists to Japan's tourism business members.
- Supporting for enterprise search Japanese Tourism Travel Vietnam information, contact with Vietnamese partners, support in terms of procedures and create favorable conditions for them to organize delegations to Vietnam .
- Organizing or coordinating teams to Fam trips for Japanese tourism enterprises to Vietnam to find out market research, product and business cooperation with Vietnamese partners.
- Organization for the Vietnamese tourism businesses to participate in the event Japan or the mass tourism market survey to increase to attract Japanese tourists to Vietnam, support for enterprise organizations caring, safe for the Vietnamese delegation to Japan.

- Participate in organizing professional training programs for business travel Vietnam's tourism, support the training of human resources Travel Vietnam in Japan.
- Support for local Vietnamese travel ties with the local, Japanese tourist business.

3.5 Relationship of Representative Office with the Embassy, Consulate General

Representative office of the Vietnam Tourism Association, operating under the Regulation by the Vietnam Tourism Association issued and implemented the program work plan by the Vietnam Tourism Association. RO must constantly keep in close contact with the agency of the Vietnam Embassy and the Consulate General.

Embassy, the program of cultural diplomacy, economic diplomacy, it is necessary to determine the role of the importance of tourism location, positive attention, support and create favorable conditions for the operation of the Office Representative Vietnam Tourism Association.

3.6 Relationship with the Advocacy Committee to establish the Representative Office in Japan and the Japanese authorities

Representative Office was established with the support of the Advocacy Committee by the Association of Tourism, tourism companies, organizations and individuals in the prestigious Japan, fell in love with Vietnam. The establishment of the representative office is also an activity to celebrate 40 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The committee to support the RO on the following areas:

- Supporting procedures established representative offices of Vietnam tourism in Japan
- Supporting in finding and mobilizing funding for the office of representative office in Tokyo and other local
- Support looking for some volunteer work at the representative office
- Facilitate expansion of RO relations with Japanese agencies and businesses
- Support and mobilize funding if

IV. Implementation

4.1 Plans on establishment of the representative office in Japan

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| - Project making-up | May – June, 2013 |
| - Consulting opinions from State agencies | July – August, 2013 |
| - Conducting Survey, and selecting location | August – September, 2013 |

These businesses join in the representative office by contributing fees. Some others can send staff working in representative offices, as being assigned by the Tourism Association. Funding for these employees provided by enterprises themselves.

- Enterprises doing businesses in accommodation and other tourism services.

These businesses joining in the Representative Office in the form of sending promotional materials, to introduce their products, directly involved in the mass market survey, the tourism promotion program in Japan organized by the RO. Costs, depending on the form of participation, businesses will contribute funds for RO or contribute funds to participate in events for RO organization.

e. Advocacy Committee to establish the Representative Office in Japan

- Cooperation with Vietnam Tourism Association in the course of project implementation
- Support for step-by-step preparation opening the representative office
- Coordinate and support for representative offices in specific activities after opening

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Establishment of representative office abroad is a complicated and difficult task, especially in the context that the association has to arrange funds for the RO. To build the project on representative office, the Vietnam Tourism Association and the Vietnam Society of Travel Agents held a series of meetings, workshops to build up plans and propose solutions to implement this project ahead urgent demand of the industry. With the support of many agencies, with the determination of the tourism enterprises, the Vietnam Tourism Association determined to implement the pilot project on the representative office.