

## CONFERENCE REPORT

# Community Involvement in Tourism Multi-Stakeholder Workshop

*Mobilize, Market, Mentor, and Monitor:  
How to support Community Involvement in Tourism in Myanmar*

1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 | Naypyidaw | Myanmar



Myanmar Centre for  
Responsible Business

 Hanns  
Seidel  
Foundation

**About MCRB:**

**The Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB)** was set up in 2013 by the Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB) and the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) with funding from several donor governments. Based in Yangon, it aims to provide a trusted and impartial platform for the creation of knowledge, capacity, and dialogue amongst businesses, civil society organizations and governments to encourage responsible business conduct throughout Myanmar. Responsible business means business conduct that works for the long-term interests of Myanmar and its people, based on responsible social and environmental performance within the context of international standards.

**About HSF:**

**The Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF)** aims to contribute in an active and effective way to international cooperation and understanding with its programmes and projects in Myanmar. Our first involvement to provide development assistance in Myanmar dates back to 1994 with capacity building activities for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the time when Myanmar was preparing to apply for membership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Since October 2012 the HSF has a representative office in Yangon. The HSF was the first German political foundation with a representative office in the country.



## Foreword from the Organizers

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to His Excellency U Htay Aung, Minister of Hotel and Tourism, for joining us at the Community Involvement in Tourism (CIT) Multi-Stakeholder Workshop in Naypyidaw. Further we would like to extend our appreciation to all the speakers, community representatives and participants for their valuable contribution in making this workshop successful.

We hoped this workshop would provide a platform for CIT specialists and practitioners to identify regulatory and policy changes they would like to see at national and local government levels while also allowing local community representatives and partners to share their perspective of on-the-ground impact of CIT projects in their regions. One of the key conclusions from the workshop was that Community Involvement in Tourism (CIT) projects cannot succeed without communities getting mobilized and being supported over a long period to help them understand and access the market.

We would like to encourage all of the participants to continue your amazing work and commitment towards CIT projects. Our belief is that successful CIT projects enrich Myanmar's tourism ecosystem, support the Myanmar brand and make for a more attractive diversified product. They are micro-businesses, not charity initiatives.

We plan to facilitate similar workshops annually with the next one being planned for the fourth quarter of 2016. That workshop should reflection on the results from the six projects presented this year and present new projects and emerging ideas.

In the following report you will find brief summaries from each session with quotes from participants and key messages from each presenter. We hope that you will find this report useful for your own work and that you continue to be engaged with our follow-up activities and events in upcoming months.

For more post-conference information such as presentations, reports and pictures, please visit our website: <http://www.myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org/news/community-involved-tourism.html>

Please join us in our future activities on the journey of supporting responsible tourism in Myanmar!

Kind Regards,

Vicky Bowman, Director, Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business

Dr. Nicole Häusler, Myanmar Tourism Federation

Achim Munz, Resident Representative, Hanns Seidel Foundation

## Rationale of the Workshop

In 2013 the Myanmar Government committed itself to promoting responsible tourism in the Tourism Master Plan as well as through numerous policies like the Responsible Tourism Policy (2012) and the Policy on Community Involvement in Tourism - CIT (2013).

The challenge is now to implement those policies. At present there is a lack of capacity, particularly an understanding of how to involve communities in tourism and guidance for enactment on local and national levels. A broad multi-stakeholder approach is needed to discuss and address these challenges, especially the need to safeguard communities and enable them to gain economic and social advantage from tourism development.

The increasing number of international visitors to Myanmar and growth of domestic travelers provide income opportunities for local communities, especially in rural and vulnerable areas. The prospect is to develop an increasing number of tourism services, such as local guesthouses and locally organized tourist activities, through the involvement of local communities, above and beyond existing and planned private and public sector development. This should provide a higher degree of inclusion and involvement for the local communities.

Tourism development presents not only opportunities but also challenges. Other countries in South-East Asia have already experienced this. Therefore, it is important to promote the principles of sustainable and responsible tourism development in local communities.

The workshop served as a knowledge exchange platform for all stakeholders, including government, development agencies, local business and civil society.



**Why this workshop?**

- Definition / Concept of CBT/CIT – A lot of misunderstandings in the past
- Many local communities did not understand the objectives and aims of CBT (Tourism is a service-orientated business)
- Many tourism experts did not understand the local / regional concepts of CBT/CIT
- Many local NGOs and Tour Operators did not understand the meaning of CBT (you have to focus in many aspects; participation/institutional strengthening, local cultural context and business)
- Focus has been too much on „economic benefits“ in the international discussion (aspects of participation/ social capital/ institutional strengthening are highly important and have been quite often ignored)

From Dr. Nicole Häusler's presentation Day 1: "Introduction: How the Journey Began: Policy on Community Involvement in Tourism – Where Are We Now?"

*“Partnerships begin with taking the time to really listen to and really see people...unlocking their skills and knowledge. Investing in partnerships, and working as a team to craft inspiring, responsible products will lead to better experiences for your guests.” - Peter Richards, Community-based Tourism Institute, Chiang Mai/Thailand*

## Summary of the CIT Multi-Stakeholder Workshop

Myanmar has a huge potential for CIT-Projects and a handful have already started. The early lessons from those initiatives show that they will not succeed without community mobilization and support to help them understand and access the market. Like other small businesses, CIT projects need simple, 'light touch' regulation and basic training. Monitoring results, sharing lessons and networking with other projects is also valuable for the further progress of CIT projects in Myanmar.

The workshop was attended by almost 100 participants including community representatives from some of Myanmar's first CIT projects, government officials from the Ministry of Hotel and Tourism, Environment, Culture and the Tourist Police, Myanmar tourism operators and guides, as well as international NGOs and community-based tourism specialists.

Participants shared their experience on community projects in tourism with a particular focus on common challenges like the current status of B&B services and licensing, (Village) Tour Conductor Trainings and the promotion of SMEs in tourism.

Development organizations and community representatives of six pilot projects on Community Involvement in Tourism presented and shared information about how they developed their initiatives and which challenges they faced:

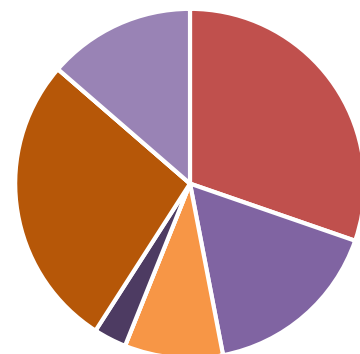
1. Pa'O, Shan State (GIZ)
2. Indawgyi Lake (Faune & Flora)
3. Myaing (Action Aid)
4. Thandaung-gyi (HSF, Peace Nexus, MTF)
5. Irrawaddy Dolphins, Mandalay (WCS)
6. Kayah State (ITC)

Conference participants were asked to identify the most important factors contributing to the success or failure for community involvement in tourism in Myanmar. The top factors they identified concerned community participation, empowerment, and organization, reflecting a similar top priorities heard at HSF's and MCRB's previous multi-stakeholder workshop on [Responsible Tourism and Human Rights](#).

Other key requirements that were identified are the licenses for bed and breakfast (B&B) and the permits to allow overnight stays in CIT locations, especially for foreigners. Overnight stays in local B&Bs will also create the opportunity for foreign visitors to better understand and enjoy Myanmar culture. B&B licenses in Thandaung-gyi, Kayin State, and the Pa'O area have already been issued. However, it is still complicated for communities to start B&B services. In the future the process needs to be simpler and facilitated by local authorities. To further help newly-opened B&Bs or locals wanting to start a B&B, HSF, LuxDev and ILO are developing an instructional manual based on their experiences in Asia, which will be published in early 2016.

Another part of the workshop was a discussion about how to ensure that local people are able to earn income, for example as local interpretative guides (or 'village tour conductors'), and what training programs are required to improve their skills and effectiveness. Since their role and that of licensed tour

## Participant profile



guides is vital to ensure the existence of three 'S's (Safety, Storytelling and Service) that tourists expect from their community tourism experience.



### Reflections on the Community Involvement in Tourism Workshop

*"Community participation is important for sustainability of CIT"*

*"To learn from what is already going on, to avoid unrealistic goals"*

*"How very important it is to make a product that will have buyers"*

*"Lots of duplicates in product-opportunity for networks of CIT"*

*"More private sector input needed, still lacking"*

*"Start wherever you are don't wait for the best moment or money"*

*"There are a lot of great projects and more scope for cooperation"*

*"Learning about different projects and approaches"*

*"Learning from each experience"*

*"Importance of community participation/mobilization"*

## Report on the Community Involvement in Tourism Multi-Stakeholder Workshop in Naypyidaw

### The Workshop was Structured in Two Parts:

This workshop was the first on the topic of “Community Involvement in Tourism in Myanmar”. It provided tourism stakeholders from government, development agencies, private sector, civil society and local communities the opportunity to share their views and knowledge. It also gave them the opportunity to discuss and compare the current status quo of the first tourism projects carried out in cooperation with local communities from various ethnic groups in different states in Myanmar. The objective of the workshop was to identify the current status of B&B services, (village) tour conductor training and promotion of SMEs in tourism, determine common challenges of the CIT-Projects, and discuss further steps.

#### Opening Ceremony

The Opening Ceremony was enriched by the contributions of high-level representatives who shared their views and experiences in relation to responsible tourism. These included H.E. U Htay Aung, Minister of Hotel and Tourism, U Yan Win, Chairman, Myanmar Tourism Federation, Achim Munz, Resident Representative, Hanns Seidel Foundation and Vicky Bowman, Director, Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business. During his opening speech, the Minister of Hotels and Tourism, H.E. U Htay Aung, emphasized the Government’s commitment to the 2013 Community Involved Tourism Policy, which was developed with the support of the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF). The Chairman of Myanmar Tourism Federation, U Yan Win also emphasized his support for community involvement in tourism in Myanmar. He welcomed the workshop

“(...) as developing Community Involvement in Tourism is a means of contributing towards rural development and poverty alleviation, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism emphasizes the empowerment of communities towards meaningful participation in the mainstream of tourism economy.” - **H.E. U Htay Aung, Minister for Hotels and Tourism**

“as an important step” in a “process of networking between different stakeholders”. He pointed out that comprehensive information and improved communication with communities and stakeholders on the ground is needed to achieve the aims of the 2013 Community Involvement in Tourism policy and Tourism Master Plan. Furthermore, Achim Munz from HSF stated during his opening speech at the workshop that for him the workshop presents a good opportunity to articulate a Community Involvement in Tourism strategy for the future, particularly concerning topics like B&B licenses, tour guides, product development and distribution channels. He also mentioned that CIT could be a local driver for community activities and could go hand in hand with improvements in the social sector

“(...) I realize that this Workshop is held for the various tourism stakeholders in order to discuss possible collaboration areas and activities which will be followed by concrete recommendations from the participants. The productive outcome will be taken in account and practice for the development of Community Involvement in Tourism in priority destinations.” - **H.E. U Htay Aung, Minister for Hotels and**

and environmental protections. He also pointed out that in Myanmar's rich culture offered good community-based product development opportunities. Vicky Bowman from MCRB added that due to the complexity of community involvement in tourism it is important to learn from failures of projects in other regions.

## PART I: CIT in Myanmar - Developing a Deeper Understanding of CIT Pilot Projects

### Session I: How the Journey Began: Policy on Community Involvement in Tourism – Where Are We Now? By Dr. Nicole Häusler

After the opening ceremony, Dr. Nicole Häusler gave an introduction about the situation concerning the CIT-Policy in 2013 and the current status quo after two years of enactment. During her presentation she shared her experiences on community based tourism projects in Bolivia in 2004/2005, which she described as her "personal nightmare". She pointed out that most of these projects failed and harmed the communities, in part



because they all followed the same profile of opening a lodge near a protected area in a very short time period. Also during the development of the project neither the local community nor the private sector was included. Additionally the lodges all targeted foreign ecotourists while leaving out the big tourist group—the Bolivian middle class. Häusler concluded her presentation by making a strong statement cautioning against similar projects in

Myanmar.

Presentation of Dr. Nicole Häusler

#### Dr. Nicole Häusler

*"There are a lot of misunderstanding in the definition, concepts and objectives of terms among the stakeholders." (in terms of CIT/CBT)*

*"In the international discussion the focus has been too much on economic benefits but there is much more than that which is highly important but has been quite often ignored like aspect of participation, social capital or institutional strengthening."*

#### Core Principles of CIT according to Dr. Nicole Häusler:

- Do no harm
- Do not raise high expectation
- Informed involvement
- Respect culture and religion
- Gender sensitivity
- Sound business planning
- Takes time
- Success within mainstream tourism network (engagement with private sector)
- Enhance rights over tourism resources

Quotes from the evaluation form on the session:

*"Specially the personal experiences in the past"*

*"Best/worst practice examples well used and make experiments more tangible"*



## Session II: Looking Beyond Borders: Lessons Learnt – Experiences of Community Involvement in Tourism from Thailand and Laos



Peter Richards from the Community-based Tourism Institute in Chiang Mai Thailand and Lee Sheridan, General Manager of Journeys Adventure Travel, formerly IFC and SNV Consultant, shared their experiences about Community-based Tourism (CBT) in Thailand and Laos. Lee Sheridan pointed out that it is important to do more than simply bring tourists into the community and that standard business principles need to be applied in areas like market access, management of bookings and payment processes. Afterwards Peter Richards listed five

factors that his experience in Thailand suggests are important for successful CBT projects: People & Product Potential (product and social cohesion areas), Preparation (expertise), Partnerships, Value Adding Marketing (clear explanation by tour operator of why CBT is different and better) and Supportive Policies. He further stated that a balanced approach is needed referring to Theerapappisit: Policy makers “preferred to develop tourism resources with measurable economic ‘outcomes’”, while local people prioritized “a mixture of modern and traditional lifestyles where neither threatens the other, and where there is community level participation in defining this mixture” (Theerapappisit, 2008, p.279 ).



### Experiences from Laos

#### Successes:

- Luang Prabang Night Market: \$millions spent per year on traditionally pro-poor products.
- Stay Another Day: driving tourists to businesses and projects with demonstrated community benefits.
- Nam Ha Eco Guide Unit: Guide cooperative under Provisional Tourism Department.
  - Offered 1-4 day treks with village homestays
  - Generated revenue for villages, national park, guides and provisional Government.
  - Good connections with the private sector
  - Private company given exclusivity to run rafting and kayaking trips – specialised skillset and product diversification
  - Nam Ha model was replicated in at least 5 other provinces.
  - Challenge was product diversification.

#### Market for CBT in Laos:

- Highly orientated towards western backpackers
- Some use by local and international travel agents.

#### Presentation of Lee Sheridan:

### Peter Richards:

*In the past, we have failed to fully share lessons learned.*

*We have so much to learn from over two decades of experiences across the region (... ) successes and mistakes:*

- Best of bottom up and top down approaches*
- Goal focused and more holistic approaches*
- Timed projects and organic movement*
- Let's work as a team*
- Think outside the box*
- Share expertise*
- Make CIT the best so far!*

*Quotes from the evaluation form on the session:*

*“Peter Richards examples were excellent, good to show 20 years on”*

*“Specially the very concrete impacts from Lee”*

## Session III Part A & Part B: Pilot Projects on

### Community Involvement in Tourism - Case Studies

In these two sessions, pilot projects from different regions in Myanmar presented their current project status. Saw Bo Tar, chairman of the Thandaung-gyi Tourism Development Working Group (TTDWG), gave an insight on the multi-stakeholder involvement in the Thandaung-gyi project. He stated that their main challenges at the moment are lack of funding, hospitality services, language skills and their lacking knowledge and experience concerning tourism. Members of Parami Network Development presented the first three of nine B&B facilities that will be established in the Pa'O region of Shan State. The objectives of the project are to build local capacity for community-involved tourism, help young people, raise the village funds and create job opportunities. In their presentation they also emphasized the importance of creating a best practice exchange platform and stated that they would continue to share their knowledge and experience.

The image is a collage of presentation slides and photographs from the CIT conference. The slides include:

- Group Formation:**
  - Following a village meeting at London a community volunteer group was founded (with selected interested people) to develop eco-tourism in Indawgyi.
  - The non-for-profit group was named "In Chit Tha" (Jawers of Indawgyi). It's objectives are to provide eco-tourism services, support the conservation of Indawgyi Lake and the livelihoods of the local communities.
  - Profits from eco-tourism are spent on community development projects and environmental conservation.
- Next Steps:** Includes photos of a boat on a lake and a building.
- Methodologies - Cultural Tourism Tours:**
  - Tour design: community-led, locally owned and operated, locally managed, locally controlled.
  - Product:
    - Developing community-based tourism products and services that are culturally authentic, environmentally friendly, socially responsible, and economically viable.
    - Developing local guides and tour operators who are trained in cultural, historical, and environmental knowledge.
    - Developing local tour operators who are trained in customer service and safety.
  - Product Development:
    - Developing local tour operators who are trained in customer service and safety.
    - Developing local tour operators who are trained in customer service and safety.
  - Product Marketing:
    - Developing local tour operators who are trained in customer service and safety.
    - Developing local tour operators who are trained in customer service and safety.
- Lessons learnt:**
  - The difference between pure trekking and CIT.
  - What kind of capacity we need for B&Bs.
  - How to write contracts and bills.
  - Reporting to development partners.
  - Currency exchange, transferring money to a foreign country and managing budget lines.
  - Business planning and how to manage and distribute earnings.
  - How to find tourism points of interest within the communities.
- Way Forward...:**
  - Launching of Community Based Tourism
  - Testing by end of 2015
  - In partnership with Journey Adventure, we are expecting at least 1048 tourists in 2016
- Organisational Structure of the TTDWG:** A flowchart showing the structure of the Thandaung-gyi Tourism Development Working Group.

Photos show participants at a conference table, including a man in a green hat speaking into a microphone.

Presentation of the different CIT projects by ActionAid, ITC, Parami Network, TTDWG, Fauna & Flora, WSC

During the presentation of the Myaing Action Aid project, Shihab Uddin Ahamad explained that construction is totally led by the community but that they still need help with the management of lodge services. Also the Indawgyi Lake project by Fauna & Fauna International stated that they are currently in process of developing marketing materials, like logos for branding, and fixed tour packages to increase the average staying time of tourists. They are also currently building a classroom to allow them to focus more on wildlife educational activities. The Irrawaddy Dolphins project in Mandalay, which is a Collaboration of Wildlife Conservation and Ministry for Fisheries, presented their tourism plans including a tourist center in Mandalay to protect the dolphins and to generate income for the fishermen. The last project presented was the ITC project in Kayah State. During the presentation they stated that their methodology is to focus on local market linkages and work with tour operators. Their main goal is to establish a two-way approach, tapping into the tourism market via tour operators and independent bookings.

*Quotes from the evaluation form on the session:*

*"Very realistic."*

## Session IV: Comparison of Presented Pilot Projects; Identification of Common Challenges and Pitfalls

In her presentation, Peggy Weidemann summarized the challenges faced by the six pilot projects presented at the workshop. She encouraged the projects to implement monitoring mechanisms to measure benefits, progress and failures. She also addressed the government and encouraged them to publish guidelines about B&B licensing in order to make access to licenses and permits easier. Furthermore, she highlighted the importance of a diverse and market-oriented product development.



### Peggy Weidemann:

*"(...) I have often heard "The community doesn't feel ready." Or "We need more Training". That might be true and Training/Education is important but how much training is needed to be ready? (...) See practice as part of the training process. (...) None of us would be where we are today without our experience."*

*"We cannot learn and develop unless we have some space to make mistakes" (Peter Richards, Interview 2015)*

Peggy mentioned the following as the main **challenges for local initiative** based on her research:

- Lack of knowledge (no tourism experience)
- Management (contact person for tourists)
- Short project duration to prepare & implement
- Involving local people
- Lack of infrastructure (technology, roads, transport)
- Training/meetings vs. own job
- Working with different policies
- Parts of training are not suitable for the community according to their culture and government laws

While for **Development Organization, she identified the following challenges:**

- Mobilization/Involvement of local people
- Different perspective from Stakeholders – Balance!
- Find the right partner to work with
- Time
- Maintain local commitment
- On-site-management
- Succeed in the marketplace
- Money
- Managing impacts
- Political situation
- B&B and guesthouse permission

**myanmar**  
TOURISM FEDERATION

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**RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

- o CBT & CIT are used randomly → reform the CIT-Policy by using the knowledge gained from the practice
- o B&B license and Homestay – Confusion about the current status
- o Diversity and market orientate the Product development
- o Everyone is doing their own thing/way → building a network & collaborate by inviting people from other fields (Nature Resource Management, sustainable agriculture)
- o Implementing a monitoring / evaluation strategy
- o Be aware of too many manuals → Work together!
- o Regional Do's & Don't's and/or codes of conducts
- o Training vs. Practicing → the community will become more confident gradually by learning from previous experiences (e.g. lessons learned from pilot tours)

Presentation of Peggy Weidemann

*Quotes from the evaluation form on the session:*

*"Good overview and good to see the use of slides, very confident! Well done"*

*"Well-structured and filtered main challenges, well presented"*

## Projects in the Pipeline – An Opportunity for Participants to Share Ideas and Plans

During this open session participants could share their upcoming projects or research. The following organizations presented:

- MCRB – are there CIT opportunities in the Tada-Oo area?
- GIZ - Shan State Tourism Development Project
- Tourism Transparency – Chin State
- Arakan Nature Lodge Project – Ec lodge in Rakhine State
- MOHT – include JICA CBT Project in Bagan area
- Instituto Oikos – Lampi Island



## Session V: Identifying Priorities – Voting Session

The day was wrapped up with an interactive “voting” activity where each participant could vote using special software. In this voting exercise participants were asked to identify the most important factors for the success failure of CIT projects.

Attendees identified the following as the most important factors for successful CIT projects: Community organization and management support (21%), Access to long-term funding and coaching (16.3%) and Tourism product development according to market needs (14.7%). Top votes in terms of the most important factors responsible for the failure of CIT projects were: Lack of monitoring and therefore absence of internal reflection in the community (i.e. what works well, what does not) (18.3%), lack of mobilization & involvement of community

(16.6%) and Top-down approach by development partner and/or private sector partner (16.6%); needs and ideas of community are not taken into consideration (16.6%).



The following are the exact results of the voting exercise:

What is the most important factor for successful CIT projects?

1. Community organization and management support (21%)
2. Access to long-term funding & coaching (16.3%)
3. Tourism product development according to the market needs (14.7%)
4. Transparent and simple B&B licensing procedure (13%)
5. Better understanding of the needs and wants of tourists (8.1%)
6. Better cultural & business-sense understanding across stakeholders (6.5%)
7. Home-stays developed as an accommodation option (5%)
8. Relaxing requirements for village tour guide qualifications (5%)
9. Support from the mainstream tourism sector (5%)
10. Knowledge of and access to marketing tools (3.2%)

What are the most important factors for failures of CIT projects?

1. Lack of monitoring and therefore absence of internal reflection in the community (what works well, what does not) (18.3%)
2. Lack of mobilization & involvement of community (16.6%)
3. Top-down approach by development partner and/or private sector partner; needs and ideas of community are not taken into consideration (16.6%)
4. Unstable political situation (15%)
5. Identified community is actually not a “selling point” (no real cultural attraction, difficult to reach) (8.3%)
6. Lack of identification of the market – who are my target groups? (6%)
7. Lack of private sector involvement (5%)
8. Short-term project over a period of a few weeks or months only (5%)
9. Poor or no marketing strategy (5%)
10. Maintaining the commitment in the community, even in “harder times” (lack of expected tourists) (3%)

*Quotes from the evaluation form on the session:*

*“Good forum to poll votes”*

*“Fun voting”*

*“Very good tool in between (participation of all)”*

*“Specially the viewing of the results right away”*

## PART 2: CIT in Myanmar – Developing a deeper understanding of CIT Pilot Projects

### Session VI: Promotion of Small Enterprises in Tourism – What has been achieved so far? What are the next steps?

During the first presentation on the second day Thuta Aung from BIF/ HamsaHub and Greg Klemm of CBI Tourism Expert presented two projects. Thuta Aung pointed out that he feels there is a lack of innovation among Myanmar companies. He also pointed out that HamsaHub's current CIT strategy is to bring in trainers to different locations and support product and package innovation. Greg Klemm explained that they support 15 inbound Myanmar tour operators in their project and try to establish links to the European tour operator's network to help promote CIT initiatives among independent travelers. Also in the future they plan to establish a CBT website and special promotions.



#### **Thuta Aung:**

*“Undertake research to better understand current demand for tourist guides of different levels in different destinations around the country.”*

*“Identify focal points, set out a process and work-plan to review and strengthen current training delivery, and develop an industry-relevant training partnership.”*

#### *Selection Criteria of PPIC according to Greg Klemm:*

- > Sustainability and Do no harm
- > Benefit to low income local people
- > Environmental impact
- > Viability
- > Innovation

### Session VII: Bed & Breakfast

During this session Marlo Perry of the Myanmar Tourism Federation (MTF) presented a draft outline of the “Learners Guide - An Introduction to B&B/Guesthouse Operations and Management”. This manual is a collaborative project of Hanns Seidel, LuxDev and MTF and targets small guesthouses and B&Bs. Also Dr. Nicole Häusler provided an update on the current status of B&B licensing, pointing out that there are two different licensing processes depending on whether the B&B has more or fewer than 10 rooms.





Presentation of Marlo Perry

**Dr. Nicole Häusler:**

*“Getting a B&B license is extremely difficult. E.g. in Thandaung-gyi it took very long, plus support from an international organization”*

*“(...) the process needs to be simplified, more clear guidance, licenses should be issued at regional level.”*

**Session VIII: Current Status Quo on “(Village) Tour Conductor Training and Curriculum”**

The presentation of the current status of village tour conductor training was the final presentation of the second day. Sai Win of the Myanmar Tour Guide Association (MTGA) of Southern Shan State pointed out that the training would also cover security issues like trafficking or child labor. Thuta Aung added that for them the most important factor is to make the training open for everyone and base it on market needs and international standards so that a secure employment opportunity for the participants could be provided afterwards.

**Thuta Aung:**

*“Our idea is to have the training open to everyone who wants.”*

*“Training based on market needs with the aims secure employment for trainees.”*

**Nine Key Intervention Areas**

No	Interventions
1	Define Tourist Guide levels, roles & responsibilities
2	Assist NSSA with competency standards for each tourist guide category/level
3	Decentralised training and identifying priority hubs for training delivery
4	MTGA, UMTA and MOHT collaboration to review and strengthen current training delivery
5	Review tourist guide training materials and curricula
6	Train trainers and occupational experts
7	Steps to build MTGA capability
8	Review market conditions and processes for MTGA and UMTA training delivery
9	Review market conditions for private sector training delivery

Presentation of Thuta Aung

All presentations from the projects are available at:

<http://www.myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org/news/community-involved->

### Session IX Part A & B: World Café Style Discussion and Presentation of Outcomes

The last part of the workshop was a big world cafe style discussion followed by the presentation of the results of the group discussion. The participants could choose between the three topics of B&B manual license, village tour conductor training and CIT marketing. Myanmar language groups as well as English ones were formed. Following are the results of the different group discussions:



#### B&B Manual Licensing Group

The first group to present their results was the B&B manual license English speaking group. The group developed five key points that the manual needs to include and added that it would be important to establish a website to share all CIT materials, information and contact details. The following are the key-points:

- Serve as an introduction to the market and help small guesthouse owners on how to set up a guesthouse.
- Propose low-cost ways to improve the accommodation
- Give a closer insights on business planning and targeting
- Raise awareness of marketing measurements that can be used like TripAdvisor or Facebook
- Give advice on how to improve accommodation in a low-cost way, manage bookings and improve communication with customers.



The Myanmar group that worked on the topic came to the conclusion that there are five key points that need to be taken into account for running a successful B&B:

- The facilities need to be good and the service hospitable so that guests feel welcome and have an “at home” feeling
- Safety and security is essential
- Environmental preservation is crucial, including a waste management and recycling system
- Maintenance, service, food and hygiene are also really important

### Village Tour Conductor Group

The village tour conductor training group first pointed out six improvement measures that need to be taken into account when holding a training:

- Locally tailor the training and to train the tour conductors better on how to work with foreigners
- Trainers should interact more with community members to increase the local focus and develop materials for specific areas that could take on a story-based narrative
- Knowledge-sharing with the ministries should take place
- The 3'S should be embedded into the training
- National and local tour guides could team up to build a network and develop a code of conduct
- Local tour guides do not necessarily need to be licensed because their local knowledge and the training might be sufficient for them to work as facilitators for national guides

The group also listed benefits of the local tour conductor training:

- Job opportunities will be created for locals
- The community will be more developed
- Local tour guides have better knowledge of their region than national ones and are better equipped to explain the history and story of their region since they can relate to it

During the presentation, the group explained that there are still problems with the trainings, especially with regard to who organizes the trainings. For example, it is still not clear if it is the task of the ministry or specialized organizations. They also pointed out that there is still a lack of knowledge concerning the do's and don'ts in special Myanmar regions.



### CIT Marketing Group

To present the results the CIT marketing Myanmar group used a SWOT analysis. During the presentation they first identified the tourism target group for the CIT projects as eco-tourists, researchers and adventurers and pointed out that an awareness-raising process has to be enacted by the community, travel agents and tourists.

- Strengths: Regional and social products, authentic rural experience, relationship between locals and tourists
- Weaknesses: Language barrier, lack of knowledge and information, lack of basic infrastructure, safety and security concerns
- Opportunities: Job opportunities, income creation, development of the local infrastructure and skills, by sharing daily life with tourist
- Threats: Tour operators maybe behave unethically, the culture and environment could be harmed

The English group that worked on the same topic also identified a target group and presented their recommendations for a successful CIT approach in Myanmar. The target groups that would be relevant for the CIT approach were identified as: backpackers, couples, small groups, niche travelers, active seniors with passion, elder people from 60 to 75 years of age and experienced hikers. The presented recommendations were:

- Focus on an online marketing approach by using resources like TripAdvisor, Wiki Travel or Facebook to promote CIT projects among tourists and tour operators
- Target niche markets like schools, universities or volunteer platforms
- Work closely with key players like tour guides, hotels, local tour or travel agencies, and communicate with tourists via direct marketing

- Local participation is crucial during the whole process, including offering unique products, having motivated tour operators and highlighting a unique selling proposition
- Offer unique experiences like romantic sunset and dinner walks, pilgrimage tours, special couple offers or student offers
- Involve the government and the NGOs as well as tour operators and overseas Burmese to help with marketing and other advisory tasks

*Quotes from the evaluation form on the session:*

*“Was good though that there was actually a lot of time for the presentation”*

*“This was the best part of the workshop”*

*“It’s a nice method to exchange and get new ideas”*

## FEEDBACK

The feedback for the workshop was positive. Workshop participants expressed a strong desire to have annual CIT workshops. Many participants especially appreciated the presentation held by Peter Richards and Lee Sheridan and noted that they brought up excellent examples. The polling exercise and the world cafe style group discussion were also rated positively by over 80% of the participants. It was still noted that there should be more participation especially from villagers who can share their experiences. Asked about what kind of topics the participants would like to have included in upcoming workshops, most participants noted that they would prefer more insight into monitoring, marketing and licensing and also have feedback on the pilot projects centering on the question of what worked out and what did not. Some participants expressed concern that the most salient message from the conference should not be that it is not easy to implement tourism ideas but rather that there is a need for new projects and new ideas.

The discussions and feedback show that there is a need for cooperation by all stakeholders (government, ministries, private sector, multilateral organizations, NGOs, CSOs, local community, academia), as well as within their own constituencies, to spread common understanding of issues related to responsible tourism and Community Involvement in Tourism. All stakeholders seemed to have the same goal: promote responsible tourism in Myanmar and contribute to sustainable development. However, approaches to communication, consultation processes and sharing information differ.



## CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS

The Hanns Seidel Foundation and Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business welcomed active input and discussions at the workshop and will consider the received feedback. The workshops showed that successful CIT projects (micro-businesses, not charity initiatives) enrich Myanmar's tourism ecosystem, support the Myanmar brand, and are an attractive product. The discussions once again reinforced the need for more on-the-ground implementation of the Community Involved Tourism Policy (2013). One of the key conclusions from the workshop was that Community Involvement in Tourism (CIT) projects cannot succeed without community support and mobilization over a long period to help them understand and access the market. The other conclusion was that there is a need for the establishment of an Advisory Committee on CIT.

The Hanns Seidel Foundation and Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business in association with the Myanmar Tourism Federation are planning to host the Community Involvement in Tourism Conference annually, and the next one is scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2016. Additionally, four small workshops (in tourist locations like Ngapali, Dawei, Bagan and Inle Lake) are planned. The workshops will include a wider range of issues, such as environmental issues, but will also include sessions on CIT.

## APPENDIX 1

Evaluation Responses from Feedback Forms distributed to participants

Reflection: What was the most important message you gained from today`s session? How would it impact your work?

- Community participation is important for sustainability of CBT
- To learn from what is already going on, to avoid unrealistic goals
- It is very important to make a product that will have buyers
- There are many duplicates in product opportunity for networks of CBT
- More private sector input is needed
- Start wherever you are, and don't wait for the best moment or money
- There are a lot of great projects and more scope for cooperation
- It is important to learn about different projects and approaches
- It is important to learn from each experience
- Community participation/mobilization is important
- More could have been shared in terms of strategy
- Was interesting seeing all the projects and inputs
- It was good to see what has been done already and what could be improved

Would you be interested in a follow-up workshop/dialogue sessions building on the discussions at the workshop?  
If yes what subjects would you like to see covered?

- Community mobilization
- Licensing
- Possible ethnic problems that may arise
- Marketing
- Monitoring
- Communication across CIT projects

## APPENDIX 2

### Presentations

All presentations from the workshop can be found at: <http://www.myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org/news/community-involved-tourism.html>



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