



CONFERENCE REPORT



NCCT

National Conference
on Communities
and Tourism
2019

Decentralisation – Destination – Development

4th National Conference on Communities and Tourism

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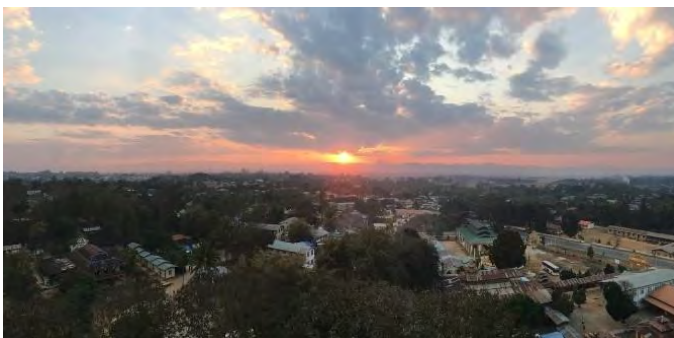
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INTRODUCTION

The Fourth National Conference on Communities and Tourism (NCCT) 2019 was held in Loikaw, Kayah State from the 6th-8th June with over 300 participants. The NCCT brought together representatives from national, regional and local government, private and public sector and local tourism organisations, national and international tourism consultants, development partners, experts and community members. The main purpose of the conference was to discuss opportunities and challenges related to responsible tourism development in communities in Myanmar. Organisers included the Hanns Seidel Foundation Myanmar (HSF), Myanmar Responsible Tourism Institute (MRTI), Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB) and the International Trade Centre (ITC), the Ministry Of Hotels and Tourism (MOHT) and Kayah State Government.

Following last year's NCCT conference in Kalaw, Shan State, this year the theme *Decentralisation – Destination – Development* aimed to inspire participants to exchange ideas and gain knowledge from successful tourism-related stakeholders. Discussions focused on ways to increase community involvement in tourism and *initiatives* engaging more parts of society. This aspect tends to be overlooked during the planning stages of tourism development. The NCCT also encouraged participants to cooperate and create partnerships among different actors, in support of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The conference also looked at environmental and social issues in the context of tourism destination planning.

This report provides a summary of this year's NCCT Conference including speeches, panel discussions and workshops. At the end of the report, there is an extensive list of final recommendations and the conference agenda.



DAY 1

- 6 June 2019 -

OPENING REMARKS



The Minister of Finance and Planning from Kayah State **U MAW MAW**, initiated the conference, sharing that Kayah State's own experience in tourism development begun recently but so far had only taken off gradually. Kayah State Government has strived to improve infrastructure to attract tourists, but more investment and tourism promotion is needed. The Minister highlighted that negative environmental effects due to increasing tourism should be kept to a minimum, and preferably avoided altogether. He also stressed the need for inclusive discussions to formulate effective policies and to ensure responsible investment for the growth of sustainable tourism development in the region.



Next **ACHIM MUNZ**, Resident Representative of Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) welcomed participants and introduced the work that HSF has been supporting since 2012. This includes federalism, responsible tourism and Myanmar's integration into ASEAN. Tourism in Myanmar has changed; aside from popular destinations such as Bagan, new destinations including Chin, Kachin and Kayah States have started to attract more tourists. As such, it is crucial to engage in consultations, debates and dialogues on decentralisation for the sustainable development of tourism. However, he highlighted that Myanmar is still a young democracy. He encouraged participants to see the conference as a platform to learn and understand that tourism development and community development should go hand in hand.



VICKY BOWMAN, Director of Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB) explained that responsible business means business conduct that ensures the long-term interests of Myanmar and its people, based on responsible social and environmental performance in line with international standards. MCRB works with the Myanmar Government and other relevant stakeholders on issues such as transparency, anti-corruption, occupational health and safety and due diligence in creating a responsible business environment in Myanmar. In Kayah State, it is important to preserve the natural beauty of the region which is one of the

main reasons for tourists visiting. Therefore, creating hotel zones or similar developments that could potentially harm the environment would be an irrevocable mistake. It is also important that all stakeholders view tourism development as positively contributing to the promotion of economic development and cooperation and not as a threat. She highlighted that increasing tourism also has the potential to become a source of conflict. A well-developed tool to assess potential conflict aspects of tourism development, as well as methods to mitigate these is the *Do No Harm Toolkit*, developed by the Business Innovation Facility.

TOURISM IN KAYAH STATE



U LIN ZAW HTUT, Deputy Director of Hotels and Tourism in Kayah State, gave an update on tourism in the state. Kayah State's appeal to international tourists made it a good destination for Community Based Tourism (CBT) implemented according to the CBT Standard Guidelines, especially as it is easily accessible by flight, car and bus. To date, four CBT sites have already been established in Kayah State. Furthermore, the opening of the international border

crossing (BP13) to Thailand is in progress with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between sister cities Loikaw and Mae Hong Son. This will again facilitate international travel to Kayah State.

It is especially important that all community members benefit from CBT. Therefore, 10% of profits are contributed directly to a special community fund. He added that tourists coming to Loikaw and the surrounding region can enjoy culture, try traditional food and discover traditional costumes. The region is not only culturally interesting, it also offers attractive natural environments where tourists can participate in activities like canoeing in Pon Creek or ecotourism in Hpruso. With many opportunities still ahead, tourism in Kayah State has begun developing in the right direction. At the end of his speech, U Lin Zaw Htut ensured conference-goers that he would incorporate recommendations from the conference into his plans to further develop tourism.



U KYAW MOE, head of the Government Administration Department (GAD) of Kayah State, presented the ‘One State One Township Programme’, which includes 22 provinces, 123 villages and 118,000 people. The programme aims to maintain a clean and well-functioning state including infrastructure developments such as streets, public bathrooms, signboards with maps at tourist sites and proper maintenance of religious sites. Popular tourist destinations such as Htee Se Khar Waterfall, Kyat Cave, Aung Tha Byay Cave, etc. should be prioritized. Htee Se Khar Waterfall still needs improvements including an organised space where cars, motorcycles and bikes can be parked.

THE ROLE OF DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONS (DMOs) IN MYANMAR

DAW OHN MAR CHO from Kalaw Tourism Organisation (KTO) shared her knowledge on DMOs in Myanmar. The Kalaw Tourism Organization is an initiative of local individuals and the business community with a strong commitment to promote responsible tourism in cooperation with local stakeholders, including the public sector. The KTO aims to preserve the natural environment and cultural heritage, to enhance social and economic development, and to raise awareness of positive and negative impacts of tourism. Strong cooperation, community work, destination marketing and contribution to the development of Kalaw creates demand and builds a good reputation, which ultimately leads to more tourism. DMOs can manage and promote cooperation in areas such as destination marketing, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), the development of human resources and activities including city development for environmental conservation. She highlighted that the role of DMOs in Myanmar will become increasingly important as new destinations emerge and competition grows.

KTO, founded in 2016, consists of 40 members. All tourism stakeholders in Kalaw are welcome to join the group. Major achievements include bringing stakeholders together to form a steering group. With the help of the GIZ and others, KTO has created a range of extensive signposted maps of Kalaw¹, organised a variety of tourism-related events, awareness campaigns, educational workshops and trainings, and won the 2017 Myanmar Responsible Tourism Award for Best Responsible Tourism Destination. In spite of its great success, KTO still has challenges it needs to address, including a lack of data, needs assessments and resource gaps, improved internal communication channels. The latter is due to the lack of permanent staff as the financial capacity of the organisation is relatively weak.

¹ <https://www.visitkalaw.com/maps>



Since the implementation of Kalaw tourist maps, there has been a 15% increase in overnight stays because tourists decide to stay longer when they see the many activities that Kalaw had to offer, she noted. Before KTO's involvement Kalaw in Shan state was only considered a starting point for treks to Inle Lake. Tourists did not take the time to explore the town. Now they are also staying to enjoy heritage sites in Kalaw. KTO firmly believes in cooperation to successfully manage a responsible and sustainable tourism environment in Kalaw.

PANEL DISCUSSION: SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE TOURISM IN MYANMAR

The panel discussion facilitated by **DAW SABEI AUNG** from Nature Dreams Travel, focused on tourism business growth, challenges faced by tourism businesses and how sustainable and responsible tourism should be conducted. Panelists included U Myo Min Zaw from Inle Canoe Lady, Daw Swe Swe Lwin from Inle Horse Club, U Thant Zin from Ayeyarwaddy Dolphin CBT and Daw Tin Win Maw from Green Hill Valley Elephant Camp. All of these businesses were winners in different categories of the 2018 Myanmar Responsible Tourism Award.



U MYO MIN ZAW considered offering canoe rides on Inle Lake after noticing how the increasing number of tourists on the lake was causing noise pollution due to loud boat engines. He wanted to develop a sustainable tourism product for the region and started organising canoe trips. The local community became involved in the project via part time jobs offered by Inle Canoe Lady, especially women from Paut Par Village. Working for Inle Canoe Lady allows these women to continue working in the local cheroot workshops while giving them the chance to increase

their income. Meanwhile, tourists can experience life on the lake first-hand whilst being guided by a local. After U Myo Min Zaw made the canoes more comfortable and convenient for tourists, the amount of canoe rides increased. Currently, over 1000 canoe tours are conducted per year.



DAW SWE SWE LWIN (KU KU) wanted to prevent the extinction of a local horse breed found near Inle Lake and started a quality horseback riding service for tourists. According to Myanmar traditions, only men are allowed to ride horses. The horses are mostly used for novitiation ceremonies. She thought of letting tourists themselves ride horses to explore the region. She founded her business in 2016 with limited horse-riding

routes and only a few tourists. Initially, her business was not making much profit. After receiving client feedback on which horse-riding routes or nature panoramas they enjoyed most, her service improved. Now she owns a successful and sustainable horseback riding business. With the motto

One person – One horse – One tree, Inle Horse Club supports the environment by asking every tourist to plant a tree when they come to visit the Horse Club.

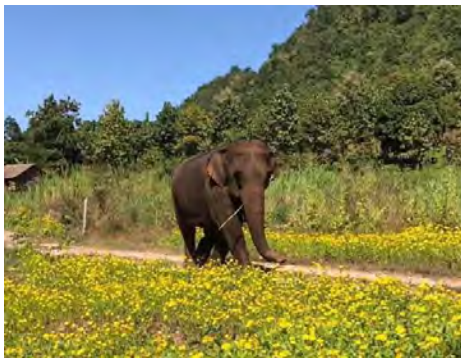
U THANT ZIN is an expert on Ayeyarwaddy dolphins. The relationship between the fishermen and Ayeyarwaddy dolphins is unique to the area between Mandalay and Sagaing where the Ayeyarwaddy dolphin conservation area is located and has existed over 150 years. The conservation and CBT project was initiated in 2005. CBT in this region serves three important purposes:



- 1) Preventing the disappearance of dolphins;
- 2) maintaining the culture of cooperative fishing; and
- 3) generating direct income for 279 community members from the area.

The main challenges this region faces are illegal electric-shock fishing and lack of equal opportunities among fishermen from different villages.

DAW TIN WIN MAW explained the historical, cultural and religious significance elephants have in Myanmar. Despite their symbolic importance, elephants are often enslaved especially for the use of timber logging and entertainment. In Myanmar, around 5000 elephants are owned privately or by the government. When these tame elephants grow old they are often abandoned even though they cannot survive on their own.



At Green Hill Valley (GHV) Elephant Camp, old retired elephants are given a better life. Awareness and education are needed to run a sustainable elephant camp. It is important to treat elephants correctly and to discourage people from using torturous training methods. Safety guidelines for people who train the elephants and tourists who interact with them are a priority for GHV. Since the elephants are old and injured following years of hard work and abuse, it is not an easy job and requires a lot of devotion, time and money. Meanwhile, Green Hill Valley Elephant Camp also ensures that elephant caretakers receive subsidies to send their children to school.

LOIKAW AS A TOURISM COMMUNITY / WELCOME FROM THE HOST COMMUNITY



DR. DAW KHIN SITHU, Member of Pyithu Hluttaw from Kayah State highlighted that there are nine different ethnicities living in Kayah State, including the Kayah ethnic group. She stressed the importance of considering local communities and their needs when implementing tourism-related activities. Hotels should be built with a focus on preserving cultural traditions. In general, ethnic minorities profit the least from major projects in Kayah State. This needs to be changed. She also addressed other challenges in tourism development including properly executed decentralisation, the prevention of child labour and sexual harassment, tour guide license issuing and the lack of awareness

regarding CBT and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR should benefit the community in terms of environment, health, etc. One of her main messages was that honesty is a crucial factor in responsible tourism. She stated that corruption does not only concern financial aspects, such as the giving and receiving of bribes but that it also corrupts human nature. Finally, Daw Khin Sithu expressed her concerns about environmental problems like deforestation and the lack of electricity still prevalent in many households in and surrounding Loikaw. With the nearby Lawpita hydro-power plant supplying electricity to large parts of the country this seems especially unfair.

DAY 2

- 7 June 2019 -

DECENTRALISATION – DESTINATIONS – DEVELOPMENT: THE STORY OF KAYAH TOURISM DEVELOPMENT



The second day of the conference started with a speech by **MARIE-CLAUDE-FRAUENRATH** from the International Trade Centre (ITC). She discussed the benefits of CBT. CBT is just one part of ITC's inclusive tourism project, which covers many other aspects such as destination development and supporting creative tourism activities, such as visiting local Kayah sausage-making businesses. ITC seeks to enhance Myanmar's tourism industry as a way to alleviate poverty and support rural

economic development. ITC also supports the Kayah State Government by coaching Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MoHT) staff on how to collect statistics and improve marketing strategies. At regional level, they support decentralised tourism committees. Finally, working with community level actors can help improve the tourism sector through innovation. Community

members often suggest products and ideas that others would never have known would be interesting for tourism.



DAW WINNIE MAI suggested that ITC’s actions in Kayah State could be shared as an example for future inclusive tourism initiatives in the country. ITC has developed a Learning Centre model which is not a physical building but rather a cross-sector network of stakeholders who share their roles, responsibilities and experiences. In Kayah State, ITC established a group of CBT trainers who are now able to organise and provide training to other communities independently. Furthermore, through the ‘Training of Trainers’ (ToT) initiative, discussions about issues and different experiences allow for effective peer-to-peer learning.

U PASCAL KHOO THWE elaborated on the process of establishing CBT projects. First, villages should be assessed on their suitability for tourism. The next step is to train villagers and help them understand how they could benefit from tourism. This process takes around six months and during the initial stages, there is little trust or confidence. Trust needs to be built over time and includes only making promises that can be kept.

NEW TOURISM REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND DECENTRALISATION IN MYANMAR

The panel discussion on the New Tourism Regulatory Framework and Decentralisation in Myanmar was moderated by **U WIN MIN** from MCRB. The main topic of the discussion was how the 2018 Tourism Law could benefit regional tourism development and how people were chosen to the new Regional Tourism Working Committees and what their tasks were. As the new Tourism Law empowers Regional Committees, their future cooperation with businesses and other tourism stakeholders, as well as their role in ensuring environmental protection and tourism safety were also addressed.

Firstly, ITC consultant **DR. NICOLE HÄUSLER** elaborated on what regulations could improve the tourism industry as well as implications of the new Tourism Law for national and regional tourism development in Myanmar. Once all tourism committees (Central Committee on National Tourism, Tourism Working Committee, Regional Tourism Working Committees) are officially formed, strong cooperation becomes vital. Since the committees' tasks overlap, responsibilities should be divided and coordinated efficiently. Dr. Häusler recommended training members of the public sector in tourism planning, and to work on strategies as well as master plans at national and regional levels, taking into consideration the role of newly established DMOs in some destinations. Committees should streamline their focus on regional development matters, facilitating processes for tourism actors and not overcomplicating their tasks. Meanwhile, although Chin State licenses are now issued at state level, tourism businesses must still travel great distances to reach the MOHT office in Hakha.



MOHT official **U LIN ZAW HTUT** explained how the new Tourism Law would affect stakeholders. Before the law was passed, only the Union Government could issue licenses. As a result, licenses could only be issued by travelling to Nay Pyi Taw. Currently, with the new Tourism Law in place, states and regions can issue licenses, empowering them to take action at a more local level.

Kachin Regional Committee Representative **U HLA AYE** expressed his delight that the new Tourism Law decentralises power but said the draft byelaws lacked transparency. He provided information on tourism development in Kachin State; lack of budget was a challenge. He foresees that the opening of Myitkyina airport will be a significant boost for tourism development in Kachin state. With sites such as Indawgyi Lake and the Hkakabo Razi National Park (ASEAN Heritage Park), Kachin State will easily compete in the tourism market.

DAW CAROL AYE, Director of local-based NGO Another Development and moderator of this panel discussion mentioned her NGO's publications such as 'Improving local governance & empowering communities in Kayin State and Tanintharyi Region'. Her research focused on government and public policy in different states and regions related to tourism development. Her findings revealed the importance of decentralisation. Apparently, roles and responsibilities of the Regional Working Committees have not yet been clarified. She noted that during the process of decentralisation, corruption and favoritism need to be prevented.

U THAN HTWE, Kayah State Regional Tourism Working Committee member, talked about the possibilities of improving tourism development in Kayah State. According to him, the most important aspect for sustainable tourism is to achieve and maintain peace in the entire region. Only just a decade ago, tourists did not visit Kayah State because of ongoing conflict. At the moment, tourism is starting to gain momentum but infrastructure needs to be improved, including more accessible public toilets and upgrading the main roads. Kalaw is a popular trekking destination because hotel prices are generally low and it is possible to arrange homestays, he said. For future tourism development in Kayah State such incentives need to be considered as well. Finally, he encouraged audience members to support tourism development in Kayah State.

U NAY MOE AUNG, a tourism operator from Kayah State based 9-Generation, emphasized that peace in the region is still very fragile. Hence, it is crucial to cooperate with local communities and respect cultural traditions. Some regions for instance are not suitable for homestays. Locals do benefit from tourism through the creation of sustainable jobs, yet there are difficulties arising from increased tourism that should be mitigated through training sessions and awareness raising about environmental and cultural preservation of local communities. Ultimately, the Government should see local communities as a useful resource in planning efforts because they know the area and traditions best. He hopes for diligent implementation and monitoring of the Tourism Law to protect indigenous communities and facilitate tourism development.

TAKEAWAYS FROM CBT BUSINESS MODELS



The panel discussion was followed by a presentation by **SEBASTIEN MOINEAU** from Business Innovation Facility (BIF). BIF's vision for the Myanmar tourism sector is to create an inclusive, responsible and resilient industry. A major part of this vision will be realized by market players introducing innovative products in existing and emerging destinations which are effectively priced and marketed, and for which information is widely available. This can be supported through partnerships between tourism businesses and communities to deliver benefits to both.

According to BIF, CBT should be strongly value-driven: respect, equality and empowerment being central aspects. Sebastien introduced nine takeaways from CBT business models in Myanmar to the participants, including the need to create a common understanding of the project and the mutual benefits for all stakeholders involved. It is important not to commit to CBT unless stakeholders are certain they can make it work. Elements of successful CBT include being transparent with communities regarding benefits, risks and challenges, implementing a 'do-no-harm' approach and safeguards as well as offering rich and diversified activities.

Besides moral considerations, practical issues are important such as: understanding demand for CBT products; managing customer expectations; developing human resources in the roles of local tour conductors; and providing targeted skills training. He defined Community Based

Tourism as a partnership between tourism businesses and the community to deliver benefits to both. It involves community (and external) support for small tourism enterprises, which in turn commit to providing support for community projects that improve collective well-being.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION FOR COMMUNITIES IN TOURISM



U PASCAL KHOO THWE concluded the morning session with a speech on Environmental and Cultural Preservation for Communities in Tourism. He spoke of his personal engagement with two villages where CBT was being established. Trust with the communities was built step-by-step, through training and providing opportunities for them to engage with ‘mock’ tourists. Through the simultaneous development of CBT in both villages (Kayah and Kayan) the relationship between the villages themselves grew stronger. However, one of the challenges tourism development faces is that old traditional houses are often replaced by modern ones,

instead of being renovated. In addition, bad roads and rubbish are other visual and environmental problems that need to be tackled. For the future of tourism in Kayah State, technical advice from ecologists and geologists is needed. In addition, young people need to be given a bigger role in decision-making processes. Indeed, local civilians’ voices should be included in all development initiatives. Cooperation between all stakeholders will lead tourism development in Kayah State in the right direction.

EXPERIENCE SHARING: COMMUNITY INITIATIVE/LED TOURISM PROJECTS IN MYANMAR

After lunch, participants were taken to different venues to enjoy panel discussions on a variety of topics. At Kayah State Hall, a panel discussion on community-led tourism initiatives took place. **DAW CAROL AYE** from Another Development facilitated the discussion.



First, **U AUNG MIN NAING** from Action Aid talked about the process of establishing a CBT in Myaing. For successful CBT many factors need to be considered, not only accommodation but also the food they offer to the guests. First there was no interest in the village, not even after presenting the idea of how they could improve CBT food by growing vegetables and other ingredients using organic farming methods. Nonetheless,

Intrepid Travel agency loved the village, found an investor and started welcoming visitors. Meanwhile, the dam-based Yin Taing Taung Reservoir CBT initiative faces challenges with the

locals and organisations that they want to collaborate with. They are trying to stay result-orientated and are aware that trust building is an important yet time consuming process.

Second, **U ZWE ZAW ZAW HEIN** from Fauna and Flora International talked about the development of Indawgyi's CBT. They tried to educate the locals on tourism and take young people from the region to workshops in Myitkyina. They also founded a waste management group to rid the surrounding roads of trash. Tours were developed for bird watching and elephant bathing which the owners of the elephants also profit from. Unfortunately, there has been relatively low interest from tourists so far.



DAW MAR MAR CHO from the Thandaunggyi Tourism Working Group explained that during times of conflict, the locals could not do anything. Since the ceasefire agreement between the Karen National Union (KNU) and the Myanmar military, there are opportunities for tourism development. They also set up a women's empowerment group in charge of creating local products. Several Bed & Breakfasts and restaurants are now running well in the town. She considers peace as the key factor for further tourism development.

U MAUNG THAR from Pan Pet CBT encouraged everyone to visit Pan Pet, as there is still a need for feedback from visitors. They already welcomed trial homestay tourists from Thailand who were accommodated in five local hosts' houses and received feedback on food and hospitality. The visitors expressed that there was a need to focus more on cleanliness, freshness and attractiveness of the food. Community members have already started to implement improvement measures and local youth are now trying to find out more about the history of the village enabling them to tell visitors stories enhancing their visual experience. ITC is further supporting them by offering training on topics such as waste management.

PANEL DISCUSSION: ADVENTURE TOURISM: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

At Famous Hotel, participants interested in Adventure Tourism enjoyed a panel discussion with national and international experts, moderated by **ACHIM MUNZ** from Hanns Seidel Foundation. Panelists discussed adventure travel agents' responsibilities, women's involvement in adventure tourism, insurance policies for adventure-based tourism, how to train tour-guides for adventure trips and challenges related to adventure-based tourism.

JOCHEN MEISSNER from Uncharted Horizons Myanmar offers bike trips in Yangon and Chin State. He said it is easy to provide biking tours from Yangon to Dala to show tourists aspects of rural life in Myanmar such as buffalos, traditional food and friendly people. Chin State on the other hand is a challenge as it takes many hours to get there due to poor road conditions. Bike tour guides are trained to provide tourists with the best possible experience and safety in case

of an emergency. Tour guides receive an annual refresher courses. For the future of bike tours and adventure tourism in Chin state, roads need to be improved. He furthermore emphasized that for remote areas like Chin State especially, responsible adventure tourism needs to include medical and other insurance plans.

U KYAY THAR HTET is team leader of Ride Behind Kalaw. He used to work as a tour guide for border tours, and now provides off-road motorbike trips in the hills of Kalaw. He also offers kayaking services. Around 80% of his clients are domestic travelers mostly between the ages of 20-40, he said. His adventure guides receive first-aid training on a monthly basis and skills in crisis management in case of an accident. Ride Behind Kalaw ensures safe trips whereby “sweeps” act as look-outs behind the group, continuously in communication with the leader (scout) via radio. Although it took a long time to receive an official license for their enterprise, it is now running smoothly and also provides job opportunities for the community.



Travel Blogger **DAW SU WAI PHYO** added that tourists are also responsible for their own safety. They should check safety issues or reviews before embarking on adventure trips. She also mentioned that women’s roles in the Myanmar tourism sector are changing. An increasing number of women are showing their interest in adventure tourism whereas before it was considered niche. Now, women can travel alone in Myanmar, which was considered culturally inappropriate only five years ago. Daw Su Wai Phyو recommended more home-stay programs as a way of directly benefiting the local community. She encouraged tour operators to follow and respect the rules. As a travel blogger, she personally raises awareness to encourage the disposal of trash whilst traveling.

BYRON HARTZELER from Myanmar Adventure Outfitters noticed that adventure tourism is growing in popularity especially among Facebook users. When asked about how he started his business in Lashio, he mentioned that it had not been an easy process. First, he had to visit several administrative departments, none of which could provide him with much information. He believes it is important to educate local people about tourism, to show them respect and communicate frequently. He sees a lot of potential for adventure tourism in Myanmar’s future, for example rock-climbing, which will develop in the next 2-3 years.

However, he mentioned that the ongoing negative impact of ethnic conflict is a defining factor. Furthermore, the legal framework needs to be improved to include an official definition of 'adventure tourism' and elaborate on the processes for licensing. Finally, he recommended that the MOHT establishes an adventure tour guide training course, equipping them with the necessary techniques related to safety and risk-assessments.

In conclusion, panelists advocated for the development of insurance packages for local travelers. Although most international tourists have the necessary health insurance, domestic travelers are often insufficiently insured and lack the awareness and opportunities to do so.

PANEL DISCUSSION: WASTE MANAGEMENT

At Gold Hotel, a panel discussion was held on waste management, moderated by **BARBARA SCHOTT** from Thant Myanmar. Plastic waste tripled in the last five years which is concerning, especially because plastic takes 800 years on average to decompose, she highlighted. Plastic pollution causes flooding and contaminates groundwater, air, and soil. It is time to reduce single-use plastic and seek alternatives, she warned. Equally, it is important to respect our environment, because the destruction of natural beauty directly impacts on tourism and health.

MARC OLIVIER ROUX, Senior Sustainability Advisor at Conyat Create explained that annually, one third of global food production (30-40%) is wasted. Some of the food waste does not decompose properly and as a result, gasses are emitted, damaging the environment. The tourism industry should work on improving their supply chains by, first of all, shortening them. Myanmar should keep the supply chain short for better sourcing, forecasting and better ingredients.

Hotels and restaurants can opt to offer menu breakfasts instead of buffets and avoid throwing away leftover food, which can be easily used as animal feed and/or turned into compost. In terms of what can be done on a municipal level, suppliers and restaurants can be incentivized by offering them rewards for good conduct. They can also produce compost which could be sold to local municipalities to recover costs related to effective food waste management. Recyglo is a strong example of a waste management platform in Myanmar, connecting all parts of the supply chain.



U OKKAR PHYO MAUNG is one of Recyglo's founders, a waste management platform that focuses on crucial points of the supply chain where waste can be reduced and recycled. A simple system, including regulations, awareness and creating interest, is a good start to managing waste in Myanmar. Issues like waste separation should also be tackled.

Loikaw City Development Committee member **U THAN TUN** explained how waste is managed in Loikaw. Loikaw is separated into 19 pick-up areas. Trash collection vehicles operate twice a week to pick up waste from private households. Other waste-producing actors such as hospitals may also burn their waste or put it on a landfill to avoid contamination.

Villages are not yet included on the garbage collection routes and are left to manage their waste separately. Loikaw and Kayah State still lack the capacity and technology to deal with special waste including chemicals and electronics.

Besides constraints due to lack of budget, human resources and technology, U Than Tun also stressed challenges deriving from citizens' lack of awareness and their general attitude towards recycling. Although the minimal budget significantly hampers efforts to improve waste management, citizens should be aware that it is heavily government subsidized, as tax revenues clearly do not cover the costs.



DAW SWE YI owner of Loikaw Lodge on the Lake since 2016, realized how much plastic she was using. She started searching for more sustainable solutions and started to substitute plastic water bottles in hotel rooms with reusable glass bottles that can be refilled at water stations in the hallways. Another positive side effect was that her costs were substantially reduced. Also, hotel rooms are not equipped with televisions or minibars, in order to reduce energy waste and noise. The hotel further supplies guests with bicycles to reduce car use.

She also mentioned that the Loikaw waste management system could be improved by changing the way that pricing on trash is determined. Pricing should be decided on by trash volume collected and not on the size of the building it is collected from.

PANEL DISCUSSION: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION IN TOURISM

At Hotel Loikaw **U WIN MIN** from MCRB moderated a panel discussion on Environmental Conservation in Tourism. Questions were raised about how businesses could respect the natural environment and indigenous cultures. U Win Min emphasised that for long-term sustainable tourism, environmental conservation is needed, and responsibility must be taken by all stakeholders to conserve the environment.

U PASCAL KHOO THWE initiated the discussion by saying that we should take into consideration how the environment intrinsically links to ethnic traditions and livelihoods. Ethnic groups surrounding Loikaw rely on the environment as part of their everyday lives. Taking care of the environment goes deeper; it is a cultural value. Living near the jungle or on top of a mountain means acquiring very different skills and knowledge which subsequently shapes peoples' values and traditions. Although he understands the interest in Kayah State from a tourism perspective, it is important that the environment does not suffer from its arrival. Many domestic tourists are attracted by Kayah's natural attractions including caves and forests, and during their visit, often leave behind waste. Protection of these areas needs to become a priority and, in some cases, tourism should be prohibited altogether.

DAW THANDAR GO KYI from the Myanmar Ocean Project believes that there is a lot of improvement to be done in terms of marine protection and conservation in Myanmar. Overfishing has caused a significant decrease in marine life, fish being crucial actors for maintaining ecosystems under water. The government should regulate fishing by designating Protected Areas where fishing is not allowed. Besides protecting ocean life, these areas, if well protected and taken care of, could become major tourist attractions for divers and snorkelers alike.

Although it is illegal, tourists often collect and take home marine plants or animals; control mechanisms to fight this are still lacking. The sea just like the land is filled with waste produced by humans. The Myanmar Ocean Project has been working to help collect plastic in the sea.



U MYO KYAW THU from Arakan Nature Lodge added that newly constructed hotels are being built with sand, cement and wood. Sand is often illegally taken from beaches causing damage to the environment and also endangering human lives. Removing sand changes the stability of buildings close to the beach. Instead, hotels should be built in an ecologically sustainable way, without having major impacts on the environment. Ko Myo Kyaw Thu reminded participants of the need to take personal steps to protect the environment such as reducing waste by avoiding unnecessary packaging as well as planting trees to counteract deforestation which has a major impact on climate change.

TOURISM AND THE PEACE PROCESS

After the panel discussions, all participants returned to the state hall where Hanns Seidel Foundation's Community Engagement and Conflict Consultant **LEON DE RIEDMATTEN** gave a presentation on the impact of tourism on the peace process. Initially, Leon worked with Peace Nexus to understand how economic development projects could support peace in bilateral ceasefire areas. The idea was to support communities in post-conflict areas by improving livelihoods through tourism development. HSF was brought in as an organization with expertise on tourism. Following three multi-stakeholder consultations with different



communities in Kayin State, Thandaung Gyi was selected for the project. The project's success relied on stakeholder collaboration, including the Karen National Union (KNU), the Government, and civil society. After numerous stakeholder consultations, the Thandaung Gyi Tourism Development Working Group (TTDWG) was established as an inclusive body whose members were selected to represent their community's needs, developing tourism in a responsible and sustainable way. They continue to meet on a monthly basis to discuss developments and capacity-building. Another

positive outcome of this participatory approach to tourism development is that Bed & Breakfasts (B&B's) are now permitted to operate as a new accommodation category by the central government, allowing foreigners to spend the night in Thandaung Gyi. Also, new stakeholders have started supporting the project. Therefore, Thandaung Gyi can serve as a model to implement in other ceasefire areas.

DAW MAR MAR CHO, leader of the Thandaung Gyi Tourism Development Working Group, described her own experience supporting tourism development in Thandaung Gyi. Before the KNU signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) the region faced many difficulties and economic development was almost impossible. Afterwards, when tourism became an option, community members were unsure what to think about the arrival of tourists and the potential impact they could have on daily life. By working together and discussing benefits, as well as challenges all stakeholders were convinced that tourism could bring economic development to their community. Now tourists are coming to visit religious sites such as the popular Prayer Mountain or enjoy natural attractions. Domestic tourists often come to experience Durian tours, which are famous across Myanmar. In terms of tourism Thandaung Gyi is doing well and even hosts events like the annual Thandaung Gyi Mountain Run.

After this final presentation, **U AYE CHAN MAUNG MAUNG** from MRTI summarized the day and participants enjoyed a leisurely evening in Loikaw.

DAY 3

- 8th of June 2019 –

On the third and final day of this year's National Conference on Communities and Tourism, a series of interactive workshops took place simultaneously in four different venues in Loikaw. The aim was to impart practical information among participants as 'food for thought', providing ideas for implementation at work and future projects. A mixture of local and international experts offered their insights on topics such as destination management, marketing strategies and community-based tourism. Participants had the option to attend workshops most relevant to them.

WORKSHOP: FOOD WASTE MANAGEMENT

Marc Oliver Roux, Senior Sustainability Advisor at Conyat Create, Sophie Hartman from the Institut Européen de Coopération et de Développement (IECD) and Barbara Schott from Thant Myanmar facilitated a workshop on Food Waste Management.

SOPHIE HARTMAN initiated the workshop, introducing the "Eco Guide" targeted at organisations and individuals looking to change their structures, processes and implement good practices including minimizing energy and water use, reducing waste and pollution and adopting measures for adaptation and mitigation.

MARC OLIVER ROUX shared his knowledge on food waste management, explaining that the main issues are lack of awareness, weak collaboration across the value chain, insufficient regulations, inadequate supply chain infrastructure and a lack of focus on food waste throughout the supply chain. Apart from negative effects on the environment, food waste produces large-scale economic losses for businesses.



BARBARA SCHOTT clarified that effective waste management not only benefits the economy and mitigates effects on climate change, but that it can also be used as a marketing message to improve business reputation in an increasingly environmentally conscious society.

Participants were divided into groups and listed concrete actions to reduce, reuse and recycle food waste in gastronomy. Among the results were suggestions such as purchasing qualified and safe products. According to the Food Waste Pyramid, the most preferable option is to prevent limited raw materials and products from becoming waste in the first place. Equally, especially in terms of

food and packaging, waste has to be reduced before and after production. One idea was to divide food waste according to waste for animal feed and waste for composting. Ideally, products should be used which are produced in a safe and environmentally friendly manner, avoiding plastics. It was mentioned that not serving buffets could drastically reduce food waste (30% of food waste comes directly from plates). Besides listing actions that service providers could take, workshop participants also recognized the importance of raising awareness among tourists visiting their businesses. Holding discussions or having more signage could prove effective.

After discussing ideas to reduce food waste, participants were asked to brainstorm what different stakeholder groups could do to educate the public on food waste management. Stakeholders include Government, tour operators or vocational hospitality and gastronomy training schools. The Government could create incentives by providing awards or investments in local organic agriculture initiatives. Likewise, vocational schools could educate students on ways to reduce food waste, for example, teaching students to maintain local traditions whilst taking food waste mitigation measures into consideration. Finally, tour operators should act responsibly and recommend hotels or restaurants to their clients that have decent food waste management policies.

WORKSHOP: STORYTELLING THROUGH DIGITAL MARKETING

At the Famous Hotel in Loikaw, U Myo Sett Paing from JoZaSo and U Min Than Htut from Proniti Travel facilitated a workshop on storytelling, focusing on digital marketing techniques.

U MYO SETT PAING introduced participants to the concept of storytelling. A good story should be touching, relatable, and interesting. There are various ways of identifying ‘a good story’, he said. It could be relevant to a region, it could focus on the reality of living in the region and provide contextual knowledge, or it could make people laugh. Most importantly, listening to a story should be enjoyable. It is important to craft the story and think of what message one wants to get across, answering the five most important questions: ‘Who, What, Where, When and How?’



U MIN THAN HTUT shared his knowledge on digital marketing. First, he shared his definition of the term ‘marketing’, emphasising that it is not the same as ‘advertising’. Marketing, he explained, focuses on learning about people through exchange and the building of strong relationships. At the same time, marketing is about creating a valuable product. Marketing is not only about making a profit, he highlighted. He helped participants understand that there are many avenues of digital marketing - not only Facebook - to reach out to potential clients. Using digital tools to conduct customer research as part of a marketing strategy can be a powerful way of raising awareness about the product, engaging with people and ultimately selling the product to establish credibility and reputation for quality services provided. For this, key performance indicators should first be identified, customers and the market need to be understood, a strategic plan needs to be developed and the devised plan then implemented. Finally, there needs to be an evaluation process. Overall, he stated that here are three channels for successful digital marketing: 1) Earned mentions: service reviews, reposts etc.; 2) Paid media: A simple, clear website or a tourism promotion website; 3) Social media: Facebook and Instagram. For a comprehensive marketing strategy these three should be combined.

In conclusion, U Min Than Htut shared a few final tips: Be authentic, plan ahead and have clear objectives, be brave and dare to test, spend wisely, learn continuously and learn about relevant data that concerns your product.

WORKSHOP: TOURISM HUBS TO SUPPORT SMEs

The morning at Gold Hotel started with a workshop on tourism hubs to support SMEs. Facilitators included Jennifer Jones from JoZaSo Sustainable Tourism Hub and Daw Yadana Thant from Business Innovation Facility (BIF).



DAW YADANA THANT introduced the ‘Do-No-Harm’ (DNH) Toolkit, which helps businesses assess their impacts and responsibilities as brands. Inle Horse Club, recipient of the BIF Product and Package Innovation Competition (PPIC) prize is operating according to the ‘Do-No-Harm’ principles. Inle Horse Club is a community-based business that actively implements responsible business tactics such as transparent pricing. They also make sure to mitigate any negative effects their business may have on their local community for example by cleaning the streets of their horses’ feces and making sure community members have equal work opportunities.

Another example is Babylon Trekking; a camping service in Shan State that mainly employs local inhabitants from Danu and Pa-O villages to benefit the local community. Tourists have a more authentic experience as locals are best suited to introduce the area.

Yadana summarized the main points from the DNH Toolkit as follows: When starting a business, the local context needs to be well understood. Potential impacts need to be

evaluated carefully, avoiding causing any possible harm to the environment and the local community. Yadana emphasized that reputation is key for SMEs. As a group activity, participants were asked to answer the 3 'Do-No-Harm' (DNH) questions: 1) What are you currently doing?; 2) Are you using the DNH approach?; 3) What could you do differently?

JENNIFER JONES stressed the importance of having a well-thought-out business plan. Even if somebody is working as an independent tour guide they are conducting business and should therefore have a sound business plan. In general, a business plan could start simply by taking notes on paper or on an Excel sheet. The second step is to conduct a thorough market analysis and to know one's main target audience. To say "tourists" is too general. Business owners should also consider what competitors are doing and if there is any potential for collaboration. It is also important to have a financial plan and to have a reasonable estimate on how long it would take for the final product to become profitable. On average this could take up to three years. At the end of the workshop participants practiced elevator pitches and presented their ideas to audience members.

WORKSHOP: A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO DEVELOPING DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONS (DMOs)

At Hotel Loikaw, the topic of the first workshop of Day 3 was "A Participatory Approach to Developing DMOs". ITC consultant Dr. Nicole Häusler, Oikos consultant DR. Andrea Valentin and independent consultant U Kyaw Shinn Thant facilitated the workshop. **U KYAW SHINN**

THANT defined the term 'destination' as a special place worth planning a journey for. Destinations need to be managed to create the best experience for tourists. The tourism industry is extremely competitive; from public services to selling products. Everything, even community interactions, influence tourists' perceptions. To create 'the ideal destination management' tourism stakeholders need to work in unity.

Dr. ANDREA VALENTIN emphasized three key points when thinking about destination management: 1) Effective tourism development requires target-oriented management; 2) High level competition requires professional management; 3) Coordination and professionalism to ensure stakeholder engagement and sustainability requires management. Destination management is carried out by DMOs with organisational units in charge of coordinating various tasks for different stakeholders.



DR. NICOLE HÄUSLER explained how DMOs face numerous challenges including low efficiency through undefined competencies, one-sided growth orientation, lack of capital resources, lack of awareness of destination management and inadequate financial resources. DMOs in Myanmar are developing at a later stage than other countries. Cooperation with the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MoHT) is essential if DMO development is to catch-up with other countries.

For the interactive part of the workshop, participants were divided into working groups according to the different regions and states they come from. Each group explored current destination management challenges that Myanmar faces and what is needed to overcome them. How could Regional Tourism Working Committees benefit from DMOs? The Taninthary group mentioned lack of government support as well as weak communication and waste management issues. The Shan State group mentioned a lack of financial support. The Kayah State group reiterated what previous groups said about insufficient funding as well as a lack of willingness to cooperate among locals.

WORKSHOP: INNOVATION IN TOURISM

At the State Hall, participants attended a workshop on innovation in tourism, facilitated by **SEBASTIEN MOINEAU** from Business Innovation Facility (BIF). According to Mr Moineau, the definition of 'innovation' is the successful conversion of new concepts and knowledge into new products, services or processes that deliver new customer value in the market.

In groups, participants shared their ideas also based on what they had learned in the past three days. One group suggested offering fishing trips and offering trainings to women who could work as local guides. The Fast Idea Generator, an online tool used to test ideas and help entrepreneurs think out of the box, introduced participants to approaches consisting of 'Inversion, Integration, Education, Differentiation, Addition, Subtraction, Translation, Grafting and Exaggeration.' Sebastien Moineau concluded his workshop by urging

participants to test their ideas in real-life and ask for feedback before bringing their ideas to life. New ideas should remain adaptable and most importantly, suit their consumers.

WORKSHOP: SUSTAINABLE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT: CREATING AN EXPERIENCE

At Famous Hotel, the second workshop of the day was about sustainable product development. U Myo Min Zaw from Inle Canoe Lady and Daw Tin Win Maw from Green Hill Valley Elephant Camp facilitated the workshop.

U MYO MIN ZAW, founder of Inle Canoe Lady highlighted that tourists appreciate learning about different cultures and traditions. Maintaining traditional aspects and building on innovative ideas go hand-in-hand. People interested in creating tourism-related products or services should be aware of the environment and cater to customers' needs in order to generate the best experiences.



Inle Canoe Lady was inspired by the sight of gondola rides in Venice during a trip to Italy. U Myo Min Zaw wanted to adapt gondolas to the natural environment of Inle Lake. Not only did he closely follow the *Do No Harm* approach created by the BIF, he made sure that local communities would benefit by providing jobs to the local women living in the village where canoe services are offered. As women continue working as cheroot rollers, they gain extra income by rowing canoes. U Myo Min Zaw also raised his concerns about protecting the natural environment, opting for canoes without motors to reduce pollution and noise. Offering

canoe trips as a sustainable tourism service does not only mean placing emphasis on conserving the environment, but also prioritizing safety and allowing tourists to interact with local people and enjoy the real experience of day-to-day village life.

DAW TIN WIN MAW does not expect her elephant camp to become highly profitable. She is keen to establish a responsible and sustainable tourism service by taking care of elephants' well-being, instead of offering rides or circus tricks. Tourists are encouraged to help take care of the elephants by bathing them for example and by learning more about them. Working at Green Hill Valley also ensures that the elephant caretakers' children are properly educated with a chance to build a future outside the elephant camp. GHV has built over ten schools to make this happen.

Daw Tin Win Maw considered the impacts her project could have, both environmentally and socially. She reuses the elephants' feces to produce paper and retains her staff during the low season by providing alternative employment such as organic farming. She also provides



internship opportunities for students from the University of Veterinary Science and the University of Foreign Languages to gain practical experience.

Her family-owned elephant camp owes much of its success to their intimate relationship with the elephants. The camp has received awards for sustainable practices and for its focus on animal-welfare.

Listening to these success stories, participants were motivated to improve the sustainability of their own tourism products, in terms of finding approaches that could be applicable to their own businesses.

WORKSHOP: COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM – MODELS AND IMPLEMENTATION FRESH FROM THE FIELD

The afternoon session at the Gold Hotel focused on Community Based Tourism. The workshop was facilitated by **POTJANA SUANSRI**, Consultant for ITC, and Regional Guides from ITC **U KO AYE NAING, U KO LWIN HTET AUNG, DAW MYA EI THWE** and **DAW SU THINZAR**.



The ITC experts showed several videos focusing on managing customer expectations, what most CBT visitors expected from their experience and how CBT visits could help tourists understand what it means to travel responsibly. As many tourists wish to interact with locals and have an authentic experience, locals should understand the high value of their cultures and traditions for tourists. Often, local communities will try to change their habits to please Western guests, which achieves the opposite.

Challenges, such as language barriers resulting in lack of cooperation between stakeholders, were also addressed. Participants mentioned the importance of working together between government, communities and the private sector in order to operate successful CBT. Language barriers can be overcome by hiring and training local guides.

Other questions discussed were: How to build trust and raise awareness, how to work with the government and how to build a team? Final questions focused on what the differences are between local and international tourists, whether or not the government currently prioritises CBT enough, whether government helps to improve CBT and if any conflicts are created by CBT. Workshop facilitators emphasized that conflicts are natural and must be managed and resolved using patience, understanding and working together.

WORKSHOP: ECO-TOURISM: POSSIBILITIES AND CHANCES IN MYANMAR



At Hotel Loikaw **UELI MORGENTHALER** owner of the Arakan Nature Lodge and **PAUL SCHREIBER** from Fauna & Flora International facilitated a workshop on Ecotourism.

To create mutual understanding of what ecotourism means, Ueli Morgenthaler defined the concept as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education.” He acknowledged that conservation is a broad topic that includes climate change, plant species, community inclusion and identity, consciousness about the use of resources and waste management. Ecotourism considers all these aspects.

Ecotourism usually takes place in Protected Areas, National and Marine Parks or forest and wildlife reserves. People who wish to go on ecotourism trips tend to be interested in activities such as watching wildlife, snorkeling, meeting local communities and acquiring skills in crafts and cooking. Also, they are often active and enjoy outdoor activities like trekking, kayaking and mountain biking.

Ecotourism is still a small but growing niche part of the world market. It has the potential to directly generate revenues for National Parks and other Protected Areas. Further development depends on clear government policies, strong commitment and law enforcement.

CLOSING REMARKS



After the workshops, everyone returned to the State Hall where closing remarks were held. **U NYUNT WIN NAING** provided a summary of the workshops and the conference, highlighting the importance of tourism development in Kayah State. He expressed his gratitude to the 2018 MRTA winners and all the speakers for contributing to the discussions by sharing their insights and experiences on responsible tourism and tourism development. He also welcomed applications for the 2019 Myanmar Responsible Tourism Awards and partnerships with various stakeholders.



U LIN ZAW HTUT, Deputy Director of Hotels and Tourism in Kayah State followed, saying that many topics were discussed, and participants had the opportunity to learn more about CBT, decentralization under the Tourism Law and environmental conservation amongst other topics. Most topics were related to strengthening cooperation between communities, the government and private businesses for successful tourism development. He invited stakeholders to cooperate with Kayah State to further develop tourism.



DR. DAW KHIN SITHU, Member of Pyithu Hluttaw, underlined in her concluding speech that rushing into forming committees is not the best way to move ahead because committee members should be those who commit to long-term tourism development. She suggested that it is important to be aware of what 'community-based tourism' means. It should not be 'centrally' based tourism or 'company-based' tourism. Asking the communities is the most important step before moving forward.



U L PHOUNG SHO, Chief Minister of Kayah State, gave the closing remarks. He stated that collaboration can lead to success and tourism can bring peace. The next step for Kayah State is to develop a stronger relationship with Loikaw's sister city in Thailand to increase visitor numbers. In the future, better laws and bylaws should be prioritised in order to strengthen conducive regulations for tourism development. It is important to support local communities in adapting to changes brought about as a result of tourism. The Minister concluded by saying that tourism development holds many opportunities for Kayah State, including more job creation for young people. Certainly, there is potential for more travel destinations.

CONFERENCE ECONOMIC IMPACTS ON LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN KAYAH STATE

This year almost 350 participants attended the National Conference on Communities and Tourism in Loikaw, Kayah State. Most of the participants used local transportation services for visiting tourist destination spots surrounding Loikaw and consumed food and drink from local restaurants and shops. Participants coming from outside of Loikaw stayed in local hotels and guesthouses. Furthermore, 60% of the direct conference budget or around 20,000 USD went to local businesses providing catering, accommodation and conference space. The positive outcome and well-executed conference organisation may potentially lead to future MICE-tourism in Loikaw instead of Nay Pyi Taw or Yangon, having demonstrated the capacity to host such a large event. Therefore, it can be said that the conference had a real economic impact on the host community not only in terms of promoting tourism, but also in terms of proving its ability to host large events.

Moreover, the NCCT gave local participants the possibility to identify potential areas for cooperation and partnership with other tourism actors who presented their ideas and innovations during the conference. Networking with other stakeholders not only provides input and new ideas but also motivates actors to get more involved and believe in themselves and their ideas. Indeed, identifying projects which may be replicated in Kayah State has been one of the conference's outcomes. For example, one of the MRTA panelists, Green Hill Valley Elephant Care Camp, started collaborating with and mentoring an elephant camp located near Demawso Township who want to make their product more responsible and sustainable.

Another tourism entrepreneur business, Inle Horse Club, also started discussions with local horse owners to evaluate the possibility of starting their own business similar to the Inle Horse Club. The Inle Horse Club has agreed to support research and provide necessary training for local people in Kayah State. These initiatives show the linkages made at the NCCT and how it can create real momentum for tourism development in these areas.

In July 2019, one month after the NCCT, the organisers returned to Loikaw to gather feedback and learn of any impacts it has had. During this trip, in-depth meetings were held with the Chief Minister and government of Kayah State, the Kayah State MoHT department, as well as some EAOs and private sector representatives. Stakeholders confirmed that they had gained knowledge on responsible and sustainable tourism development and would like to ensure that these practices are also implemented in their state. They also commented on the momentum the conference created in the tourism sector, including new ideas and positive outlook.

The trip also proved useful for the exploration of potential new tourism destinations within Kayah State. Areas include but are not limited to the Seven Lakes Area, Hoya Region and Khu Payar Village region. All areas have beautiful untouched scenery. If relevant stakeholders cooperate and agree on a way forward, tourism activities such as trekking, mountain biking, horse riding, rafting and hobby photographing can be developed. To this end inclusive and open communication is vital. It may also be possible to support the development of Bed and Breakfast stays in these areas.

In conclusion, Kayah State has a large number of opportunities that can lead to long-term economic development through tourism if 1) investments are responsible and due diligence is done; 2) sustainability is made a priority; and 3) participatory planning and decision-making are part of the process.



EVALUATION

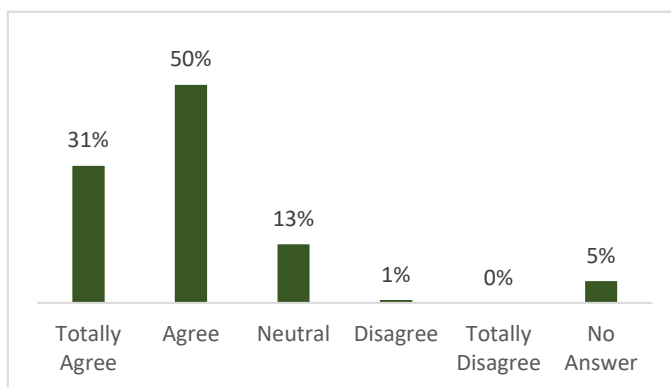
Participants were asked to complete an evaluation form to provide feedback on the Fourth NCCT Event. Out of approximately 350 attendants on Day 1, 250 on Day 2, and 200 on day 3, a total of 156 participants completed the evaluation form.

Overall feedback was positive. Respondents agreed either mostly or definitely that the conference covered relevant issues for stakeholders involved in tourism (93%). CBT (42 remarks) were by far seen as the most relevant topic of the conference, followed by Food and Waste Management (19 remarks), DMOs (16 remarks), Adventure Tourism (14 remarks), Environmental issues (13 remarks), Marketing (13 remarks), SMEs (12 remarks) and Innovation in tourism (10 remarks).

Various answers were given regarding the question “If there were to be a follow-up conference in 12 months, what topics should be included?” Many related to topics that were already discussed during the conference, which suggests that many issues require more consideration.

Other questions and specific issues raised that had not been addressed in the conference include:

- The need for a discussion on structural challenges & weaknesses of Myanmar’s tourism sector
- How to use data, technology, and software to improve efficiency / service delivery in the tourism sector
- Environmental law and its enforcement
- How to target domestic tourists in a sustainable way
- Culture, agriculture and training schools
- The relationship between vocational education and tourism
- Homestay businesses
- China
- Digital marketing at State Government level
- How to use social media advertising and other techniques
- Promotion/Branding
- How to keep local traditions alive
- Water and forest management
- Tourism and cultural risks, risk management, land conflict
- New destinations
- More interaction between youth/experts
- Tourism niche markets
- Lessons learned (e.g. cruise industry, mass tourism)
- How to divide and recycle waste
- Safety and transport
- How to transform community-based projects into social enterprises
- Banking sector (interest, insurance)
- Geo tourism



I can apply the conference’s content in my day to day work

The majority of the participants stated that they will be able to apply the conference’s content in their day to day work (81%). The vast majority (89%) think that workshops imparted practical information, useful to leverage for their future work.

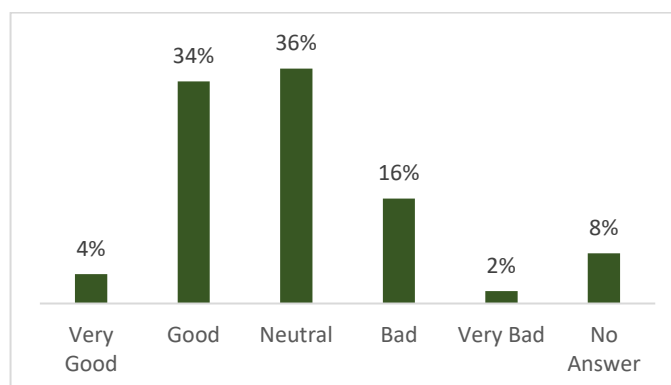
80% of participants agreed that the conference helped them understand the positions of other relevant actors. The fact that participants believe they gained useful information to help them move forward, is a great achievement.

THE WAY FORWARD

Many states in Myanmar such as Kayah State have the potential to offer a unique experience given the variety of different cultures, ethnicities and natural environments. In terms of future prospects, Myanmar could thrive on offering different types of tourism-related activities, also to ensure long-term sustainable tourism development.

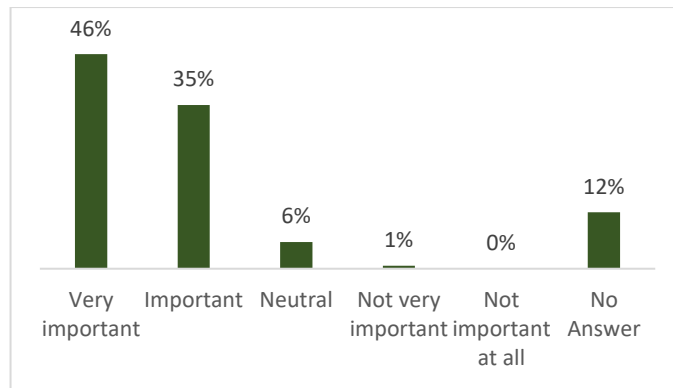
Opinions on 'the way forward' differed among stakeholders. However, the majority agreed that sustainable tourism development could serve as a tool to advance and improve living standards, especially for economically deprived and marginalised communities in Myanmar. Tourism could also play a vital role in the ongoing peace process, provided that its planning, management and implementation is conducted in a responsible manner. Tourism development has the possibility to positively impact the country, however, there are a number of challenges that need to be addressed, for example, coordination and communication between local communities and tourism-related stakeholders.

Current tourism development in Myanmar was voted as 'positive' by 38 % of the participants, while 36 % voted 'neutral', 16 % voted it was 'bad' and 2 % voted 'very bad'. This showed an improvement compared to the answers from last year's conference; only 30% of the participants thought that tourism development in Myanmar could be described as positive. Meanwhile, based on the high number of 'neutral' votes, it could be assumed that the participants had difficulty assessing the current situation.



How do you rate the current tourism development in Myanmar?

76 % of the participants stated that they are reassured by government decentralisation efforts, that processes will improve. 12 % disagreed. Many participants thought that decentralisation efforts were already saving time and costs in the tourism development process and that they empowered local communities by including them in the decision-making process. 78% of the participants agreed that while decentralisation efforts give more voice to communities, there is a need to focus on corruption which should not increase as a result of decentralisation. Therefore, the Union Government should encourage the decentralisation process further and reduce centrally made regulations for the benefit of communities, whilst being transparent in the process. The importance of tourism in rural areas of Myanmar was recognised by 81% of participants.



How important is tourism for rural areas in Myanmar?

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

To support and encourage the implementation of existing government initiatives related to tourism development;

Union Government:

- **Hold inclusive discussions on the formulation of effective policies and responsible tourism investment** to ensure the growth of sustainable tourism development in Kayah and other states.
- **Engage in consultations, debates and dialogues on decentralisation for sustainable tourism development.** Tourism development and community development should go hand in hand.
- Encourage ecotourism development to preserve and protect natural environments.
- Develop clear and inclusive government policies on ecotourism, as well as regulations reflecting state and regional needs.
- Encourage **Regional Tourism Working Committees to do their own inclusive tourism-based planning to foster regional development.**
- **Train public sector stakeholders in tourism planning, enhancing strategy development and taking into consideration the role of newly established DMOs.**
- **Empower Committees, both at national and regional level, enabling them to facilitate processes for tourism stakeholder rather than complication them further.**
- **Define adventure tourism activities in the legal framework and elaborate on licensing processes.**
- **Encourage and study economic development (tourism) projects in (including bilateral) ceasefire areas for sustainable peace.**
- **Plan inclusively with local communities, as they know the area and its traditions best.**

- **Implement protection measures for natural and cultural resources and facilitate sustainable tourism development.**
- **Ensure strong cooperation between the three tourism committees (Central Tourism Development Committee, National Tourism Working Committee, Regional Tourism Working Committee) and divide their tasks appropriately.**
- **Regulate aquatic activities including designating protected areas where marine tourism is developed, and fishing is not allowed.**
- Create **control mechanisms** to fight illegal collecting of local flora and fauna.
- **Properly manage licensing as well as permitting requirements adapted to suit regional capacities creating an enabling environment to support SMEs.**

Regional Government:

- **Delegate to and clearly define roles and responsibilities of the Regional Tourism Working Committee members. For example, the private sector representatives need to be excluded from permitting decisions to ensure there is no ‘conflict of interests’.**
- Improve infrastructure in states and regions, including more accessible facilities and upgrading the main roads.
- **Protect and cooperate with local communities while respecting their cultural traditions.**
- Maintain valuable historical and cultural architecture to avoid negative effects on tourism.
- Invite **ecologists and geologists to advise on technical issues for protection of natural resources prior to tourism development.**
- **Change pricing system for waste collection. Costs should be determined by trash volume collected and not on the size of the building it is being collected from.**
- Allocate more resources to waste management allowing City Development Committee employees to carry out their job efficiently and effectively.
- **Incentivise suppliers and restaurants to enact proper waste management by providing awards or investments in local organic agriculture initiatives.**

Tourism Businesses

- Increasing tourism has the potential to become a source of conflict. Refer **to the principles outlined in the *Do No Harm Toolkit*** developed by the Business Innovation Facility, is a useful tool to encourage stakeholders to follow responsible business conduct.

- Consider and avoid as much as possible negative environmental and social effects as a result of increasing tourism.
- Only commit to CBT if certain it can work and be **transparent with communities regarding benefits, risks and challenges.**
- Design **proper policies on waste management.** Proper waste management not only benefits the economy and mitigates effects on climate change, and it can also be used as a marketing message to improve business reputation in an increasingly environmentally conscious society.
- Act responsibly as tour operators and recommend hotels or restaurants to clients that have decent food waste management policies.
- **Advocate for proper medical and other insurance plans, especially for locals.**
- The tourism industry should work on **improving supply chains by first of all shortening them.** Myanmar should keep the supply chain short for better sourcing, forecasting and better cooking ingredients.
- Service providers should develop proper food waste management policies. They should also support awareness-raising activities, encouraging ethical consumers.
- **Increase awareness-raising activities for the general public** to encourage proper waste management.
- **Promote inclusivity through partnerships between tourism businesses and communities to deliver benefits to both.**
- **Create a common understanding of planned tourism projects and the mutual benefits for all stakeholders involved.**

CBT-related recommendations:

- **Understand moral responsibility** when implementing CBT; respect, equality and empowerment being central aspects.
- **Manage expectations within communities** who do not generally have prior experience in tourism, nor understand the mechanisms of business operations.
- **Analyze risks and opportunities associated with CBT with the community** at the early stages of their engagement.
- **Be transparent with communities** about the benefits, risks and challenges involved.
- **Ensure CBT inclusiveness and long-term sustainability by diversifying** activities and products available.

- **Be transparent with clients on prices** by informing customers where exactly their fees, donations and tips are going to. Well-informed customers will be more satisfied, creating more trust and increasing sustainable tourism.

Tourism Associations:

- **Include ethnic minorities interests in planning and economic development to increase their benefits from major projects in all states and improve sustainability.** This includes planning for hotel zones.
- **Practice child-safe tourism** by preventing and implementing control mechanisms against 'orphanage tourism' and child labour.
- **Ensure that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is about benefiting the community** in terms of environment, health, and other social responsibilities, including having a strong policy framework against corruption and favoritism.
- **Mitigate negative effects of tourism by providing training sessions and awareness raising about environmental and cultural preservation for local communities.**

AGENDA



CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Day 1: Thursday, 6 th June	
~ 09:00 am	Participants from Yangon arrive in Loikaw
Optional	
09:00 - 13:30	Free time to view Loikaw and surrounding Tourist Attractions
13:30 - 14:00	Registration
14:00 - 14:30	Opening Remarks U Maw Maw, Minister of Finance and Planning, Kayah State Achim Munz, Resident Representative, Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) Myanmar Vicky Bowman, Director, Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB)
14:30 - 15:00	Tourism in Kayah State U Lin Zaw Htut, Director of Hotels and Tourism, Kayah State U Kyaw Moe, Head of the Government Administration Department (GAD), Kayah State
15:00 - 15:30	Tea Break and Networking
15:30 - 16:00	The Role of DMOs in Myanmar Daw Ohn Mar Cho, Kalaw Tourism Organisation (KTO)
16:00 - 17:30	Promotional Video MRTAs Panel Discussion: Sustainable and Responsible Tourism in Myanmar Moderator: Daw Sabei Aung, Nature Dreams Travel U Myo Min Zaw, Inle Canoe Lady Daw Swe Swe Lwin, Inle Horse Club U Thant Zin, Ayeyarwaddy Dolphin CBT Daw Tin Win Maw, Green Hill Valley Elephant Camp
17:30 - 18:00	Loikaw as a Tourism Community/Welcome from Host Community



	Dr. Daw Khin Sithu, Member of Pyithu Hluttaw from Kayah
18:00	Free Evening/Dinner with MoHT Representatives

Day II: Friday, 7 th June	
	Venue: State Hall
08:30 – 09:00	Registration
09:00 – 09:30	Decentralization – Destinations – Development – The Story of Kayah Tourism Development Marie-Claude Frauenrath, Daw Winnie Mai, U Pascal Khoo Thwe, International Trade Centre (ITC)
09:30 – 11:00	New Tourism Regulatory Framework and Decentralization in Myanmar (Panel Discussion) Moderator: U Win Min, MCRB Panelists: U Lin Zaw Htut, Director of Hotels and Tourism, Kayah State U Hla Aye, Kachin Regional Tourism Committee Representative U Than Htwe, Kayah Regional Tourism Committee Representative U Nay Moe Aung, 9-Generation Tour Operator Daw Carol Aye, Another Development Dr. Nicole Häusler, Consultant International Trade Centre
11:00 – 11:30	Tea Break and Networking
11:30 – 12:00	Takeaways from CBT Business Models Sebastien Moineau, Business Innovation Facility (BIF)
12:00 – 12:30	Environmental and Cultural Preservation for Communities in Tourism U Pascal Khoo Thwe
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 13:45	Transport to Venues

	State Hall	Famous Hotel	Gold Hotel	Hotel Loikaw
	Community Initiative/Led Tourism Projects in Myanmar Experience Sharing (local stakeholders)	Adventure Tourism Experiences: Opportunities and Challenges Panel Discussion	Waste Management Panel Discussion	Environmental Conservation in Tourism Panel Discussion
13:45 - 16:00	<p>Moderator: Daw Carol Aye, Another Development</p> <p>Panelists: U Aung Min Naing/ Abhijit Patnaik Myaing CBT, Action Aid Representative Kayah CBT or Daw Win Nie Mai Naw Mar Mar Cho, Thandaung Gyi Tourism Working Group, MRTI/HSF U Zwe Zaw Zaw Hein, Indawgyi CBT, FFI</p>	<p>Moderator: Achim Munz, HSF</p> <p>Panelists: Jochen Meissner, Unchartered Horizons Myanmar U Kyaw Thar Htet, Ride Behind Kalaw Byron Hartzeler, Myanmar Adventure Outfitters Daw Su Wai Phyo, Travel Blogger</p>	<p>Moderator: Barbara Schott, Thant Myanmar</p> <p>Panelists: U Okkar Phyo Maung, Recygio Marc Oliver Roux, Senior Sustainability Advisor Conyat Create Representative Loikaw City Development Council Daw Swe Yi, Loikaw Lodge</p>	<p>Moderator: U Win Min, MCRB</p> <p>Panelists: U Myo Kyaw Thu, Arakan Nature Lodge Representative Forestry Department U Pascal Khoo Thwe Daw Thandar Ko Gyi, Myanmar Ocean Project</p>
16:00 - 16:15		Transport to State Hall	Transport to State Hall	Transport to State Hall
16:15 - 16:45	Tourism and the Peace Process Leon Di Riedmatten, Consultant HSF			
16:45 - 17:30	Summing up the day/ Instructions for III Day U Aye Chan Maung Maung, MRTI			
17:30-17:45	Transport to hotels			
18:30 - OPEN END	Free Evening/ Contributors Reception at Amazing Bar			

Day III: Saturday, 8th June

Note: Every participant can join 2 workshops but each workshop is limited to a max of 30 people.

	State Hall	Famous Hotel	Gold Hotel	Hotel Loikaw
	Food Waste Management	Storytelling through Digital Marketing	Tourism Hubs as Support to SMEs	A Participatory Approach to Developing DMOs
	Workshop	Workshop	Workshop	Workshop
08:30 - 09:00	Registration	Registration	Registration	Registration
09:00 - 11:45 (INCLUDES 15 MIN TEA BREAK)	Facilitators: Marc Olivier Roux, Senior Sustainability Advisor, Conyat Create Sophie Hartman, IECD Barbara Schott, Thant Myanmar	Facilitators: U Myo Sett Paing, JoSaZo U Min Than Htut, Proniti Travel	Facilitators: Jennifer Jones, Sustainable Tourism Hub Daw Yadana Thant, BIF	Facilitators: Dr. Nicole Häusler, Consultant ITC Dr. Andrea Valentin, Consultant Oikos U Kyaw Shin Thant, Independent Consultant
11:45 - 12:45	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:45 - 13:00	Transport to Venue	Transport to Venue	Transport to Venue	Transport to Venue
	State Hall	Famous Hotel	Gold Hotel	Hotel Loikaw
	Innovation in Tourism	Sustainable Product Development: Creating an Experience	Community Based Tourism – Models and Implementation <i>Fresh from the Field</i>	Eco-Tourism: Possibilities and Chances in Myanmar
	Workshop	Workshop	Workshop	Workshop
13:00 - 15:30	Facilitators: Sebastien Moineau, BIF	Facilitators: U Myo Min Zaw, Inle Canoe Lady Daw Tin Win Maw, Green Hill Valley Elephant Camp	Facilitators: Potjana Suansri, ITC U Aye Naing, U Lwin Htet Aung, Daw Mya Ei Thwe, Daw Su Thinzar (Regional guides)	Facilitators: Ueli Morgenthaler, Arakan Nature Lodge Paul Schreiber, Fauna & Flora International (FFI)



15:30 - 15:45		Transport to State Hall	Transport to State Hall	Transport to State Hall
15:45 - 16:15	Coffee Break			
16:15 - 16:45	Conference Summary/Workshop Summaries and Networking/Evaluation U Nyunt Win Naing , MRTI			
16:45 - 17:00	Conclusion and End U L Phaung Sho, Chief Minister, Kayah State Dr. Daw Khin Sithu, Member of Pyithu Hluttaw from Kayah			
19:30	Departure to Yangon			

* A handicraft fair will be held at the Kayah State Hall throughout including demonstrations on the development of sustainable products.

Supporting Organizations



Greatest thanks and appreciation is expressed here to all those who contributed to the success of the Fourth National Conference on Communities and Tourism 2019

- ❖ All employees of the organisers: Hanns Seidel Foundation, Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business, Myanmar Responsible Tourism Institute, International Trade Centre and the many volunteers,
- ❖ the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MoHT),
- ❖ the Kayah State Government,
- ❖ all national and international resource persons and facilitators who shared their valuable expertise,
- ❖ the host community Loikaw

Authors: Verena Hofer, Maya Muller, Julie Buchwald

With contributions from: Win Min, Aye Chan Maung Maung, Lei Lei Aung, Wint Mon Eindra Thwin, Thazin May Phoo, Thet Thint Taw

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Hanns Seidel Foundation in Myanmar:

Unit 7, Ground Floor, Inya Lake Hotel,
No. 37, Kaba Aye Pagoda Road,
Mayangone Township, Yangon
Tel: +95 1 667225
myanmar@hss.de
<https://southeastasia.hss.de/myanmar/>

Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business:

6 (A), Shin Saw Pu Road,
Kayin Chan Ward, Ahlone Township,
Yangon
Tel: 01 512 613
info@myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org
myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org

Myanmar Responsible Tourism Institute:

No. 254, 1st Floor, Tha Byae Street,
South Wai Lu Won Quarter, Yangon, 11111
Tel: 09 778 158168
info@myanmarresponsibletourism.org
<http://www.myanmarresponsibletourism.org/>

THE ORGANISERS




The **MINISTRY OF HOTELS AND TOURISM (MOHT)** is a ministry in the government of Myanmar, responsible for the country's tourism sector. It was established in September 1992 to raise the momentum of the tourism industry. The objective of the Ministry is to bring about employment opportunities, to raise the living standards and to earn a large amount of foreign exchange in a short period.

<https://www.facebook.com/moht.mm/>



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. Its 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). The Foundation has had a representative office in Yangon since October 2012 and was the first German political foundation to establish a representative office in Myanmar.

<https://www.facebook.com/HSF.Myanmar/>



Myanmar Centre for
Responsible Business

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 the UK, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Switzerland and Ireland. Based in Yangon, it aims to provide a trusted and impartial platform for the creation of knowledge, capacity, and dialogue amongst businesses, civil society organisations 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.

<https://www.facebook.com/myanmar.responsible.business/>



The **MYANMAR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM INSTITUTE (MRTI)** is a non-profit organisation set up in 2016 aiming to support responsible tourism development in Myanmar through knowledge sharing, training, and research. MRTI envisions Myanmar as a leading responsible tourism destination, which empowers local communities, strives for livelihood creation and respects environmental sustainability.

<https://www.facebook.com/myanmarresponsibletourism/>



The **INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE's (ITC)**'s mission is to enable small business export success in developing and transition-economy countries, by providing, with partners, sustainable and inclusive development solutions to the private sector, trade support institutions and policymakers.

<https://www.facebook.com/InternationalTradeCentre/>



The **KAYAH STATE GOVERNMENT** is the cabinet of Kayah State and was formed in 2010. The cabinet is led by chief minister L Paung Sho.