

The Dynamic of ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) in Tourism Development in ASEAN Countries

Usmar Salam

Affiliation

Department of International Relation, Universitas Gadjah Mada.

Correspondence

Usmar Salam. Department of International Relation, Universitas Gadjah Mada. Email: usmarsalam@ugm.ac.id

Abstract

ATF, or the ASEAN tourist Forum, was created in 1981 to help Southeast Asia become more cohesive in its tourist industry. Through cooperation between state and non-state actors within ASEAN, the ATF expands the list of actors that contribute to the promotion of ASEAN as a common tourism destination. Nevertheless, it is still to be determined how effectively the ATF achieves this goal, namely, whether it functions as a platform for competition rather than cooperation. The present study utilises a qualitative case study approach to examine the activities, responses, and outcomes of the ATF throughout its existence. The primary emphasis is on the dynamic interplay between cooperation and competitiveness among member states of the ATF, particularly within the framework of ATSP 1 and ATSP 2. The findings show that while the ATF has promoted regional tourism collaboration, competition among member countries sometimes limits deeper integration. The results also show that some countries prioritize domestic tourism over integrated regional destinations due to their domestic conditions. This analysis uses tourism to shed light on Southeast Asian regionalization in the ATF. Access to this information also suggests ways to create more effective, harmonious, and comprehensive policies.

Keywords: ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF); tourism regionalization; Southeast Asia tourism; ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP)

Article Information: Submitted: 02-10-2025 | Revised: 11-10-2025 | Accepted: 02-10-2025



Copyright © 2025 by the author(s). This article is published by Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate, and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and noncommercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and author(s). The full terms of this license may be seen at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>

Introduction

Formally established on August 8, 1967, in Bangkok, Thailand, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional organization. As a regionalization phenomenon, ASEAN was formed by nations with common goals and visions. With the goal of promoting economic growth, social progress, and cultural development in the Southeast Asian region, five founding members—Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand—formed ASEAN. ASEAN has continued to expand to its current ten members. It has always had a strong vision to cooperate with each other, including in tourism. As one of the crucial industries, tourism is expected to be able to drive the economic development of Southeast Asia.

In the context of global economic development, the contribution of tourism to economic growth has been widely acknowledged. In the Northern Hemisphere, for instance, Europe, member countries have succeeded in establishing tourism as a leading sector through the European Parliament and the European Commission Council. This objective was achieved through the integration of policies and the promotion of the region as a unified tourist destination, a process that commenced in 1984 (Ana, 2017; Estol & Font, 2016; Pearce, 1992). The process of regionalization of the tourism sector in Europe has been demonstrated to have a considerable, beneficial impact on the number of tourist arrivals.

However, Europe's commitment to integrating tourism into regional policies and cooperation was not the first. Southeast Asia, although at that time it had economic and political power that was still below Europe, had first encouraged the regionalization of the tourism sector. This was evidenced by the organization of the ASEAN Tourism Forum in 1981, which became an important milestone in the promotion of tourism in the ASEAN region in an integrated manner. Thus, both Europe and Southeast Asia show a pattern of tourism regionalization as an effective strategy in promoting economic growth, increasing the number of tourists, and strengthening regional integration.

The ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) has become a pivotal platform for fostering regional tourism cooperation. Nevertheless, the role of the Forum in this context is not without ambiguity. The activities of the ATF are subject to a range of influences, which have resulted in a variety of perceptions, including those that are pessimistic and those that are optimistic. A contention exists that the ATF is predominantly exploited as a competitive arena among member nations, rather than as a productive collaborative platform. This viewpoint is predicated on the premise that every ASEAN member state has an interest to host the ATF, with the main goal being the advancement of domestic tourism. At times, this is seen as a divergent approach from the stated goal of promoting ASEAN as a cohesive tourist destination.

The ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) usually takes place in major cities across the ASEAN. The latest meeting takes place in Lao PDR, which held the forum in Vientiane in 2024. The ATF's organization in a variety of major cities in the region emphasizes the forum's importance as a regional instrument for tourism promotion. Nevertheless, the extent to which the ATF is perceived merely as a competition between member states or whether it serves the objective of fostering closer collaboration for the advancement of ASEAN tourism collectively remains a subject of debate.

The objective of this study is to investigate the dynamics of tourism cooperation among the member nations of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), with a specific focus on the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) as a regional regime under consideration. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Tourism Forum (ATF) is an annual event

that rotates between different nations with the purpose of enhancing ASEAN's reputation as a unified tourist destination while concurrently strengthening the combined efforts of member countries in promoting their national tourism sectors.

This research will examine whether the dynamics in the ATF are dominated by tourism competition among ASEAN member states or whether there are real efforts to create harmonious cooperation. In this context, this paper will analyze the tourism policies developed through the ATF, how member countries respond to the proposed agendas, and how this forum can improve ASEAN tourism competitiveness in the global arena. Through this study, it is hoped that it can be identified whether the ATF acts as a forum to strengthen ASEAN tourism cooperation or instead becomes a stage for competition between member countries.

Methods

This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study method to examine the dynamics of the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) within the context of tourism promotion and ASEAN regional cooperation. This method was selected to facilitate an in-depth investigation of the manner in which the ATF serves as a conduit for collaboration and competition among ASEAN member countries. The present study is confined to an examination of the organization of ATFs in a number of ASEAN member countries over the period 2012 to 2024. Consequently, the findings may not fully reflect the dynamics that occur in the organization of ATFs outside this period. Furthermore, the lack of access to certain historical sources presented a challenge in gathering primary data.

Result and Discussion

1. An Intro to Early ASEAN

In 2025, ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) tourism is projected to become a highly competitive, sustainable, and inclusive region, reflecting sharply defined strategic goals. However, the origins of ASEAN date back to 1967, when it was established by a limited group of five founding nations: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. During its early years, ASEAN gave cooperation on tourism less of importance. In the framework of regional cooperation, the ASEAN vision was broader, seeking to hasten regional economic growth, advance social development, and so support cultural development in the area.

The general political environment of the Cold War and the alleged threat of communism in the area had a major impact on the August 8, 1967, founding of ASEAN. While striving improved security and peace, the founding nations aimed to present a united front and handle regional problems by cooperative ways (Wong et al., 2011). From the outset, the company faced skepticism regarding its efficacy and immediate benefits, given the prevailing political fragmentation in Southeast Asia (Stubbs, 2019). However, the number of member governments grew over time, ultimately encompassing all ten Southeast Asian countries, significantly enhancing the organization's capacity to pursue shared objectives, including those pertaining to tourism.

Six nations made up ASEAN up to 1981, with newcomer Brunei Darussalam joining in 1976. ASEAN's political scene in the 1980s was dotted with many difficulties and upheavals. The *Đổi Mới* (Renovation) reforms were helping Vietnam's economy to recover; however, Myanmar was suffering with problems of democratization and human rights. Simultaneously, Cambodia was fighting for sovereignty and independence from Vietnamese influence, a

situation that also affected Laos (McCarthy, 2008; Simon, 1987; Tuan, 1994). These countries eventually joined ASEAN-Vietnam in 1995, Laos and Myanmar in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999—further expanding the association.

Despite its core principles, ASEAN has encountered significant challenges, particularly in the form of internal mistrust and a lack of cohesion among its member states. These challenges have their roots in both historical and present-day issues. The non-intervention principle, which is designed to uphold national sovereignty, often acts as a hindrance to the organization's effectiveness in addressing internal conflicts or human rights issues. This is because members are hesitant to interfere in each other's domestic matters. In addition, the economic disparities and diverse political systems, which range from monarchical to democratic regimes, present additional challenges to the formulation of unified policy. While these factors contribute to an ongoing atmosphere of distrust and incoherence, it is important to acknowledge that ASEAN has achieved noteworthy successes, including the advancement of economic cooperation, the establishment of a platform for security dialogue, and the fostering of a Southeast Asian identity. These achievements demonstrate that, despite internal challenges, ASEAN remains a valuable regional organization that plays an essential role on the global stage.

2. Southeast Asia's through the Lens of Tourism

Tourism has become one of the most important economic areas for countries in Southeast Asia. The forty-three million visitors predicted to visit all ten ASEAN states by 2022 would help contribute greatly to the region's GDP. According to WTTC (2023) the industry produced US\$241 billion in national GDP and employment. Particularly among ATF members, the huge capacity of contribution was a growing phenomenon in the tourism sector for Southeast Asia. One cannot perceive this current tourism without paying attention to the past of this region.

The history of tourism in Southeast Asia can be traced back to the early 20th century. However, tourism in Southeast Asia has only boomed since the advent of commercial air transportation in the 1960s. The opening of air access allowed international travelers to explore Asia, including Southeast Asia. In addition, the formation of ASEAN strengthened regional cooperation in the tourism sector, which in turn facilitated an increase in the number of foreign tourists. The support of growing international air routes accelerated the growth of the region's tourism sector and had a significant impact on regional tourism policy (Thomas, 2023; Wood, 1980).

Looking ahead to the subsequent phases of the development of the region, the dynamics of tourism in this place cannot be seen the same with previous on its early dynamics. Aini (2024) noted a trend of increase in the number of visitors among almost all Southeast Asian nations to grasp the present regional scope. Thailand experienced the greatest influx of tourists, with an estimated 30 million more, followed by Malaysia, which saw an impressive increase of over 10 million tourists. During the early decades of 21st century, nations such as Singapore, Vietnam, and Indonesia had significant increases in tourism, with an additional 10 to 15 million visitors. Tourism does play as source of income and contribute to various ASEAN countries advancing their economies. For reference, Indonesia has had the most serious economic growth, going from \$427 billion in 2002 to \$1.05 trillion in 2019, giving a 150% rise (Aini, 2024). Several nations in the region, such as Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam, have also witnessed remarkable GDP growth, with raises ranging from 1.5 to 3 times the original value.

Nevertheless, not all member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have derived comparable benefits from the surge in regional tourism. In comparison, countries such as Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and Brunei exhibited relatively slower GDP growth rates, with estimated GDP values remaining below \$100 billion. Trupp and Dolezal (2020) observe that a few select locations, including Thailand and Malaysia, have collectively accounted for over half of the region's international tourist arrivals since the 1960s. It is interesting to note that the combined data for Malaysia and Thailand indicates that these two countries attracted 21 million visitors, which represents over half of the total arrivals to the other eight ASEAN member countries. Despite this considerable inflow of tourists, the combined areas of Malaysia and Thailand are only 843,933 km², which is less than one-fifth of the total area of Southeast Asia.

While tourism plays a significant role in shaping the economic and cultural identity of several ASEAN countries, it is not a sector that is equally important to all members. Some countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand, have allocated a significant level of priority to the tourism sector. The global community is likely to be familiar with Bangkok, Boracay, Bali's picturesque views, and tourism attractions, as well as Singapore, which has been depicted in cinematic productions including *Crazy Rich Asians* and Malaysia's Kuantan, which has been featured in an episode of the widely popular Japanese anime series *Jujutsu Kaisen*. The aforementioned travel attractions in Southeast Asia are not as visible as they could be, particularly in the case of Brunei Darussalam and the CLMV nations (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam). Indeed, these countries are home to a wealth of natural beauty, as evidenced by sites such as Yangon, Hanoi, Angkor Wat, and Luang Prabang. Nevertheless, these nations appear to demonstrate a paucity of activity with regard to the development of national tourism.

To illustrate, Brunei's primary source of state funding is the oil and gas company. The tourism industry in Brunei remains relatively minor in comparison to that of its neighboring countries. Given the abundance of oil and gas resources, it appears that the Brunei government is unlikely to prioritize tourism as a means of diversifying the economy. This phenomenon is also observed in CLMV nations. Cambodia continues to rely on agricultural and related sectors, while the quality of its workforce and the infrastructure for health and education must be enhanced to support the growth of a more competitive tourism sector. In Laos, the national economy is primarily driven by the energy, construction, and electronic component manufacturing sectors, indicating that the country has not yet fully relied on tourism as a significant source of revenue. Myanmar, despite its abundance of natural resources, including jade, gems, oil, natural gas, and other minerals, has yet to prioritize the development of the tourism sector as a significant economic driver. In contrast, Vietnam, with its historical reliance on agriculture, particularly wet rice cultivation, is actively pursuing diversification of its economy, although tourism remains a relatively limited sector (Tun, 2019).

This context underlines that, albeit tourism is a major economic sector in many ASEAN members, the idea of tourism as a uniting factor for regional integration cannot be generally used across the whole ASEAN region. The different economic priorities, degrees of infrastructure development, and areas of concentration of other economic sectors in every member state highlight the complexity in combining tourism as a shared goal. Still, ASEAN's vitality shows promise. Institutions created from many historical, cultural, and economic patterns and textures promote these prospects. These components taken together enhance

the platform for ASEAN regional cooperation, therefore strengthening the basis for next joint projects in the tourism industry as well as in other industries.

3. The Emergence of Tourism Regionalization in Southeast Asia under ASEAN

The internal dynamics of ASEAN have led to questions being raised about the organization's capacity to function as a genuinely beneficial regional body. Notwithstanding the uncertainties surrounding its future, ASEAN has quietly established a solid foundation, particularly through its less prominent yet strategically significant endeavors, such as its emphasis on regional tourism. As a prime example, look into the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF), which was founded in 1981 in Genting Highlands, Malaysia, during a ministerial meeting (Tourism Malaysia, 2014). The ATF emerged as a crucial endeavor to promote Southeast Asia as a unified travel destination, embodying ASEAN's proactive stance towards regional cooperation in the tourism domain.

The formation of the ATF is of particular significance in that it preceded comparable efforts in other regions. In 1976, the ASEAN Committee on Trade and Tourism formalized ASEAN cooperation in tourism under the Sub-Committee on Tourism (SCOT), which gave rise to the idea of the ATF. It has been asserted that the ASEAN governments utilized the ATF as a forum for engagement with the private sector and relevant civil society organizations, with the objective of promoting ASEAN as a unified tourism destination (ASEAN, 2012). Nevertheless, during its formative years, the ATF's significance was not fully acknowledged by its expanding membership.

The expanding significance of the tourism industry in Southeast Asia led to both structural and substantive changes to the SCOT's structure until 1997. In order to create a single ASEAN tourism destination, the ASEAN Tourism Ministers endorsed the concept to establish the ATF as a separate forum in 1997 and acknowledged its expansion. In Cebu, Philippines, on January 10, 1998, the ATF convened its first-ever annual meeting, one year later. With a more organized and targeted strategy to promoting Southeast Asia's tourist industry, this summit codified the ATF's basic framework (ASEAN, 2012). From this point on, the Meeting of ASEAN National Tourism Organizations (ASEAN NTOs) and the Chairmanship of the Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (M-ATM) have been coordinated annually under the direction of the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF). Every year, this rotation takes place, with the Meeting of ASEAN NTOs taking place before the M-ATM (ASEAN Tourism Ministers, 1998).

This progress, which has been sustained for a long period, reflects a distinctive approach to regional tourism cooperation not observed elsewhere, including in Europe, which only began considering tourism as part of its regional strategy in 1984 (European Parliament, 2019). It basically denotes that ASEAN's commitment to promoting regional tourism was very forward-looking and ahead of time. Although there is limited direct evidence specifically relating ASEAN's early efforts to later developments in Europe, the simple fact that ASEAN began its regional tourism strategy sooner is noteworthy. It implies that ASEAN recognized the potential of tourism as a vehicle for regional integration a little earlier than others.

This trend is also witnessed in ASEAN's establishment of a dedicated regional tourism organization, a move that parallels developments in other regions of the Global South. For example, in 1989, the Caribbean established the Caribbean Tourism Organization, and Southern Africa established the Regional Tourism Organization of Southern Africa, RETOSA, in 1997. The newness of ASEAN's approach endows it with the facility to make bold, independent initiatives on regional cooperation, especially in those areas which have been slower to respond from other major world powers. Therefore, ATF acts as a reflection of the ASEAN progressive vision that still shapes the tourism market in the region up to date.

4. Annual Chairmanship in ATF and Significance

Table 3.1 Selected Years of ATF and Key Findings

Year	Host	Focus of Event	Regional Tourism Numbers (in Millions)	Findings
January 13, 2001	Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam	Official launch of the Visit ASEAN Campaign (VAC) in two phases	39.1	Promotional materials for the launch of VAC were completed, including the logo, taglines, and theme song.
February 3, 2004	Vientiane, Lao PDR	Soft-launch of the extended third phase of VAC; launch of the Roadmap for Integration of the Tourism Sector (RITS) 2004-2010.	49	The Avian Flu impacted tourism activity during this period
January 24, 2010	Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei	Development of the framework for the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) 2011–2015	73.7	ASEAN launched a new tourism marketing strategy, "Southeast Asia: Feel the Warmth"
January 11, 2012	Manado, Indonesia	ASEAN Multilateral Agreement on the Full Liberalization of Passenger Air Services (MAFLPAS) as a step towards the ASEAN Single Aviation Market (ASAM)	89	Endorsement of the ASEAN Tourism Marketing Strategy 2012-2015, building on the Visit ASEAN Campaign and previous marketing efforts.
January 25, 2015	Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar	Agreement on the new ATSP 2016–2025, committing to responsible, sustainable, inclusive, and balanced tourism development	108.9	Implementation of the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) on Tourism Professionals
January 19, 2017	Singapore, Singapore	Progress in the implementation of the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) 2016–2025	125	Ecotourism initiatives subsumed under the existing implementation of the ATSP

January 19, 2022	Sihanoukville, Cambodia	Implementation of the Post-COVID-19 Recovery Plan for ASEAN Tourism, including ASEAN Guidelines on Hygiene and Safety for Tourism Professionals and Communities	43.2	Endorsement of the ASEAN Community-Based Tourism Standard and initial steps toward reopening ASEAN tourism post-pandemic
January 25, 2024	Vientiane, Lao PDR	Development of the post-2025 Strategic Plan with the Philippines leading the commitment	91	49 out of 64 activities under the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) 2016–2025, or 76.6%, have been implemented.

Source: ATF documents and joint media statements compiled by the author.

The ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) implemented a systematic framework for yearly coordination after 1998, which included two important meetings: the Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (M-ATM) and the Meeting of ASEAN National Tourism Organizations (ASEAN NTOs) (ASEAN Tourism Ministers, 1998). The M-ATM establishes the strategic vision and policy direction for regional tourism, which many subordinate entities, such as the ASEAN NTOs, subsequently execute. The ASEAN NTOs, in turn, are responsible for coordinating, overseeing, and reviewing the execution of programs and policies established by the M-ATM. Moreover, they actively contribute to the creation and formulation of policy suggestions, which are subsequently submitted for approval by the M-ATM.

Moreover, they actively participate in the development and formulation of policy recommendations, which are in turn presented for approval by the M-ATM. In order to ensure continuous development and coordination of regional tourism objectives, the ASEAN National Tourism Organizations (NTOs) convene biennially, while the Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers occurs annually. The structured coordination promotes the collaborative efforts within ASEAN to strengthen the integration of tourism in the region and guarantee consistency in regulations.

The Annual Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (M-ATM) functions as a comprehensive forum for the coordination and assessment of the progress achieved by the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) and its designed yearly plans. On a long-term basis, the ATF adopts a strategic approach, often developing five-year plans to guide its operations. Specifically, in 2002, the ATF initiated the Visit ASEAN Campaign through its ministerial-level strategic organizations, which subsequently evolved into a prominent promotional initiative in Southeast Asia. This effort was distinguished by its cooperation with key partners such as Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Furthermore, the collaborative aspect of this effort played a crucial role in developing regional tourist integration by enabling travel within the interior of ASEAN. In pursuit of this objective, the Ministers expressly urged member nations to eliminate all fiscal and other barriers to travel (ATF, 2001; ATF, 2002; Tourism Malaysia, 2014). This strategy not only improved the tourist competitiveness of ASEAN but also promoted even stronger neighborhood integration and cooperation.

The tourism industry in Southeast Asia encountered a particularly difficult phase from 2003 to 2005, since the region, along with East Asia, was one of the first to be impacted by the H5N1 Avian flu epidemic. In their study, Kuo et al. (2009) applied the Panel Data Analysis method based on Static and Dynamic Fixed effect models to examine the impact of Avian flu on international tourism demand. The result of the study showed that the outbreak had a glooming impact on the number of foreign tourists coming to these countries (Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia). Furthermore, the Avian flu not only reduced the quantity of tourists due to concerns about contracting the illness but also damaged the image of these countries as safe international travel destinations.

Despite expectations, this analysis of Southeast Asia's tourism sector between 2003 and 2005 found no significant decline in visitor numbers. Aside from the Avian flu, the December 2004 Aceh tsunami, which measured 9.3 on the Richter scale, did not have a significant impact on tourism. Strategic ASEAN measures to improve international tourist coordination may have contributed to this resilience. To improve tourist competitiveness, ATF fostered international collaboration. The ASEAN, China, Japan, and Korea Tourism Ministers Meeting (M-ATM+3) was a major topic of the 2004 ATF meeting to promote tourism interchange between ASEAN and its East Asian partners. ASEAN also expanded its tourist operations to India, Australia, and New Zealand (ASEAN, 2004). These coordinated initiatives show ASEAN's proactive attitude to foreign issues and regional tourism through international relationships.

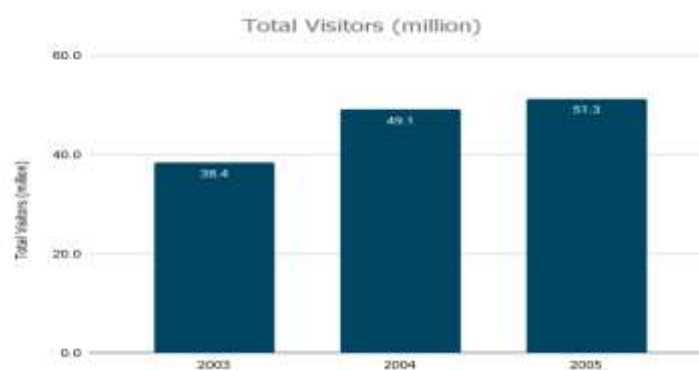


Figure 3.1 Growth in International Tourist Arrivals to ASEAN, 2003--2005 (in million).

Source: ASEAN Statistical Yearbook 2008, ASEAN Secretariat (2009)

A quick look at the growth numbers is enough basis to say that this growth reflects on a huge potential through increased spending on infrastructure, promotion of tourism, and enhanced connectivity among nations in the region. Southeast Asia suffered traumatic incidents in the first years of this century, from the avian flu epidemic and Aceh tsunami to bombs in Bali and civil strife in several countries, yet across this decade tourist arrivals continued rising notably. This ongoing growth has solidified Southeast Asia as one of the best tourism destinations in the world. All the 10 Member States of ASEAN, and the organization within the ASEAN framework such as ATF along with others, have vowed to cooperate actively. Those tumultuous years between 2003 and 2005 were managed through lobbying together.

One of ATF's regular plans was the Roadmap for Integration of the Tourism Sector (RITS) 2004–2010 which was agreed upon at the ATF meeting in 2004 (ATF, 2004). After 2004, there appears to be a limited amount of information regarding the roadmap and what becomes more relevant in time is the evolution since RITS. The ATF, which was previously known as RITS 2004–2010, adopted the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) 2011–2015 that

was also conceived during the Brunei Darussalam meeting in 2010. This is consistent with the new tourism marketing strategy of ASEAN, "Southeast Asia: Feel the Warmth" (ATF, 2010). The move from RITS to ATSP is important for the discussions of ASEAN competitiveness and cooperation, particularly carried out under the ATF. By doing so, it opens a re-examination of the effect of globalization and contemporary tourism issues on the region that would have otherwise resulted in Southeast Asia envisioned as a Single Destination Tourism destination.

5. The Dynamics of ATF Member Countries during the Implementation of ATSP I (2011–2015)

The ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) 2010 marked the official launch of the implementation of the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) 2011–2015 (ASEAN Secretariat, 2011). The official ATSP document outlines the primary objective of tourism regionalization in Southeast Asia, stating that:

The overall objective is to develop a blueprint defining the policies, programs, and projects of the ASEAN NTOs in the areas of marketing, product development, standards, human resources development, investment, and communication, among others. The blueprint will be developed using world-recognized sustainable and responsible tourism principles and practices (ASEAN Secretariat, 2011).

Aligned with these goals, the vision for ASEAN tourism by 2015 was defined as follows: *By 2015, ASEAN will provide an increasing number of visitors to the region with authentic and diverse products, enhanced connectivity, a safe and secure environment, increased quality of services, while at the same time ensuring an increased quality of life and opportunities for residents through responsible and sustainable tourism development by working effectively with a wide range of stakeholders (ASEAN Secretariat, 2011).*

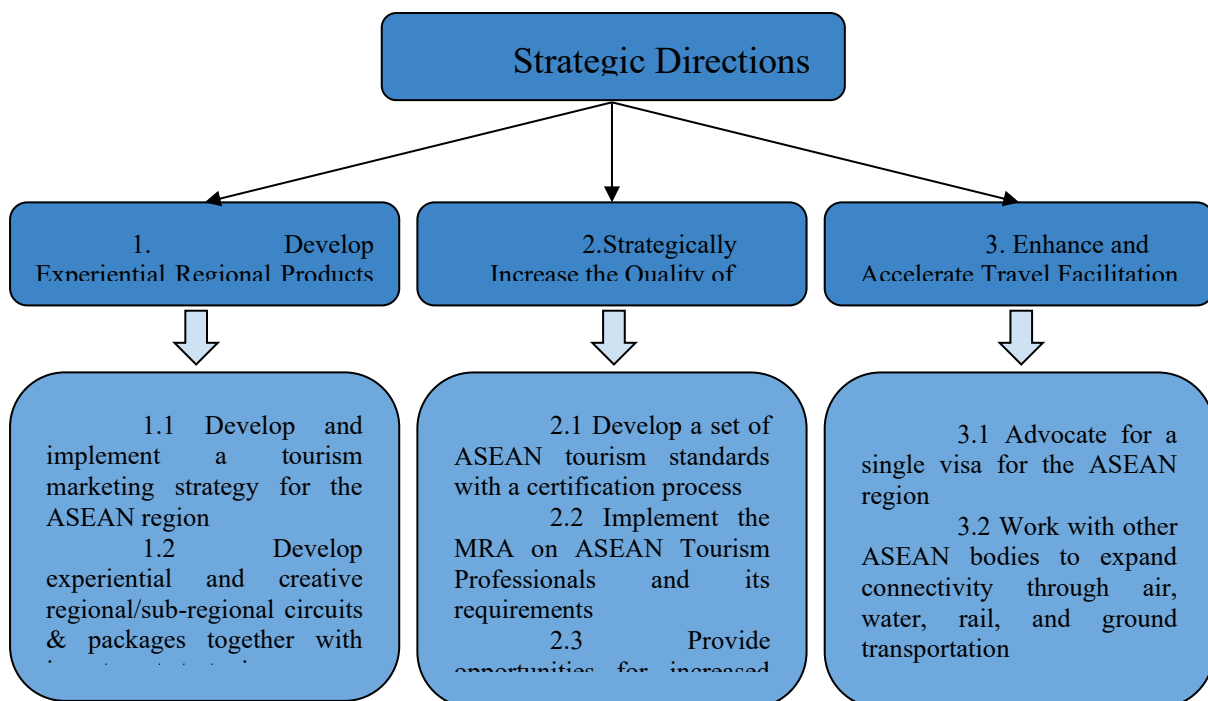


Figure 3.2 ATSP 1 Strategic Directions and Strategic Actions, 2011–2015.

Source: ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2011–2015, ASEAN Secretariat (2011)

The ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 1 (ATSP 1) 2011–2015 outlines the region's commitment to leveraging its cultural richness, diverse landscapes, and distinctive experiences to attract international tourists. In light of these considerations, the ATSP 1 provides a clear direction for ASEAN's tourism development under the ATF regime. Three strategic directions were initiated within the framework of ATSP 1:

1. Develop Experiential Regional Products & Creative Marketing & Investment Strategies;
2. Strategically Increase the Quality of Services and Human Resources in the Region;
3. Enhance and Accelerate Travel Facilitation and ASEAN Connectivity.

Each directions carry number of actions with specific details serve parameters will be taken to progress the ultimate goal (ATSP, ASEAN 2010).

The ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) 2011–2015 primarily focused on growing visitor numbers, rather than fully implementing the Sustainable Tourism Development principles outlined by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Though sustainability was mentioned, several ASEAN governments found it difficult to develop comprehensive plans that successfully included these ideas. The ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) members had to put in a lot of work to achieve the ambitious targets established during the ATSP 1 period. Members of the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) had to work very hard to reach the high targets set during the ATSP 1 period. The unequal cooperation among the members produced both achievements and failures. While some countries had great success boosting tourism, others ran across problems due to insufficient strategic direction and cooperation.

Three key directions under ATSP 1 served to assess the dynamics of coordination or competition among member countries. The plan's strengths and weaknesses included a strong focus on increasing visitor numbers and an uneven implementation across member nations. Only a few countries showed leadership throughout this strategic plan, highlighting the varied levels of success and challenge within the ASEAN community.

- a) Develop Experiential Regional Products & Creative Marketing & Investment
- b)

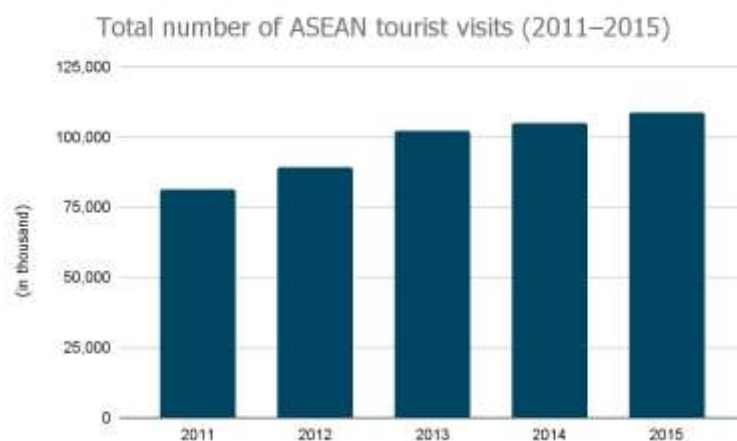


Figure 3.3 Annual International Tourist Arrivals to ASEAN, 2011–2015

Source: ASEAN Statistical Yearbook 2016/2017, ASEAN Secretariat (2017)

Thailand is home to various prominent tourist sites like Bangkok, Phuket, and Chiang Mai, which are regularly promoted through global tourism campaigns. By means of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), the Thai government seeks to

establish Thailand as a top global tourist destination in line with its strategy to increase regional tourism marketing (Fajryani & Harto, 2016). Likewise, Malaysia uses the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (Tourism Malaysia) for national promotion campaigns. Malaysia started the "Visit Malaysia Year" (VMY) campaign in 2014 in line with holding the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) 2014 (Tourism Malaysia, 2014).

Creative marketing techniques have been successfully applied in Cambodia to increase environmental awareness. This is seen by the "One Tourist, One Tree" campaign, which seeks to support green tourism and environmental protection (Tourism of Cambodia, 2013). Comparably, Laos has been praised worldwide. The European Council on Tourism and Trade bestowed upon it the Best Tourism Destination in 2013. With the "Simply Beautiful" advertising campaign effectively stressing the country's natural beauty and simplicity, this awareness has greatly helped the tourist and hospitality sectors to grow (Inthavong & Onphanhdala, 2015). However, marketing plans used by ASEAN countries are often seen as less comprehensive and successful when compared to those used by single countries. Williams (2014) says that the Philippines has done a better job of promoting its tourism on its own, rather than using the "ASEAN" name. This has meant that opportunities to use the power of regional marketing have been missed. Similarly, Indonesia has had trouble coming up with creative marketing plans and new products for the area. Even though the ASEAN website has a tourism portal, the material is still very basic and limited (Amalia, 2016).

Indonesia has also initiated the process of recalibrating the perceptions of foreign tourists, similar to the Philippines. The Philippines has endeavored to diversify its tourism offerings by promoting unique tours, including heritage tours in Ilocandia, cultural tours at the T'bolo Cultural Village, and diving at the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park (Williams, 2014). For Indonesia, the objective is to redirect attention from Bali to other high-priority destinations, including the Borobudur and Lake Toba (Moenir, 2017). Nevertheless, both nations encounter substantial obstacles in reconciling their domestic tourism policies with the broader regional promotion initiatives. The regional objectives envisioned by the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) are not in alignment with national initiatives.

As for substance, Alfiarnika (2017) notes in her study of Indonesia's adherence to the ATSP 1 that Indonesia is in a rather puzzling situation. A significant number of the initiatives described in ATSP 1 had previously been executed within Indonesia, as its tourism industry was more advanced than those of other ASEAN member states during that period. Other nations, such as Thailand and Malaysia, have also shown this separation, and have emerged as regional tourist leaders over this period. Notwithstanding their prominent positions, these countries nevertheless face challenges in effectively incorporating their own initiatives into the wider regional structure.

c) Strategically Increase the Quality of Services and Human Resources in the Region

The Mutual Recognition Arrangement for ASEAN Tourism Professionals (MRA-TP) was established to facilitate the movement of certified tourism professionals across the region, thereby raising the standards of service within the ASEAN tourism sector. In addition, ASEAN places a strong emphasis on fostering lifelong learning opportunities to enhance the global competitiveness of its workforce through

capacity-building initiatives. These efforts are designed to promote sustainable economic growth and enhance the overall quality of the ASEAN travel experience.

The MRA-TP was formally adopted by ATF member states at a special ministerial meeting held during the UNWTO Global Summit on City Tourism 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand. This endorsement serves to illustrate the expeditious implementation of the pivotal strategic objectives delineated in the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) 1. Nevertheless, since its inception, the MRA-TP has encountered obstacles pertaining to its alignment with the extant political frameworks within the region. For example, countries such as Indonesia encounter considerable difficulties in identifying suitably qualified assessors and certified instructors able to implement MRA standards within their educational institutions (Lagarense, 2013).

In terms of language proficiency, particularly in English, ATF member countries remain unskilled to adapt the fast-moving conditions. According to the EF English Proficiency Index (2012), Singapore and Malaysia were categorized as having high proficiency in English, while other ASEAN member states were ranked between medium to low proficiency. Specifically, Indonesia and Vietnam were initially classified at a low proficiency level. By the end of the ATSP 1 during 2011–2015 period, Indonesia and Vietnam had improved to a moderate level of proficiency; however, many other member countries continued to struggle with significant deficits in English language skills (EF EPI, 2015).

d) Enhance and Accelerate Travel Facilitation and ASEAN Connectivity

Particularly in connection to tourist growth, connectivity inside the ASEAN area has not notably increased despite efforts under the ASEAN tourist Strategic Plan 1 (ATSP 1). The particular geography of the area makes it quite difficult to create efficient physical connection. Political opposition has also hampered development outside of geographical limitations, particularly in the aviation industry. The ASEAN Single Aviation Market (ASAM), which has been a recurring subject of discussion since the 2012 ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) in Yogyakarta, has so far had minimal impact on regional connectivity.

Often geographical obstacles render almost impossible connectivity. For example, Myanmar's insufficiently developed transportation system and limited international flight options set up significant obstacles to improving its connectivity and accessibility, which have discouraged international visitors and hampered the nation's integration into the larger ASEAN tourism framework (Walsh & Lin, 2013). Likewise, Laos has battled with insufficient infrastructure spending, therefore complicating initiatives to improve connectivity (Inthavong & Onphanhdala, 2015).

Targeted regional connectivity strategies have, however, helped some sub-regions—such as the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA). To improve sub-regional connection, Indonesia, for instance, added flights from Manado to Davao under Wings Air in 2012, hence broadening its air routes (Rimando, 2012). Long-standing leader in ASEAN tourism Thailand has seized on these policies by pursuing its own connectivity projects, including initially implementing the ASEAN single visa scheme via a joint visa deal with Cambodia. This visa policy seeks to expedite the travel process for guests wanting to tour several ASEAN nations, therefore promoting regional tourist development. Still, these projects usually find more wealthy countries setting the example while less

developed countries still struggle greatly to adapt to and profit from such connectivity ideas.

Year	Malaysia	Singapore	Thailand	Indonesia	Others
2011	24,714	13,171	19,098	7,650	16.595
2012	25,033	14,491	22,354	8,044	19.303
2013	25,716	15,568	26,547	8,802	25.565
2014	27,437	15,095	24,780	9,435	28.336
2015	25,721	15,231	29,881	10,407	27,663

Figure 3.4 Visitor Arrival by Country of destination to ASEAN, 2011-2015 (in thousand)

Source: ASEAN Statistical Yearbook 2016/2017, ASEAN Secretariat (2017)

The ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 1 (ATSP 1) 2011–2015 shows that the plan was meant to improve regional tourism integration through three main areas: creating more experiential tourism products; making services and human resources better; and speeding up travel facilitation and ASEAN connectivity. However, the strategy was not implemented equally. Some nations, like Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia, were generally said to have fared better. Other challenges included limited infrastructure and workforce in places like Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, or even the less visible progress in Vietnam, Singapore, and Brunei. As a result, ATSP 1 was mismatched in its objectives, with more developed countries taking the lead, while less developed nations focused on establishing a regional tourism economy.

Additionally, ATSP 1 did not properly address issues like overtourism and sustainable tourism growth. Despite an increase in tourist arrivals in several ASEAN countries, inadequate management of overtourism, especially in popular destinations like Bali, Boracay, and Angkor Wat, resulted in negative environmental impacts and reduced quality of life for local communities. Therefore, in future initiatives, ASEAN must prioritize sustainable tourism development, including proactive management of overtourism and more inclusive strategies to empower less developed nations in enhancing their tourism capabilities without harming local ecosystems. The aspiration for future ATSP initiatives is to create a tourism ecosystem that is equitable, sustainable, and inclusive for all member states, balancing economic growth with environmental preservation.

e) The Dynamics of ATF Member Countries during the Implementation of ATSP 2 (2016–2025)

The unaddressed challenges and untapped opportunities have made it necessary to revitalize the ATSP 1. As a result, ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2 (ATSP 2) was established to bridge the nexus between tourism and sustainable development, aligning with the vision of the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF). As the second phase, ATSP 2, initiated by ATF in 2015, focuses on a more inclusive, sustainable, and knowledge-based economic growth scenario. The strategic scope is narrowed down to two main objectives: (1) enhancing ASEAN's competitiveness as a well-connected tourism destination and (2) ensuring the sustainability and inclusivity of ASEAN tourism.

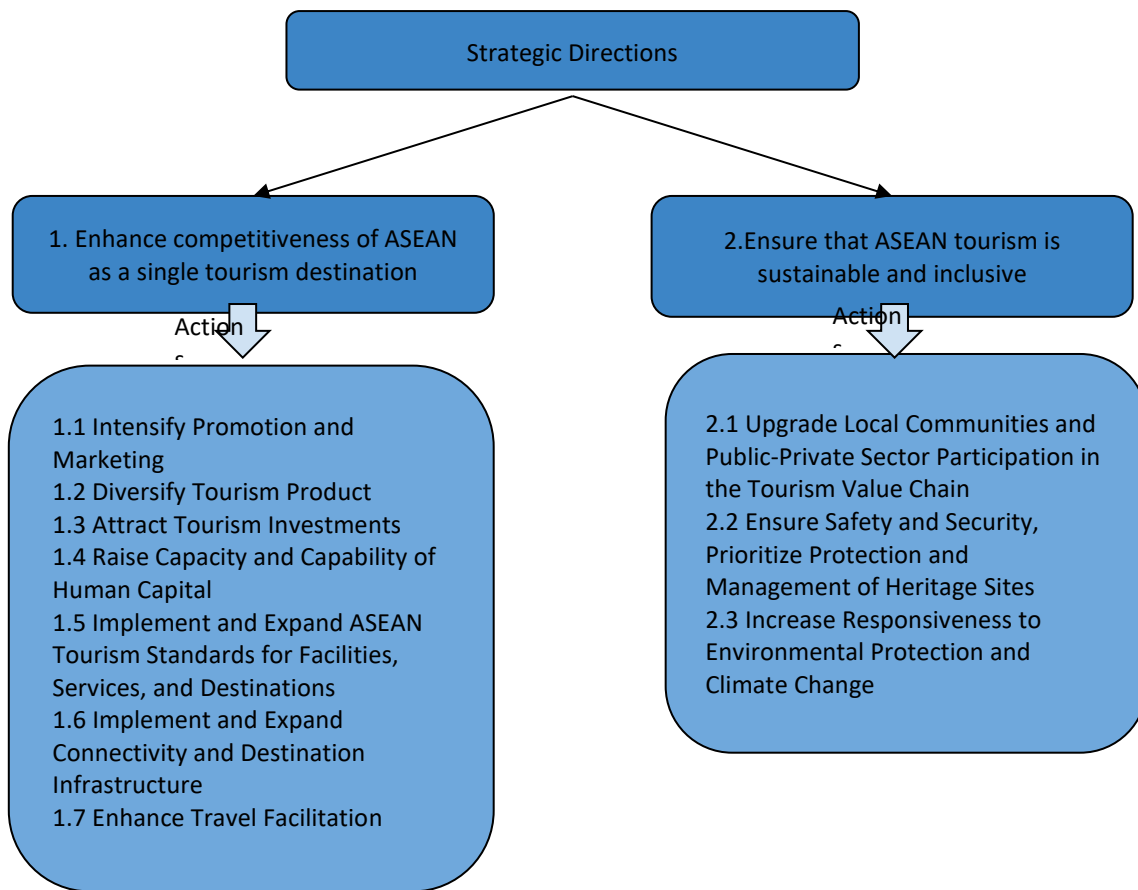


Figure 3.4 ATSP 2 Strategic Directions and Strategic Actions, 2016-2025

Source: ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016–2025, ASEAN Secretariat (2015)

ATSP 2 not only addresses cross-national corporate inefficiencies encountered in the implementation of the previous ATSP but also identifies opportunities to remediate ATF tourism through strengthening the policy framework. The core focus areas include integrating sustainable tourism development principles, optimizing community participation, adapting to climate change, and preserving natural and cultural heritage through more comprehensive site management (ASEAN, 2015). The focus of ATSP 2 can be evaluated through the perspective of global sustainable tourism development commitments. There is a clear similarity between the ambitions of ATSP 2 and the worldwide sustainable tourism development strategy. Both theories offer a synergistic approach to solving contemporary tourist concerns, such as overtourism and environmental degradation. Integrating these principles enables the design of more holistic and flexible plans in response to the dynamic nature of the regional tourism sector.

According to ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) (ATF, 2024), by the year 2024, 76.6 percent of strategic activities as stated in ATSP 2 have been implemented. It bodes well for a high degree of commitment to the objectives of the plan among member states going forward. At the same time, it flags up the challenge still before us to revise the rest of the bottlenecks and opportunities in those two basic strategic directions. An in-depth assessment of the progress, achievements and challenges pertaining to that execution in each area can show us an overview of how effective ATSP 2 really has been, and guide ASEAN tourism on its next steps.

1) Enhance competitiveness of ASEAN as a single tourism destination

ATF 2016–2025 strategic direction number one was responded to by ASEAN Member States with various strategies implemented to improve tourism promotion and ensure offering diversification. Each nation has taken very different steps, presumably reflecting their differing geographies and peoples. These differences are the instruments to show the diversity and beauty of ASEAN. Therefore, strategies to optimize the tourism potential must be designed around such specific conditions in each country. Over the years, Indonesia and CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam) nations have committed strongly to driving sustainable tourism. As the member of ATF, they were targeting emerging locations while taking pressure off from tourist-saturated destinations. The "Ten New Balis" project by Indonesia, focusing on establishing new tourism hubs in locations such as Lake Toba, Borobudur, and Wakatobi is a case in point. Accordingly, these locations adopt sustainable activities in order to attain the equilibrium between eco-friendly preservation and tourism development (Rahayu & Sulistyawati, 2021).

In a similar vein, Vietnam, too—of the CLMV countries—is working to promote its northern mountainous regions, like Sapa, through community-based events. Events such as "Sa Pa—The Land of Love" and "Fansipan Rose Festival" help to enhance the local economy and introduce unique values of nature, as well as cultural heritage contained in the natural landscape (Vietnam+, 2024). Indonesia and Vietnam alike have emphasized regional dispersal strategies to spread the tourist dollar more broadly within their countries. Some other groups of the ASEAN economies, such as Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines, have focused significantly on cultural and heritage tourism. Northern cities like Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai, famous for their cultural hot spots, are aggressively marketed in Thailand under its "Charming Thailand: 5 Regions" campaign (Tantivangphaisal, 2024). Likewise, heritage storytelling has been employed as a marketing device in destinations such as Penang, Sarawak, and Terengganu in Malaysia. This is a strategy that helps Malaysia connect tourists with its rich cultural and historical past significantly better, thereby aiding their travel experience (Zins & Adamu Abbas Adamu, 2023). The "Love the Philippines" campaign in the Philippines enhances emotional and historical binding through branding of colonial cities and decades that have passed from times past cultures to be embodied by tourists (Department of Tourism Philippines, 2023).

The specialized way has been adopted by nations such as Singapore and Brunei who focus on niche markets to attract targeted tourist segments. It has developed an image of being the "World's Best MICE City" for Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibition tourism. By doing this, Singapore supports not only its main tourist tenet but also its standing as a worldwide business center (Singapore Tourism Board, 2026). At the same time, Brunei has created a distinctive tourism appeal by highlighting its natural beauty, adventure sports, and cultural experiences—including culinary specialties (Borneo Bulletin, 2024). In both examples, these are high-value travelers interested in corporate events or once-in-a-lifetime experiences that set them apart from the mass consumer-focused part of the tourism market. This

approach affords both Singapore and Brunei some leverage in tailoring their industries to their fullest potential, which will help fatten their tourism-related foreign profits.

Diversifying tourism products, intensifying promotion and marketing, and attracting tourism investments may benefit from the diversification strategy. The first strategic direction makes it impossible for ATF member states' tourism ministries, especially those in the ATF, to selectively implement these strategic actions. While these initiatives do attract tourists and investment, they also intensify competition and potentially weaken regional integration, as most members focus on deepening tourism-tourist connections domestically. It would appear that fewer resources are being allocated to other pivotal actions, such as the implementation and expansion of connectivity and destination infrastructure.

The ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan, which runs from 2016 to 2025, emphasizes how member states are unable to control their distinct competitive tendencies. The term "ASEAN tourism" is not thought to be a consistently defined concept, despite the fact that the ASEAN region has made significant strides toward becoming a popular tourist destination. Instead, it is often associated with the distinctive travel options provided in each member state. The diverse approach to tourism promotion could inadvertently erode the unity of identity that ASEAN seeks to establish.

2) Ensure That ASEAN Tourism is Sustainable and Inclusive

In recent years, the notion of sustainable tourism has garnered significant global interest. This approach has been spearheaded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) since the start of the 21st century. The initiative for the sustainable development of tourism was initiated by UNEP and subsequently, a UN declaration was issued designating 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism (Niedziółka, 2022). UNEP has delineated the principles of sustainable tourism development, which encompass both economic and social dimensions. Yet, the journey to responsible, sustainable, and inclusive tourism is tough because of overtourism in some of Southeast Asia favorite destinations. As an example, Bali, Indonesia is troubled by water scarcity, waste management, and cultural commodification (Mahendra, 2024; Yamamoto et al.). The biggest Philippine Island—the king of white-sand beaches, Boracay—temporarily closed down in mid-2018 for a six-month restoration period from years of over-touristization (Varga, 2018). Angkor Wat in Cambodia also faces the challenge of managing increasing crowds that would affect both the site's delicate structures and the ecological sound region (Varga, 2019).

ATF member countries are moving towards more sustainable and inclusive forms of tourism development by focusing on ecotourism and community-based tourism (CBT). ATF's membership is a strong indication of the trend toward addressing the complex challenges facing tourism as a major industry. Not only responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment, but the well-being of local people and their communities, as well as sustainability, are consistent with the principles of ecotourism. With

ecotourism having been identified by leaders at the ASEAN Tourism Ministerial Roundtable (MRT) on Ecotourism held in Laos in 2016 under the ATSP 2016-2025 as an imminent solution to tourism challenges across the region (ASEAN, 2016).

The gradual shift towards ecotourism in Southeast Asia is a promising development that should be encouraged. It is in the region's best interest to drive their tourism sectors towards safe and sustainable tourism destinations that preserve both natural resources and consumer experiences. Having primarily attracted international eco-travelers, Brunei has targeted the development of ecotourism in the Temburong district and has witnessed a 20% increase in volume in 2017 due to its attractions based on nature (Chin et al., 2023). Meanwhile, Indonesia is countering overtourism in Bali through ecotourism development in Nusa Penida, especially by pioneering a mangrove-based tourism approach to provide a distinct and sustainable visitor experience (Vipriyanti et al., 2022).

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) represents a promising approach to sustainable and inclusive tourism. In 2016, the ASEAN Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Standard was adopted with the objective of promoting the region as a competitive and sustainable destination through the establishment of unified criteria and standards (Kim et al., 2024). While some ATF member countries, such as Laos, have adapted the standard to align more closely with their distinctive contexts, resulting in the adoption of their own CBT Standard in 2023. Despite the implementation of the ASEAN Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Standard in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, challenges remain. Tien et al. (2024) identifies several constraints to the effective implementation of the CBT Standard, including poor community awareness and capacity, the lack of policy support, unequal power relations, limited market access, and environmental degradation. These constraints undermine the implementation of the CBT Standard in Vietnam.

The future of sustainable and inclusive tourism in the Southeast Asia region is contingent upon the deepening and sustaining of collaborative efforts among governmental entities, the private sector, local communities, and tourists. Such collaboration is vital to establish a unified framework that integrates economic growth with environmental stewardship and social equity. By establishing sustainability and inclusivity as fundamental tenets of their tourism strategies, ATF member countries can transition from a profit-driven model to one that genuinely values and protects their rich natural and cultural heritage.

This transition engenders a tourism landscape wherein local communities are active partners rather than passive recipients. This guarantees that tourism income are equitably dispersed, empowers underprivileged communities, and enhances local capacities. Furthermore, by engaging tourists as aware participants, rather than simply consumers, the region may build a more responsible tourism culture that respects local customs and eliminates negative impacts. This holistic approach not only protects the lifespan and resilience of the tourism industry but also advances

broader sustainable development goals across the region, generating a virtuous cycle of prosperity that benefits all stakeholders.

6. ATF in the Future

As the Philippines prepares to assume a leadership role in the development of the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) in the post-2025 period, there is a significant opportunity for ASEAN to redefine its regional tourism strategy. As the current ATSP 2016–2025 draws to a close, the fact that 49 out of 64 planned activities have already been implemented (suggests that progress has been made in some areas ATF, 2024). Nevertheless, the future of ASEAN tourism is not merely contingent upon the continuation of existing projects, rather, it necessitates a critical reassessment and innovation of the region's approach to tourism development in order to maintain momentum and address emerging challenges.

The rise of ASEAN tourism under the ATSP has been defined by a considerable increase in tourist numbers, a variety of locations, and a competitive tourism landscape. However, the region's variety creates a duality of opportunity and struggle. Although the area offers a multitude of cultural and experience options, the political and economic integration within ATF is inadequate, resulting in divergent policy execution across member states. Some governments have designated tourism as a core sector of economic and social growth, adopting policies through major marketing, partnerships, and research projects. Conversely, some governments may opt to de-prioritize tourism in favor of addressing other important challenges, such as the management of natural resources, socio-political issues, or economic stability.

This distinction demonstrates the necessity of a more unified and comprehensive strategy for future ASEAN tourism collaboration. In formulating the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) for the period after 2025, ATF member countries must consider the development of a tourism strategy that encourages continuous participation. In particular, areas such as the extension of intra-ASEAN flight routes or cross-border payment solutions have demonstrated the potential to reinforce business relationships and facilitate travel. This could result in the growth of enhanced regional cooperation and integration (AirAsia, 2024; Rachmad & Raharjo, 2023). Furthermore, it is crucial to cultivate intraregional confidence and political readiness to engage in legally enforceable cooperative endeavors.

The ATSP post-2025 has to advocate for a more holistic regional tourism ecosystem, tailored to match the different levels of priorities and capacities within ATF member countries. These rules might be flexible in order to consider the specific circumstances of each country, whereas at the same time advance common goals such as sustainable tourism, alleviating poverty, and protecting cultural heritage. Additionally, raising the level of financial and technical assistance to less economically advanced members might help make work share more even and encourage broader participation in local tourist initiatives. In the end, how effectively ATF can solve these questions and whether a more harmonized approach to tourism sustainability will take place or not, will thus be crucial in determining the long-term post-2025 survival of the ATSP. If ATF places diversity, cooperation and creativity in the forefront, then a future where travel boosts economic growth and strengthens familiarity with one another can be forged.

Conclusion

The ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) is one of the most important platforms in Southeast Asia for facilitating tourism cooperation. Through the forum through which it is laid down, it

permits member nations of ATF to collaborate in improving tourist sector by adopting various promotional techniques and policy initiatives. However, the forum also encounters obstacles that impede the complete realization of regional tourism integration. These include an imbalance of commitments between countries and competition among member countries that prioritize national tourism promotion over regional collaboration. In the future, the ASEAN, through the ATF, must prioritize integrated and sustainable tourism development, with initiatives that support inclusive economic growth and the preservation of cultural and natural resources.

The best-case future would be for them to establish a travel experience through which travelers, having arrived to one of the Southeast Asian airports, plan their route in a few days. This could include taking a mangrove tour in Bali, eco-tourism in Temburong, Brunei and visiting the northern cities of Thailand to experience some of its culture and partaking in a festival from Vietnam under the umbrella of one visa stipulation. In a bid to do so, the ATF must capitalise on available avenues and explore new ones which will necessitate that the ATF work more closely with relevant government authorities across ATF member states in lowering political and economic barriers, enhancing connectivity infrastructure, fostering effective cross-border cooperation in order to transform ASEAN into an even more complete and attractive international travel alternative.

A more strategic focus on regionalizing and cementing the ASEAN tourism brand would serve to make the ATF the preeminent forum for positioning the unified ASEAN as an international tourism destination. The implementation of a "one-visa" policy for Southeast Asia would be a logical step in terms of fostering greater regional integration and reducing the fragmentation previously described. By expanding integration, improving policy coherence and fostering tourism development in innovative ways, ATF can better rise to global challenges, position itself as an active player able to seize emerging opportunities and hold the view that maintaining competitive tourism products is a key component of regional economic and social progress.

References

- Aini, Y. N. (2024). Sustainable tourism in Southeast Asia: Balancing economic growth, employment, and carbon emissions through evidence-based strategies. *Jurnal Kepariwisata Indonesia: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengembangan Kepariwisata Indonesia*, 18(1), 157–174. <https://doi.org/10.47608/jki.v18i12024.157-174>
- AirAsia. (2024, July 4). *AirAsia enhances Malaysia-Indonesia connectivity with direct flights to Labuan Bajo*. AirAsia Newsroom. <https://newsroom.airasia.com/news/airasia-enhances-malaysia-indonesia-connectivity-with-direct-flights-to-labuan-bajo#gsc.tab=0>
- Alfiarnika, V. (2017). *Tingkat Compliance Indonesia terhadap implementasi ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan I (ATSP I)*.
- Amalia, L. D. A. P. (2016). Efektivitas ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2011-2015 di Indonesia. *Jurnal Analisis Hubungan Internasional*, 5(1). <http://journal.unair.ac.id/download-fullpapers-jahid65320b68efull.pdf>
- Ana, M.-I. (2017). Tourism industry in the new Europe: Trends, policies and challenges. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Business Excellence*, 11(1), 493–503. <https://doi.org/10.1515/picbe-2017-0053>
- ASEAN. (2004). *ASEAN documents series 2005*. ASEAN. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2005/01/asean-documents-series-2004.pdf>

- ASEAN. (2012). *Plan of Action on ASEAN Cooperation in Tourism*. Asean.org; ASEAN. <https://asean.org/plan-of-action-on-asean-cooperation-in-tourism/>
- ASEAN. (2016). *ASEAN tourism ministerial roundtable meeting on Ecotourism*. <http://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Joint-Media-Statement-RTM-2016-Final.pdf>
- ASEAN. (2021). *Safe and warm stamp style Guide*. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/asean-safe-and-warm-stamp-style-guide-v1.pdf>
- ASEAN. (2022). *Joint media statement of the 25th meeting ASEAN Tourism Ministers*. <https://asean.org/joint-media-statement-of-the-25th-meeting-of-asean-tourism-ministers/>
- ASEAN. (2023). *Tourist arrivals in the ASEAN region from 2013 to 2022 (in million arrivals)*. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/645643/tourist-arrivals-in-asean-region/>
- ASEAN Member States. (2012). *2012 ASEAN MUTUAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT ON TOURISM PROFESSIONALS*. <https://cil.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2012-MRA-on-Tourism-Professionals.pdf>
- ASEAN Secretariat. (2009). *ASEAN Statistical Yearbook 2008*. ASEAN. https://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/ASYB_2008.pdf
- ASEAN Secretariat. (2011). *ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2011 -2015*. ASEAN. <https://www.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/images/2012/publications/ASEAN%20Tourism%20Strategic%20Plan%202011-2015.pdf>
- ASEAN Secretariat. (2015). *ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025*. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ASEAN-Tourism-Strategic-Plan-2016-2025.pdf>
- ASEAN Secretariat. (2017). *ASEAN Statistical Yearbook 2016/2017* (p. 181). ASEAN. https://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/ASYB_2017-rev.pdf
- ASEAN Secretariat ICT and Tourism Division. (2021). *FINAL STUDY REPORT FOR THE POST-COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN FOR ASEAN TOURISM*. ASEAN. https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Final-Study-Report_Post-Covid19-Tourism-Recovery-Plan-for-ASEAN-Tourism_....pdf
- ASEAN Tourism Ministers. (1998). *Ministerial understanding on ASEAN cooperation in tourism*. <https://arc-agreement.asean.org/file/doc/2015/01/ministerial-understanding-on-asean-cooperation-in-tourism.pdf>
- ATF. (2001). *JOINT PRESS STATEMENT FOURTH MEETING OF ASEAN TOURISM MINISTERS*. Asean.or.id; ASEAN. <https://www.asean.or.id/economic/pratom4.htm>
- ATF. (2002). *THE FIFTH MEETING OF ASEAN TOURISM MINISTERS (5TH M-ATM)*. Asean.or.id; ASEAN. <https://www.asean.or.id/11152.htm>
- ATF. (2004). *The Seventh Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (7th M-ATM)*. Asean.org; ASEAN. <https://asean.org/the-seventh-meeting-of-asean-tourism-ministers-7th-m-atm-vientiane-lao-pdr/>
- ATF. (2010). *Joint media statement of the thirteenth meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers*. Asean.or.id; ASEAN. <https://asean.org/joint-media-statement-of-the-thirteenth-meeting-of-asean-tourism-ministers-13th-m-atm-bandar-seri-begawan-24-january-2010/>
- ATF. (2012). *Joint Media Statement of the Fifteenth Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers*. Asean.org; ASEAN. <https://asean.org/joint-media-statement-of-the-fifteenth-meeting-of-asean-tourism-ministers-15th-m-atm/>

- ATF. (2015). *THE EIGHTEENTH MEETING OF ASEAN TOURISM MINISTERS* Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT. <http://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/JMS-M-ATM-18-Final.pdf>
- ATF. (2022). *Joint Media Statement of the 25th Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers*. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/JMS-25th-M-ATM-Final Adopted.pdf>
- ATF. (2024). *Joint Media Statement of the 27th Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers*. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Adopted-JMS-27th-M-ATM.pdf>
- Borneo Bulletin. (2024, September 14). *Brunei receives Best Tourism Marketing award*. BorneoBulletin. <https://borneobulletin.com.bn/brunei-receives-best-tourism-marketing-award/>
- Chin, S. W. L., Hassan, N. H., & Yong, G. Y. (2023). The new ecotourists of the 21st century: Brunei as a case study. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2191444>
- Department of Tourism Philippines. (2023, June). *Love the Philippines draws widespread support*. Gov.ph. https://beta.tourism.gov.ph/news_and_updates/love-the-philippines-draws-widespread-support/
- Department of Tourism Philippines. (2024, January 29). *PHL is lead country coordinator on the development of the ASEAN tourism development plan post-2025*. Love the Philippines! https://beta.tourism.gov.ph/news_and_updates/phl-is-lead-country-coordinator-on-the-development-of-the-asean-tourism-development-plan-post-2025/
- EF EPI. (2012). *EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) 2012*. Education First. <https://www.ef.com/assetscdn/WIBlwq6RdJvcD9bc8RMd/cefcom-epi-site/reports/2012/ef-epi-2012-english.pdf>
- EF EPI. (2015). *EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) 2015*. Education First. <https://www.ef.com/assetscdn/WIBlwq6RdJvcD9bc8RMd/cefcom-epi-site/reports/2015/ef-epi-2015-english.pdf>
- Estol, J., & Font, X. (2016). European tourism policy: Its evolution and structure. *Tourism Management*, 52, 230–241. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.06.007>
- European Parliament. (2019). *European tourism : Recent developments and future challenges*. European Parliament. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2861/705>
- Fajryani, D. P., & Harto, S. (2016). Kebijakan pemerintah Thailand berpartisipasi di ASEAN Tourism Forum (Atf) dalam meningkatkan industri pariwisata tahun 2011-2015. *Jurnal Online Mahasiswa*, 3(1). <https://jom.unri.ac.id/index.php/JOMFSIP/article/view/9330/8995>
- Inthavong, S., & Onphanhdala, P. (2015). the development and service quality management of hotel business in Lao PDR. *Journal of International Cooperation Studies*, 22(2). https://www.research.kobe-u.ac.jp/gsics-publication/jics/inthavong&onphanhdala_22-2&3.pdf
- Kim, S., Yoon, Y. H., Kim, J., & Lee, S. K. (2024). Community implementation of the ASEAN Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Standard: An executive stakeholder study on Lao PDR. *Sustainability*, 16(17), 7728–7728. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16177728>
- Kuo, H.-I., Chang, C.-L., Huang, B.-W., Chen, C.-C., & McAleer, M. (2009). Estimating the Impact of Avian Flu on International Tourism Demand Using Panel Data. *Tourism Economics*, 15(3), 501–511. <https://doi.org/10.5367/000000009789036611>
- Lagarense, B. E. S. (2013). Challenges for Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) implementation: the case of tourism higher education institutions in Indonesia .

- Manado State Polytechnic, 1(ISSN 2339-2339), 41–46.
<https://repository.polimdo.ac.id/50/3/current%20content.pdf>
- M-ATM+3. (2004). *Joint Media Statement of the Third Meeting of ASEAN, China, Japan and Korea Tourism Ministers, 3 February 2004, Vientiane*. Aseanplusthree.asean.org; 3rd M-ATM+3. <https://aseanplusthree.asean.org/joint-media-statement-of-the-third-meeting-of-asean-china-japan-and-korea-tourism-ministers-3-february-2004-vientiane/>
- Mahendra, D. (2024). The impact of tourism on the preservation and transformation of cultural identity in Bali, Indonesia. *Studies in Social Science & Humanities*, 3(6), 34–41. <https://doi.org/10.56397/sssh.2024.06.05>
- McCarthy, S. (2008). Burma and Asean: Estranged bedfellows. *Asian Survey*, 48(6), 911–935. <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2008.48.6.911>
- Moenir, H. D. (2017). Implementasi ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2011-2015 dalam kebijakan pariwisata Indonesia di masa pemerintahan Jokowi. *Andalas Journal of International Studies (AJIS)*, 6(1), 57. <https://doi.org/10.25077/ajis.6.1.57-78.2017>
- Niedziółka, I. (2022). Sustainable tourism development. *Regional Formation and Development Studies*, 8(3), 157–166. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15181/rfds.v7i2.2371>
- Pearce, D. G. (1992). Tourism and the European regional development fund: The first fourteen years. *Journal of Travel Research*, 30(3), 44–51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004728759203000307>
- Rachmad, A. amar bani, & Raharjo, M. (2023). “QRIS cross border” as digital financial inclusion acceleration in Southeast Asia. *Global Local Interactions: Journal of International Relations*, 3(1), 151–161. <https://doi.org/10.22219/gli.v3i1.25234>
- Rahayu, D. S., & Sulistyawati, D. (2021). Implikasi Asean Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) 2016-2025 Dalam Pengembangan Project Ten New Bali’s Indonesia. *Dauliyah: Journal of Islam and International Affairs*, 6(2), 249–227. <https://doi.org/10.21111/dauliyah.v6i2.6594>
- Simon, S. W. (1987). ASEAN’s strategic situation in the 1980s. *Pacific Affairs*, 60(1), 73. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2758831>
- Singapore Tourism Board. (2024). *Singapore Tourism Board launches global MICE campaign to position Singapore as the “World’s Best MICE City” | STB*. Wwww.stb.gov.sg. <https://www.stb.gov.sg/content/stb/en/media-centre/media-releases/singapore-tourism-board-launches-global-mice-campaign-to-positio.html.html>
- Stubbs, R. (2019). ASEAN sceptics versus ASEAN proponents: Evaluating regional institutions. *The Pacific Review*, 32(6), 923–950. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2019.1611627>
- Tantivangphaisal, P. (2024). *Thailand’s new tourism campaign to generate 800 million baht*. Thetaiger.com. <https://thethaiger.com/news/national/thailands-new-tourism-campaign-to-generate-800-million-baht>
- Thea, N. T., & Mardy, N. S. (2023). Agro-Tourism development in Cambodia: A literature review. *International Journal of Sustainable Applied Sciences*, 1(5), 479–498. <https://doi.org/10.59890/ijzas.v1i5.826>
- Tien, N. D., Nhat, T., Thanh, T., Anh, P. Q., Oanh, N. T., Tich, V. V., Dat, D. T., Hong, T., & Trang, V. H. (2024). Community-based ecotourism for sustainability: An evaluative analysis of Binh Son district, Quang Ngai province in Vietnam. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 9, 100807–100807. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.100807>

- Tourism Malaysia. (2014). *PRESS RELEASE THE 33RD ASEAN TOURISM FORUM (ATF) 2014*. Malaysia Tourism Board. <https://asean.org/plan-of-action-on-asean-cooperation-in-tourism/>
- Tourism of Cambodia. (2013). *Cambodia to attract 4 million foreign visitors in 2013*. Tourismcambodia.com. <https://www.tourismcambodia.com/news/localnews/8087/cambodia-to-attract-4-million-foreign-visitors-in-2013.htm>
- Trupp, A., & Dolezal, C. (2020). Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals in Southeast Asia. *Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies*, 13(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.14764/10.ASEAS-0026>
- Tuan, H. A. (1994). Vietnam's membership in ASEAN: Economic, political and security implications. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 16(3), 259–273. <https://doi.org/10.1355/cs16-3b>
- Tun, K. M. (2019). *CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN MYANMAR AMONG CLMV COUNTRIES (CAMBODIA, LAO PDR, MYANMAR, VIETNAM)*. <https://meral.edu.mm/record/1108/files/Khine%20Myintzu%20Tun%20%28EMDevS%20-%209%29.pdf>
- UNWTO . (2023). *World tourism barometer* (p. 6). UNWTO. https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-09/UNWTO_Barom23_03_September_EXCERPT.pdf?VersionId=5i4.UT7ZwFAc0OKrufVJ.TE_HAFz4kUU
- Varga, D. P. (2018). *Overtourism: Lessons from Boracay Island, The Philippines*. Ehl.edu. <https://hospitalityinsights.ehl.edu/overtourism-borocay-island-philippines>
- Varga, D. P. (2019, October 18). *Angkor Wat: The Impacts of Mass Tourism*. Hospitalityinsights.ehl.edu. <https://hospitalityinsights.ehl.edu/cambodia-overtourism>
- Vietnam+ . (2024, April 29). *Sa Pa to launch tourist products to attract visitors on upcoming holidays*. Vietnam+ (VietnamPlus); Vietnam+ (VietnamPlus). <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/sa-pa-to-launch-tourist-products-to-attract-visitors-on-upcoming-holidays-post285171.vnp>
- Vipriyanti, N. U., Semadi, I. G. N. M. D., & Fauzi, A. (2022). Developing mangrove ecotourism in Nusa Penida Sacred Island, Bali, Indonesia. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 26. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-022-02721-9>
- Walsh, J., & Lin , N. S. (2013). Performance assessment in the international hotel sector of Yangon, Myanmar. *Journal of Economics and Behavioral Studies*, 5(5), 282–290. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/9fa7/9045423ae96be96c28fae7267428209fc314.pdf>
- Williams, M. C. R. (2014). Competitiveness of Philippine tourism in terms of the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2011-2014 . *International Journal of Education and Social Science* , 1(3). <https://ijessnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/10-1.pdf>
- Wong, E. P. Y., Mistilis, N., & Dwyer, L. (2011). A framework for analyzing intergovernmental collaboration – the case of ASEAN tourism. *Tourism Management*, 32(2), 367–376. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2010.03.006>
- WTTC. (2023). Total contribution of travel and tourism to the GDP in Southeast Asia from 2015 to 2022, with forecasts for 2023 and 2033. In *Statista*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1102510/southeast-asia-travel-and-tourism-gdp-contribution/>

- Yamamoto, E. M. S., Sayama, T., & Takara, K. (2021). Impact of rapid tourism growth on water scarcity in Bali, Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Limnology*, 2(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.51264/inajl.v2i1.14>
- Zins, A. H., & Adamu Abbas Adamu. (2023). Heritage storytelling in destination marketing: cases from Malaysian states. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 19(5), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873x.2023.2232476>