

Cambodia: Emerging MICE Tourism Market

Cambodia is still new to MICE tourism but it does seem to be heading in the right direction. As a developing nation it has a long way to go before it can be a top MICE destination however recent changes suggest positive outlook of the industry.



MICE tourism is highly affected by other types of tourism. Having good conference facilities without any other tourist attractions would not make a country a top MICE destination. Although the venues may be the main “attraction” for the event attendees, there also need to be some other tourist sites that they can enjoy when they are not at the conference. Looking at Cambodia and its vast number of tourist attractions there is no doubt that the country offers sufficient entertainment and exciting activities for MICE tourists.

Since Cambodia is relatively new in the MICE tourism sector there is no huge collection of statistics, however in October 2011, during the IT&CMA, which is a MICE focused event, the minister for tourism did say that the MICE sector was doing well and that they expected 2012 to be a good year with a number of meetings and conferences already scheduled.

There are not many venues in the country although the tourism ministry seems to be encouraging the growth of more towns as MICE tourism destinations. The Angkor COEX convention is the biggest conference facility in Cambodia and it attracts thousands of tourists every year. Two other centers in Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville are also slowly coming up with large conferences and exhibition centers being built.



However there are several other Asian countries that offer quality services and venues. Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand are some of the countries keen on promoting its MICE tourism. Some of these countries have been in the industry for much longer which makes the competition for Cambodia quite

challenging.

The key thing that is needed for a country to be seen as international MICE tourist destination is good accommodation. The quality of hotels should be appealing to tourists. Also, there should be a number of 3, 4 and 5 star hotels. Although the quality of hotels in Cambodia is not to be questioned, the number could probably be higher especially if the country is to start holding large international events.

Among other challenges is the number of conference venues which limits the number of events that the country can hold at a time. However there is still room for growth. A country cannot become a top MICE tourist destination if they have not managed to hold a large international conference with success.

Cambodia is yet to win a bid to hold a large international event which will give it a chance to showcase its ability as a serious MICE country.



The general outlook of Cambodia's MICE tourism industry is good. With the increasing number of MICE centers as well as improvements in other tourist facilities and services like communication, transport and accommodation the country's officials may be positive about the future. The tourism ministry also seems to be making a genuine effort to encourage the development of conference centers which will give the country the ability to hold a large number of MICE tourists at a go.

If the country continues with its steady growth, there is a high chance that in the future, Cambodia will definitely be among the most competitive MICE tourist destinations in Asia.

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