

CHINA LOOKS TO REDEVELOP DESERT TO ENCOURAGE INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS



In the Northwest corner of Zhongwei City lies Shapotou, an area of vast natural beauty and resources between civilisation and the wilderness. This region is full of different landscapes, from oases and rivers to stretches of sand and mountains, and is currently being viewed as the ideal location to help China expand their tourism opportunities and welcome visitors from around the world.

One of the country's leading travel authorities, the China National Travel Service (HK) Group Corporation, is looking towards this specific area with the bold plan of developing it into a brand new tourist resort with everything that the international market could possibly need. Reports state that they currently aim to spend their substantial budget on a series of themed hotels and restaurants - a move which evokes images of a Chinese Las Vegas on the edge of the Tengger Desert - as well as other, vaguer suggestions of tourist service centres and a business district. These plans will probably become clearer, or alter, during the five year period that is being cited for completing this project.

The HKCTS predict that this new Shapotou development will be a 'step towards high-quality tourism in China'.

This venture has been given the go-ahead after the signing of a co-operation framework between the local government and the HKCTS, with the latter seeming confident that it will be a great success and claiming that it has the potential to increase visitor numbers and tourism revenue by up to 15% within three years. Of course, all of this success and the predicted revenue does depend on the adventurous building project making it to completion; however, with talk of an extensive advertisement campaign - one that stretches from simple online ads to elaborate performing arts - and an expected expenditure of approximately 2 billion yuan/\$329.8 million, it is understandable that these officials would be hopeful at the very least.

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