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Session 1: Resource Efficiency, Safeguarding Natural and Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Tourism Development

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Strengths

- Stable political environment, safe and secure destination.
- Hospitality of Lao people.
- Unique cultural heritage: ethnic tribes, two UNESCO World Heritage Sites, a diverse range of traditional handicrafts and food.
- Location-centre of the Mekong Sub-region
- Variety of natural resources: waterfalls, caves and 24 national protected areas.

Weaknesses

- Inconvenient of accessibility compared to countries in the GMS region.
- Lack of direct air access, all long-haul visitors have to come via Thailand, Vietnam or Cambodia.
- Inadequate quality and quantity of tourism workforce.
- Investment in tourism remains low compared to other sectors of the economy
- Less coordination between public and private sectors.

Opportunities

- Geographic location and accessibility to the China which is the world’s fastest growing outbound travel market.
- ASEAN Economic Community provides an opportunity to attract foreign investment.
- Many development projects and partners (ADB, NZaid, GIZ, Swisscontact, LUXDEV, JICA, WWF etc.)

Threats

- Increased competition from regional countries.
- Conflict of interests among development of Laos and preservation and conservation of Laos.
- Climate change (slash and burn).

Resource Efficiency, Safeguarding Natural and Cultural Heritage of Sustainable Tourism Development
## Stakeholder Analysis

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<tr>
<th>Name of Stakeholder</th>
<th>Roles and Responsibilities</th>
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| Government                     | - Establishes regulatory guidelines to protect natural resources and preserve local cultural heritage  
                                  | - Provide tourism awareness to local communities on natural resource protection and cultural preservation for their own benefits in short term and long term  
                                  | - Coordinates with line Ministries and development partners  
                                  | - Provides knowledge on Sustainable Tourism Development                                                                                                      |
| Private Sector                 | - Develops and operate tourism facilities and services for visitors while ensuring financial returns and environmentally sustainability  
                                  | - Promotes and market the products                                                                                                                          |
| Industry Associations          | - Represents private sector stakeholder interests. However, many members in the associations are less enthusiastic to participate and involve in the association activities. |
| Civil Society                  | - Involves local people in the planning and development processes, ensure the rights and benefits of local people are in place.                           |
| Development Partners           | - Provides technical and financial support.                                                                                                               |
| International Organizations    | - Brings skills and knowledge to apply at local level  
                                  | - Information sharing and ........................................................................................................................................... |
Key Regulatory and Policy Initiatives

• Establish National Level of Destination Management Taskforces (MICT, independent consultant, LATA, Tourism Institute)
• Develop a Guideline on Tourism Planning, Management and Investment in natural areas, in collaboration with World Bank (to be finalise March 2018)
• Develop tourism standards
• Develop Sustainable Tourism Development Guidelines for Lao PDR (to be finalised end of 2017)
Benefits:
- Protect natural resources and reserve local cultural heritage
- Ensure environmental and cultural sustainability

Lessons Learned:
- Enhance cooperation among line ministries, private sector and local people
- Raise public awareness and community engagement through consultation in tourism planning and management

Recommendations:
- Sustainable tourism development is long term process and requires cooperation of all relevant stakeholders
- The country should have pilot projects in target areas that apply principles of sustainable tourism development.
Thank you!