Session II: Participatory Processes for Identifying Research and Monitoring Priorities

Observatories in China

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Previous experiences:

- **Active**: UNWTO experts/Internationally recognized experts, experts from MCSTO/Sun Yat-sen University, determine priorities and research areas according to field trips and research;

- **Passive**: Local authorities (governments, tourism related departments, scenic areas, enterprises), listener, look for advices;

- **Active**: A continuous communication process, before/during/after establishing the observatories, during the whole monitoring process; different interests among stakeholders;
Changing situation:

- Many changes in local authorities: more sensitive to what academic research is offering, younger generation, more sensitive to the market, cutting edge information, more involved in daily change; more active in raising their questions and wanting to get the right answers to solve the problems; more national strategies in culture and tourism (14th 5-year plan, STDs, etc)

- Monitoring has to face the changes ---> Regular monitoring & Special researches

  - Huangshan Observatory: Value of World Heritage and National Recognition; Earthcheck and STD; Social responsibility of SMEs;
  - Henan Observatory: Kong Fu and tourism;
  - Xishuangbanna: Tourism and real estate development; Ethnic villages involvement in tourism;
  - Changshu: Destination image evaluation;

Monitoring becomes a compulsory exercise, Special researches respond to new demand
Challenges:

- It is hard to offer too much while the monitoring is also a limited research;
- Facing limited influence with data if local authorities have bigger pictures to look at for a more comprehensive strategy;
- There are too many data in hand for governments and big enterprises, with more advanced technology and more closer cooperation;
- Not easy to input enough human resource or funding, or when they do input, they want an immediate impact or result;
Way forward: DO MORE THAN JUST MONITORING...

- Be a platform with different resources: tourism, culture, edging industries...
  - culture-tourism-E-sports cooperation
- Experts are growing, providing new knowledge and know-how;
- Connecting local authorities, local communities, social welfare...
  - First-aid training in tourism destinations, working with best hospitals
- Influence the future generation;
  - Lectures and activities in local communities
- Think and Do a little bit more than monitoring issues
  - data collected by MCSTO in 2019 is used in a recent project of Xishuangbanna
Thank You

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