

Tourism Development and Regional Integration: The Case of Quadruple Zone in Great Mekong Region

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The quadruple zone in the Greater Mekong region is composed with the border areas of China Laos, Thailand and Myanmar. This isolated and instable borderland of four nations is turning into the heartland of a potential economic powerhouse uniting Southeast Asia and China. It is expected that, through the regional cooperation and economic development, especially in the area of tourism and transportation, the domestic instability within each individual country can be reduced and domestic integration can be improved. Although it is widely accepted that tourism cooperation can promote regional peace and development, unexpected negative multiplier effects may also be generated which not only reduce the potential of tourism but also the political stability of the region. With the regional tourism cooperation programs, major stakeholders within the region are being altered. The changes of local institutional capacities are lagging behind and potentials for conflicts also rise. This political instability may threaten further tourism development. The paper attempts to explore the effectiveness of tourism cooperation in the regional quadruple zone.