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THE PACIFIC (ESCAP)**

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in Pacific Island Countries**

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## **1. The status of Korean tourism industry**

Since 1997, after the economic crisis of Korea. The Tourism Industry was fostered and supported as a main national industry.

Since the economy has stabilized, the number of outbound and inbound tourists has increased continuously every year.

In 2000, 5.5 million Koreans were engaged in outbound tourism and 5.3 million foreigners visited Korea.

In 2001, we expect over 6 million in each direction. The number of outbound tourists and inbound tourists has increased at an average rate of over 10% since 1997.

To sum up, Korean inbound tourism ranks 32nd in the world in terms of numbers and 19th in terms of earnings, as shown in the WTO report of August 2000.

### **Tourism organizations of Korea**

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Korea is responsible for tourism as a central government body. The Tourism Bureau under the Ministry has 4 divisions.

Each local government (1 Metropolitan City, 6 Major Cities and 9 Provinces) has its own bureau or department which regulates tourism. However, these local offices do not have the same

constitutions, the same name or system.

The Tourism Bureau of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism have subsidiaries, such as KNTTO (Korea National Tourism Organization) whose main objective is to focus on overseas marketing and KTI (Korea Tourism Institute) which is a research and study center.

In the private sector, there are 7 tourist service business groups : Travel Agencies, Tourist Accommodations, Tourist Entertainment Facilities, Professional Convention Organizers, Casinos, Amusement Parks and Tourist Convenience Facilities. They also constitute their own associations.

### **Tourism policy & budget**

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism devises national-level tourism plans and policies. KTI, KNTTO, tourism enterprises, tourism organizations and tourism authorities follow its' plans and policies and launch subordinate businesses. The government of Korea revises the tourism budget and supports tourism projects and plans. The portion of tourism budget in 2001 is US\$330million. In 2002, the budget is forecasted to exceed the 2001 budget.

### **Mid term planning for tourism development**

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism has planned mid term 5

year projects " Tourism Vision 21" to foster strategic planning and

proceed with various strategies. The main aims are " To attract 7 million foreign visitors" and to successfully launch 8 projects each with their own sub-project totalling 30 projects on tourism over 5 years.

The 8 projects are as follows;

1. Expand international level of Korean tourism resources
2. Develop Korean-style tourism products
3. Develop internationally competitive tourism infrastructure
4. Expand systematic tourism advertisement activities
5. Modernize tourist receiving system
6. Successfully hold millenium tourism events
7. Realize general tourism for Korean nationals
8. International cooperation and expand exchange tourism program between south and north of Korean peninsula

The first of 8 projects "Expand international level of Korean tourism resources" includes sub-projects for designation and operation of eco-tourism development area and supports projects for green tourism development.

## **2. Eco-tourism development in Korea**

### **Academic circles research**

In the beginning of the 1980's, Academic circles studied and researched eco-tourism. Research on eco-tourism began just prior to sustainable tourism research, which started in the late 1990's.

Early 1990's, eco-tourism studies broadened.

### **Background of eco-tourism development**

In the 1990's, all local governments and travel agencies were interested in and operated businesses based on academic research and studies. In the middle of 1990's some local governments started to devise their own budget for preservation of natural resources and local development.

In the late of 1990's the central government devised a budget for eco-tourism development, which was dispersed among local governments.

### **Legislation on the protection of the environment**

In the beginning of 1990's, the government legislated for the preservation of the natural environment and also launched environment related projects. From the second half of the 1990's the government passed laws and regulations which protected natural environment from exploitation by tourism industries.

In 1990, passed the environmental preservation law

In 1991, established the natural environmental preservation regulations and protection of environment under criminal act

In 1998, formulated 5 year tourism development projects

### "Tourism Vision 21"

In 1999, enacted laws for marsh preservation.

In addition, each local government preserves natural resources and plans local development through the establishment of suitable regulations for their local situations.

### **Reflection on government policy**

As I mentioned before, by the end of 1990's the central government included eco-tourism in its main political tourism policies. From the beginning of 2000, the central government started to secure a national budget with a strong interest in eco-tourism.

## **3. Eco-tourism progress in islands of Korea**

### **The status of eco-tourism progress**

The status of progress of eco-tourism development of Korea involves central government projects, which include sustainable tourism. In 1999, the central government selected the proper projects of local governments and allocated a budget for each project. In 2000, the central government granted US\$1million for 3 projects among 1 city and 2 provinces.

\* Seasonal (migratory) bird watching program in Chulwon-Kun, Kangwon Province, including the area around the

DMZ(De-Militarized Zone) area. This area has been off limits for civilians since 1953. The project was granted US\$260,000.

\* Mud eco-tour in Incheon City, west coastal area which is well endowed with mud. The city created various kinds of program sites, for instance; eco-tourism, watching bird, observations of living things in mud, etc. It was granted US\$260,000.

\* Thirdly, Jeonnam Province marketed tourism destination "Mystic sea road". The sea bed appears like a Miracle of Moses. It shows 2 times per month, caused by an ebb tide. The local government constructed many tourism facilities to preserve the attraction - paved road to access, parking lot, flower gardens, and other related facilities. It was granted US\$480,000.

In 2001, a budget was granted to 4 projects, which was distributed among 1 City and 3 Provinces. The amount of the budget is US\$880,000.

\* Two projects were carried over from 2000 : seasonal bird watching project of Chulwon-Kun, Kangwon Province is granted US\$ 220,000 and mud eco-tour of Incheon City is granted US\$130,000. And 2 new projects are Haeui eco-experience park of Jeonnam Province is granted US\$130,000, and fireflies cave development of Kyungbuk Province is granted US\$400,000.

In 2002, the central government will support US\$1,190,000 for 4 projects of 4 provinces. Carrying over the same projects of 2001, seasonal bird watching projects of Chulwon-Kun, Kangwon Province will be granted US\$ 310,000, and mud eco-tour of Incheon City will be granted US\$260,000. Fireflies cave development of Kyungbuk Province will be granted US\$310,000. Finally a new project of Jinan-Kun, Jeonbuk Province will be granted US\$310,000 for Yongdam Lake tourism development.

### **Main islands' eco-tourism progress**

A few years ago, the local government for the main islands of Korea, Cheju and Kangwha, etc. planned preservation of natural resources and tourism attractions in its area. However, launching the scheme was postponed due to a lack of budget and a lack of awareness among people. In 2000, the project was eagerly launched with the central governments support. Eco-tourism projects of Kangwha Island are mainly related with mud, most of these projects are developed and launched from 2000 to 2002.

Cheju Island will make plans in 2001 and begin launching in 2002. The projects are encouraged to preserve natural resources, for instance, restricting entry to protect natural resources and making a specific searching area for preservation of beautiful seashores and cliffs.

### **Future prospects**

From every year since 1999, The Ministry of Culture and Tourism has made a priority to select local government projects which support eco-tourism. The budget and number of projects will increase in the future as a result of increased acknowledgement about the importance of the environment and the need to support related institutes.

### **Eco-tourism resources of Korea.**

20 National Parks, 22 Local Provincial Parks, 29 Municipality Parks  
10 preservation areas according to the Environmental Preservation Law

145 Preserved Natural Forests designated by the Forest Law

5 Natural Preservation Areas designated by the Protection of cultural properties

69 Arrivals of migratory bird

4 Marsh preservation areas designated by the laws for marsh preservation

## **4. The challenges to Korean eco-tourism and its solutions**

### **The challenges to Korean eco-tourism**

- Difficult to preserve eco-tourism resources due to a lack of local people awareness
- Due to low numbers of eco-tourists, few programs have been produced, and travel agency avoid its operation.

- Damages of eco-tourism resources due to industrialization and urban development.
- Difficulties securing a budget, due to a lack of public officers' understanding and interest
- Damages of eco-tourism resources caused by ignorant tourists

### **Formulate solutions**

- To develop eco-tourism programs concerns improving the living standard of local people
- Develop and operate programs for understanding the importance of natural resources and cultural heritages to civilians and enterprises
- Consideration to limit development and restrict entry to preserve eco-tourism resources
- Urge cooperation and understanding, support budget etc. to the civilians, enterprises and related officers.
- Foster and assign professional guides who have expert knowledge
- Carry out pre-travel eco-tourism education to the eco-tourists

## 5. Suggestions for Fiji tourism development

### The status of Korean tourists to island countries

(Unit : Person)

Country	Year	1999	2000	2001 (Estimate)
Australia		97,436	132,387	175,000
New Zealand		30,478	42,636	57,000
Guam		37,364	72,682	95,000
Fiji		751	2,539	4,000

In 1999, Korean tourist to visit Australia was totally 97,436. In 2000, there were 132,387 total. This is a 35.8% rate of increase. In New Zealand 1999, there were 30,478 total. In 2000, there were 42,636 total. This is a 39.9% rate of increase. In Guam 1999, there were 37,364 total.

In 2000 there were 72,682 total. However, in Fiji 1999, there were only 751. In 2001, there were 2,539.

As we see the number of visitors to Australia is 132,387, and to New Zealand is 42,636. The distance and flight time from Australia to New Zealand and from Australia to Fiji is almost same. Therefore there are no big differences between two destinations from Australia.

So, we can think there are some problems as follows:

### **Fiji from the perspective of Korean tourists**

- Basically, Korean people do not know much about Fiji
- Generally, they think it is very far country from Korea
  - \* They don't know it just 4 hours from Sydney.
  - \* Same distance from Sydney to New Zealand
- Korean tourists exclude Fiji as a traveling destination.
- Koreans are unaware of Fiji's various programs for tourists
  - \* Koreans assume Fiji has only natural resources and sea sports.

### **Suggestions to attract Korean tourists**

#### **- To develop island cultural programs**

- Focused on their own culture and customs
- Eco-tourism programs based on Island natural resources
- Cooperate with main air-lines and develop air package programs

#### **- To advertise diversely**

- Participate international tourism exhibition, festival etc. and oper  
ate advertisement activities.
- Advertise to the international newspapers, publications and media etc.
- Invite writers related to media and advertising through to report and write articles.
- Advertise using internet and other network system

#### **- To improve access**

- Develop short air-line routes from airport hubs of near countries.
  - \* Shorten access time and reduce air fare

- Develop other transportation methods besides air-line routes.
    - \* Using Ship or Cruise, etc.
    - \* Improve inner island transportation routes.
  - **To grasp tourist preference trends and improve services**
    - Research and develop the preference program of tourist through surveys
    - Formulate marketing strategies for target markets, specific nations and research its' preference trend.
  - For example : Korea focused on Chinese tourists. Then developed a preference program, Chinese food and increased air-flight during Chinese national holidays and their vacation season to attract Chinese tourists.
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