

Green Meetings¹ Part 2: To the Lighthouse Beaconing [Coping with Environmental Impacts of Meetings]

Casting Our Mind Back To Things Galore

In the previous report, we set the scene for a better understanding of the green meeting notion, elucidating on a great many aspects and dimensions thereof. It was postulated that green meeting proper refers to a meeting that is specifically designed and implemented in an optimal ways to minimize its environmental impacts and/or externalities in order to achieve sustainability throughout all of its components and involves all parties concerned in the meeting realization process.² It was reiterated that MICE events are considerably resource-intensive, and may exert negative environmental bearings on host locality and inhabitants. It is of utmost importance to comprehend the fundamental principles and rationales as to why one should adjust one's MICE practices such that they become an integral micro-level component of the planning and implementation processes. One also has to appreciate the more comprehensive picture and an event's bearing/relation to current **climate change** and **global warming**. It was highlighted that **constructive contributions/benefits of green meetings** comprise two-tier components: 1) **macro-level benefits** and 2) **micro-level benefits**. Macro-level/society-level benefits identified are social benefits, an enhanced social decision-making process, awareness-raising among constituents concerned, and concrete environmental innovation. Meanwhile, micro-level/firm-level benefits discussed are physical cost savings, goodwill/positive reputation, strategic business opportunities, and return on financial investment.

In the second part of this report we attempt to have a look at more far-reaching and comprehensive international developments to shed further light on the 'green meeting' notion. The two developments examined are Cape Town's green initiatives [comprising both the green event/event greening and green/smart living concepts³], and the ILO Greener Business Asia Project financed by the Government of Japan. Cape Town as a major global tourist and MICE city has initiated and thoroughly developed the green event concept to better administer the organizing

¹ Parallel to the notion of green meetings, a similar conceptualization has been developed to the same effect in other areas involving human assemblies such as event greening. See for example Smart Events Handbook: Greening guidelines for hosting sustainable events in Cape Town, First Edition, June 2010,

² In his paper entitled "Externalities Galore in Conferences", Phutiratana, has formalized the scope of this notion further and has postulated that a green meeting refers to a meeting specifically designed and implemented in optimal ways to minimize its environmental impacts and/or externalities in order to achieve sustainability throughout all of its components and involves all parties concerned in the meeting realization process. [see Charungkiat Phutiratana, Externalities Galore in Conferences, Conference Interpretation, Unpublished Lecture Notes Series, 2012]. The Smart Events Handbook provides a definition of the event greening concept as "the process of incorporating socially and environmentally responsible decision making into the planning, organization and implementation of, and participation in, an event. It involves including sustainable development principles and practices in all levels of event organization, and aims to ensure that an event is hosted responsibly. It represents the total package of interventions at an event, and needs to be done in an integrated manner. Event greening should start at the inception of the project, and should involve all the key role players, such as clients, organizers, venues, sub-contractors and suppliers." [See Smart Events Handbook: Greening guidelines for hosting sustainable events in Cape Town, p. 3].

³ City of Cape Town, Smart Living Handbook: Making Sustainable Living a Reality in Cape Town Homes, 4th Edition, May 2011, http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/EnvironmentalResourceManagement/Documents/Smart_Living_Handbook_Eng_FULL%20VERSION_4thEd_2011-05.pdf

of major international events including the FIFA World Cup 2010.⁴ Meanwhile ILO and its tripartite constituents and partners have creatively worked out the Greener Business Asia [GBA] Phase 1, which has been thoroughly developed further into its second phase.

The 'Cape Town Green Event Initiative'⁵

In light of the current global warming, policy responses thereto involve mitigation by 1) emissions reduction, 2) adaptation to its effects, and 3) possible/potential future geo-engineering. Signatories/parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC] have adopted a variety of policy options to mitigate/minimize greenhouse gas emissions⁹ as well as to provide assistance in adaptation to this global climatic phenomenon.⁶ In the main, Cape Town's event greening and smart living concepts are based on practical and innovative efforts to minimize emissions.

The MICE Sector's Role and Responsibility: Cape Town's Green Events:

In the wake of an ever-increasing number of key events organized globally, it is the MICE sector's collective and integral responsibility to take on board a mission to minimize its impacts on the physical environment with special reference to the utilization of basic-yet-major natural resources, generating waste in large quantities, and substantially contributing to air pollution and various forms of carbon footprints.⁷ The way through which MICE events are administered can effectively minimize their negative impacts on the environment, and simultaneously enhance their positive outcomes significantly. Collectively, the MICE sector shall need to deliberate upon ways to ensure that MICE events are implemented in an eco-friendly and financially sustainable manner to better address **the triple bottom-line**.⁸ The MICE industry has tremendous potential to initiate and realize/effect positive change/transformation by advocating and adopting a comprehensive organizational culture of **CSR** and eco-

⁴ In the words of Dan Plato, Cape Town's executive mayor, "... *The 2010 FIFA World Cup will give Cape Town an opportunity to show the world that it can successfully host major international events that also leave a positive environmental legacy. To achieve this, Host City Cape Town is implementing Green Goal 2010, the official greening programme of the tournament. The development of the Smart Events Handbook is one of the Green Goal legacies, which will provide guidance to the events industry for hosting events in a more sustainable manner.*" [See Smart Events Handbook: Greening guidelines for hosting sustainable events in Cape Town, *ibid*].

⁵ The City of Cape Town, Smart Events Handbook: Greening guidelines for hosting sustainable events in Cape Town, pp. 1 and 19, *ibid*.

⁶ Parties to the UNFCCC have agreed that effective reductions in emissions are required, and that future global warming should be limited to below 2.0 °C (3.6 °F) relative to the pre-industrial level. [See Global Warming, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_warming].

⁷ The City of Cape Town, Smart Events Handbook: Greening guidelines for hosting sustainable events in Cape Town, First Edition, June 2010, p. 22, *ibid*.

⁸ The triple bottom line (abbreviated as TBL or 3BL, and also known as people/ social, planet /ecological, profit/economic or "the three pillars") captures an expanded spectrum of values and criteria for measuring organizational (and societal) success. With the ratification of the United Nations and ICLEI TBL standard for urban and community accounting in early 2007, this has become the dominant approach to public sector full cost accounting. Similar UN standards apply to natural capital and human capital measurement to assist in measurements required by TBL [e.g. the Eco Budget standard for reporting ecological footprint]. In the private sector, a commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) implies a commitment to some form of TBL reporting. [See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triple_bottom_line].



sustainable consciousness.⁹ A great many international clients are making **green meetings** a part of their tender process. Greening events are capable of both reducing negative environmental impacts, and leave a constructive and lasting legacy for the host community/locale.¹⁰ Currently, parts of the MICE sector promote MICE event greening planning as a response to the increasing public concerns/demand for sustainability measures and arrangements. Public agencies and non-profit organizations also promote these practices. Certain private consultants in the event planning sector specialize in championing green events. Green conventions, meetings, conferencing and events are now firmly established as part of an ever-growing global collective movement to attain a sustainable world economy and livable planet.¹¹ Major international bodies include the **US Environmental Protection Agency [EPA]**,¹² **the Green Meeting Industry Council [GMIC]**,¹³ **International Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus (IACVB)**¹⁴, **Meeting Professionals International (MPI)**.¹⁵ Business entities have also joined this positive environmental bandwagon globally. Examples under this heading include **Conference Venues Southern Africa [CONVEN]**,¹⁶ and **CVENT [Online Solutions for Events and Surveys]**¹⁷

Cape Town's Practical Algorithm for Better and Greener MICE Events

The Cape Town's event greening concept has provided practical tips as a basic rule-of-thumb checklist for MICE events. The following 13-step operational algorithm based thereupon proves useful for our event-greening purposes:¹⁸

⁹ See The City of Cape Town, Smart Events Handbook: Greening guidelines for hosting sustainable events in Cape Town, First Edition, June 2010, p. 22, *ibid*.

¹⁰ See The City of Cape Town, Smart Events Handbook: Greening guidelines for hosting sustainable events in Cape Town, First Edition, June 2010, pp. 3-4, *ibid*.

¹¹ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_conventions

¹² See <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings/pubs/basic.html>

¹³ See <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings/pubs/initiatives.html>. In its own words, "The Green Meeting Industry Council (GMIC) is the premier global community solely dedicated to sustainability in the meetings and events industry, not only through education but also by spearheading research, policy and standards. GMIC is a nonprofit professional meetings association with member representation in over 20 countries. The GMIC is 100% focused on advancing sustainability in the meetings industry, helping leaders of all levels." [see <http://www.gmicglobal.org>]. and

<http://www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings/pubs/initiatives.html>].

¹⁴ <http://www.iacvb.org>, and <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings/pubs/initiatives.html>

¹⁵ <http://www.mpiweb.org/Home>, Meeting Professionals International (MPI), 2112 Annual Business Barometer, p. 19, and <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings/pubs/initiatives.html>

¹⁶ <http://www.conven.co.za/about-us>

¹⁷ <http://www.cvent.com/en/event-management-software/green-meetings-made-easy.shtml>

¹⁸ See The City of Cape Town, Smart Events Handbook: Greening guidelines for hosting sustainable events in Cape Town, pp. 23-24 *ibid*. Also see Charungkiat Phutiratana, Green Meetings and Event Greening, Conference Interpretation, Unpublished Lecture Notes Series, 2011. For comparison purposes, see 10 Simple ways to green your meeting, see <http://www.conven.co.za/latest-news-on-the-conference-meetings-and-events-industries/item/330-environmental-responsibility-and-greening-your-meetings-and-events>.

1. Comprehensive planning process

1.1) Get started early to allow adequate time for the creation of an environment amenable to event greeting; 1.2) effectively orchestrate the functioning of a working team as the focal driving force; 1.3) acquire buy-in and support from all entities/parties concerned, including clients, goods and service suppliers/sub-contractors, and venues; 1.4) compile an action/operational plan with detailed responsibilities and timeframes; 1.5) communicate the plans to participants, clients, exhibitors, delegates, members of the press, and other parties concerned; and 1.6) adequately provide appropriate training on event greening practices to staff members; and 1.7) effectively monitor and evaluate progress and success.

2. MICE venues

- 2.1) regarding **venue design**, encourage energy-efficient venue design practices. It is possible to cut up to 70% of the total venue energy needs through simple design principles that save on lighting, heating and cooling needs – a practice known as **passive solar design**.¹⁹
- 2.2) support green energy advocacy by installing a solar water heater or photovoltaic panels, and buy renewable-energy certificates.²⁰
- 2.3) ceiling insulation can keep venues 10°C cooler in summer and 5°C warmer in winter. More comfortable indoor temperatures mean less need for electrical heating and cooling, with savings of up to 65%.²¹
- 2.4) install a grey-water recycling system on the venue premises.²²
- 2.5) consider whether or not 2.5.1) the MICE venue in question lies within a safe and convenient walking distance from suitable accommodation, local shops, and recreational areas; 2.5.2) air-conditioning/heating is effectively kept to a minimum and set pursuant to seasonal/temperature requirements; 2.5.3) natural lighting is provided; 2.5.4) all the access areas are fitted with energy-efficient lighting facilities; 2.5.5) support generators operate on eco-friendly fuel; 2.5.6) waste separation facilities are provided at appropriate locations; and 2.5.7) any potential negative impact is kept to a minimum when hosting open-air MICE events.

3. Eco-procurement arrangements

3.1) prioritize use of local products and services; 3.2) prioritize/give preference to environmentally friendly products or services; 3.3) deliberate upon ways to reduce, re-use, and recycle [3Rs] in the procurement process; 3.4) avoid the use of single-use and disposable products; 3.5) promote the use of 3Rs products/products containing recycled components; and 3.6) avoid excessively packaged products and purchase in large quantities as appropriate.

¹⁹ 2.1.1) orientate the venue to the north to get the best light and sunshine; 7.1.2) as the northern side of the venue receives the most sun, the roof overhang on this side should be longer. This will shade windows in summer, when the sun is high, while allowing the sun's rays through the windows in winter, when the sun is at a low angle; 7.1.3) window shutters, awnings or screens provide shade for rooms, and keep the heat out during summer. [See City of Cape Town, Smart Living Handbook: Making Sustainable Living a Reality in Cape Town Homes, 4th Edition, May 2011, page 79.

²⁰ City of Cape Town, Smart Living Handbook: Making Sustainable Living a Reality in Cape Town Homes, 4th Edition, May 2011, page 40, *ibid*.

²¹ City of Cape Town, Smart Living Handbook: Making Sustainable Living a Reality in Cape Town Homes, 4th Edition, May 2011, page 88, *ibid*.

²² City of Cape Town, Smart Living Handbook: Making Sustainable Living a Reality in Cape Town Homes, 4th Edition, May 2011, page 94, *ibid*.

4. Supportive office practices

4.1) ensure that all staff members fully appreciate the event greening; 4.2) purchase environmentally-friendly products with a high recycled content; 4.3) minimize paper consumption by using electronic correspondence instead; 4.4) wherever possible, print double sided, use small margins, and print two pages per sheet; 4.5) utilize a multi-bin system for recycling purposes and involve staff members in such a process; 4.6) utilize refillable printing ink cartridges; 4.7) resort to public fresh water supplies in lieu of bottled water; 4.8) encourage staff members to turn off lights; and 4.9) organize staff shifts subject to vehicle/bus availability and mass-transit vehicle schedules.

5. Lodging/accommodation

5.1) ensure that it is located near the MICE event venue[s]; 5.2) advocate green energy advocacy by supporting accommodation that installs a solar water heater or photovoltaic panels, and buys renewable-energy certificates [as in 2.2]; 5.3) ceiling insulation can keep accommodation 10°C cooler in summer and 5°C warmer in winter [as in 2.3]; 5.4) install a grey-water recycling system on the accommodation premises [as in 2.4]; 5.5) provide energy efficient lighting and natural lighting as appropriate; 5.6) inform their guests regarding their environmental policies and initiatives 5.7) operate a 3Rs program for main waste; 5.8) provide guests with a key card linked to the lights and air-conditioning in the rooms; 5.9) operate a registration and billing process electronically; 5.10) clearly display, operate, and encourage a towel and bed sheet re-use policy [see the case of Karon Beach Resort and Spa in the GBA Project]²³; 5.11) provide soap and shampoo provisions in refillable dispensers; and 5.12) provide environmental training for their staff and goods and service provider.

6. Innovative and energy-efficient transportation arrangements

6.1) facilitate and encourage walking options by creating safe walking routes connecting the accommodation and venue 6.2) use cycle-cabs in central urban areas; 6.3) provide group commuting transfers instead of individual transfers; 6.4) encourage incentives for car-pooling [such as free parking]; 6.5) ensure that drivers provide fuel-efficient driving; and 6.6) ensure that the parking areas do not have any negative bearing on the natural environment.

7. Effective meetings and MICE events

7.1) **Organizers** should ensure that 7.1.1) ensure that the 'green' message is clearly and effectively presented in the exhibitor manual; 7.1.2) ensure that banners and signs are generic to the greatest extent possible; and 7.1.3) ensure that inserts into visitor bags are kept to a minimum.

7.2) **MICE venue operators** should 7.2.1) ensure that their staff members are adequately trained and understand the greening plans; 7.2.2) implement a multi-bin waste system in exhibition areas to encourage recycling practices; and 7.2.3) provide 50% lighting during the set-up stage.

7.3) **Event exhibitors on the ground** should be encouraged to 7.3.1) choose and display reusable decorations and materials; 7.3.2) be innovative with their exhibition designs and utilize 3Rs materials; 7.3.3) provide electronic communication channels [instead of printed materials/hand-outs]; and 7.3.4) keep and reuse their packaging material in subsequent events.

²³ ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific [International Labour Organization Multi-Bilateral Programme of Technical Cooperation], Karon Beach Resort and Spa: Case Study Draft, 2013

8. Registrations

8.1) provide electronic registrations and correspondence facilities; 8.2) advise participants regarding 'eco-friendly behavior'/'green behavior' prior to and during the event; and 8.3) encourage participants/delegates to return their badges for re-use purposes.

9. Audio-visuals, interpretation systems, and other equipment items

9.1) use equipment with energy efficient rating; 9.2) turn off all unnecessary equipment overnight; 9.3) use notebooks/i-pads and other equivalents portable devices instead of desktops due to their greater energy efficiency; 9.4) A LED backlit liquid crystal display (LCD) computer monitor uses less energy than the old-style, bigger cathode ray tube (CRT) monitors²⁴; 9.5) plan an effective use of batters for interpretation receivers²⁵; and 9.6) dispose of old cartridges.

10. Catering and beverages

10.1) select local, organic and seasonal food ingredients; 10.2) request SASSI fish and avoiding meat where appropriate; 10.3) provide healthy items during breaks; 10.4) take into account the food miles in catering arrangements; 10.5) establish the exact number of delegates/participants so as to minimize food wastage; 10.6) provide tap drinking water rather than bottled water; 10.7) print menus on 3Rs/eco-friendly paper or digitally; and 10.8) ensure that the run-off water is channeled to appropriate points and disposed of in a responsible manner.

11. Eco-friendly marketing, PR and material production

11.1) avoid glossy/colorful publications. Instead, print on paper with recycled content and request vegetable or soya based ink for printing when possible; 11.2) avoiding printing by providing information electronically such as on a CD or USB stick; 11.3) choosing useful, econ-friendly and durable presents from local providers; 11.4) distributing production of banners that cannot be re-used to small businesses; and 11.5) considering an electronic marketing campaigns regarding greening initiatives.

12. Decoration materials

12.1) use innovative materials for partitioning and furniture; 12.2) use energy-efficient lights; 12.3) instead of wax candles, use soya candles; and 12.4) when fixing marquees ensure that the natural environment is not affected nor damaged; and 12.5) avoid the use of products related to cruelty against animals.

13. Overture performance/recreational arrangements

13.1) engage the performers in the greening process to be reflected in the actual overture/recreational performance stage[s]; 13.2) give preference to local performers to avoid travelling; and 13.3) ensure that the recreational activity serves as an audience-friendly channel through which eco-friendly messages are imparted to all parties concerned in a subtle or straightforward fashion as appropriate.

²⁴ City of Cape Town, Smart Living Handbook: Making Sustainable Living a Reality in Cape Town Homes, 4th Edition, May 2011, Page 79, *ibid*

²⁵ This suggestion is based on the author's experience in his professional work as an international interpreter.

The ILO Greener Business Asia Project: The Project Objectives/Outcomes²⁶

The Greener Business Asia [GBA] Project shed light on regional-level collective action in the green job paradigm involving major actors across social and organizational strata. The GBA approach could serve as a *modus operandi* for any green attempts designed to have long-lasting impacts in fields/circles concerned. Studies of this approach could as well serve as a procedural algorithm starting from the inception stage up to the implementation, follow-up and evaluation stages at both the micro-operational level, the sectoral level, and the national level.

The GBA Project focuses on the enterprise dimension of the transition towards a more sustainable economy. In light of the multiplicity of pressures Asian enterprises need to address so as to remain competitive and be sustainable, it seeks to strengthen and build on workers and employers' cooperation at the operational/workplace level to promote improvements in resource efficiency/productivity and environmental performance, labour practices, and overall business competitiveness. In a nutshell, this project aims at developing an understanding and awareness of tripartite entities and partners on sustainability issues and responses at the workplace; at enhancing the capacity of employers' organizations and national institutions to support the adoption of environmentally-friendly and responsible sectoral and industrial practices; and at disseminating good practices and an effective approach to enterprise improvement designed to achieve positive changes towards more productive, safer and also greener workplaces through enhanced management-staff collaboration.

The **expected impact/development objective** of this project is to build capacity in relevant national institutions to respond to challenges of climate change related mitigation measures in specific sectors. The **immediate objectives/project outcomes** are threefold: 1) to increase understanding of tripartite bodies of the challenges and opportunities associated with developing responses at the workplace to environmental pressures; 2) to enhance capacity of national employers' organizations and other relevant institutions to support bilateral cooperation in responding to micro-level environmental pressures; and 3) to enhance knowledge and awareness at the national level of good models of practice of bipartite cooperation in response to environmental pressures at the workplace.

Despite rapid economic growth and a remarkable reduction in poverty experienced by numerous Asian economies in the past decades, the region still faces a great many challenges. In particular, various sectors and enterprises have confronted strong pressures associated with the global economic slowdown/recession. Secondly, the fast-paced growth of the manufacturing and service sectors have put tremendous pressure on the environment and natural resources in a region highly vulnerable to environmental threats. Thirdly, with approximately 908 million workers living on less than a USD 2 a day and the continuing challenges of globalised competition, enterprises' competitiveness and improvements in working conditions remain fundamentally important.²⁷ The transition

²⁶ The GBA case study section draws substantially from the author's experience as an interpreter during certain parts of the project, and the following two documents, among many others, also translated by the author: 1) ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific [International Labour Organization Multi-Bilateral Programme of Technical Cooperation], Progress Report/Final Report of the Greener Business Asia [7 July 2009 – 31 December 2012], Mimeographed, 2013], and 2) Saengabh Srisopaporn and Pornpimon Dechsakdipol, Training Report: Green Jobs, Greener Business Plus Training and Knowledge Sharing – Thailand [5th – 7th September, 2012], Bangkok, Thailand, 2012

²⁷ The rapid economic growth that Thailand has witnessed in the past decades has been linked to the expansion of the export-driven manufacturing sector and the tourism sector. Such changes in the structure of the economy have outstripped the development of pollution management, culminating in mismanagement of resources, including energy inefficiency, and deterioration in Thailand's natural environment. The time presents an opportunity for a shift away from current practices towards the development of sustainable enterprises and a greener economy. In Thailand, the



towards more sustainable economies is increasingly regarded as a necessary change, which will involve far-reaching transformations in industries, enterprises and labour markets. It will involve changes in ways of working and running enterprises, in technologies used and occupations and skills requirements. The value of joint actions to address such challenges is well recognized by all parties concerned, and has been reiterated in various forums.²⁸

Progress towards ILO's immediate objectives and indicators for 2008-09

With its focus on increasing institutional awareness on concepts and approaches to promote sustainable and responsible enterprise and the development of a practical program to assist enterprises in making actual changes in their workplaces and operations, the Greener Business Asia project contributes to sustainable enterprises creating productive and decent jobs. The contribution of the project towards this outcome may be identified in key project outputs. In particular, the project carried out in both countries of operation national-level training workshops for tripartite constituents and partners to increase the awareness and understanding on principles and practices related to sustainable enterprises, paying particular attention to their linkages to debates on sustainable development and climate change, and to the interface between labour/employment challenges and environmental ones.

A second key output is the development and pilot testing of enterprise improvement programmes in two sectors: Thailand's hotel sector and the Philippines' automotive sector.²⁹ Following the development of training packages seeking to improve resource efficiency/productivity, environmental impacts, and labour practices (including OHS and workplace relations) utilising a model of worker-employer cooperation, the project pilot tested them and ran demonstration programs in collaboration with local institutions, which led to several significant positive changes and achievements by participating enterprises, thus demonstrating the effectiveness of the program and the approach taken.

Knowledge-sharing initiatives and products organized by the project helped to generate remarkable interest among several participating institutions, some of which explicitly expressed the commitment in taking up the program and to integrate it in their own initiatives, particularly in the field for SMEs support/skills development/sustainable tourism promotion. In its specific collaboration with and support to the Employers' Confederation of Thailand [ECOT], including assistance for the establishment of a web-based Green Information Service to disseminate sustainability practices among the ECOT's member companies, the project also provides a contribution to an outcome whereby employers have achieved strong, independent and representative organizations.

¹¹ National Economic and Social Development Plan has identified more sustainable management of resources and the environment as important priorities [the National Economic and Social Development Board, <http://eng.nesdb.go.th/>].

²⁸ The project is in line with the 2007 ILC Conclusions on sustainable enterprises, which highlight the three pillars of sustainability at the micro-operational/enterprise level: **profit/economic**, **people/social**, and **planet/environmental**. The conclusions of the 2011 Asia Pacific Regional Meeting (APRM) recognized that sustainable enterprises and the promotion of green jobs and greener economies are crucial elements of a strategy for a job-rich growth with decent work.

²⁹ For the purposes of this report, we shall put an emphasis on the GBA Project in Thailand's hotel sector. For a case study report, see ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific [International Labour Organization Multi-Bilateral Programme of Technical Cooperation], Karon Beach Resort and Spa: Case Study Draft, 2013



Progress towards DWCP immediate outcomes and priorities

The DC country programme being developed in Thailand contains explicit references to green jobs and/or sustainable enterprises. The Thai constituents' organizations seek to develop knowledge and understanding on strategies to promote green jobs. GBA's work to develop and promote approaches and good practices in this respect are supportive of these areas of focus. In terms of regional and country outcomes, the project contributes to specific outcomes that make reference to green jobs and sustainable enterprises. The project supports sustainable development through green enterprise development and green employment strategies to adapt to climate change and respond to natural disasters due to its focus on assisting enterprises to become more resource efficient, productive and safer places to work with opportunities for decent jobs. The project also contributes to enhancing the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations, and thus to Thailand's relevant country outcomes through the tripartite trainings and knowledge-sharing, and in the case of Employers' organizations also through the support for the Green Information Service: i.e. strengthened institutional capacity of employers' organizations as well as strengthened institutional capacity of workers' organizations. The project has achieved significant steps in the building of the capacity of several institutions to respond to challenges of climate change related mitigation measures in specific sectors and beyond. A program was developed to assist enterprises in Thailand's hotel sector to improve their environmental and labour practices and overall competitiveness based on staff-management cooperation, and established a basis of knowledge and support to engage with constituents and relevant national institutions in promoting collaborative approaches to greener workplaces/sustainable enterprises.

The three project objectives of increasing understanding through R&D and knowledge development, capacity building through training and enterprise demonstration programmes, and of knowledge-sharing were mutually supportive and reinforcing. Research and other outputs under the first objective were preparatory steps for further training and capacity building, Results and learnings in the enterprise demonstration initiative under the second objective fed into knowledge-sharing and the dissemination of good practices taking place under the third objective. The project remains highly relevant to the country-level and regional policy context as reflected by constituents' statements and outcomes of discussions. Given the novelty of the green job concept and of the environmental dimension of sustainable enterprises, the initial research and consultations helped to generate an initial layer of understanding among constituents on issues related to climate change responses and enterprise sustainability, which served as a ground for further capacity building and knowledge sharing.

The foundation trainings for tripartite constituents and GBA partners have been instrumental to introducing these new concepts, and to the linkages between labour and environment issues as well as notions of enterprise sustainability. The project developed a training materials package for enterprises in the hotel sector, and implemented pilot demonstration programme in collaboration with Thailand's PSU Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism. The approach, good practices, results and learnings provided key inputs to the follow-up training and knowledge sharing for constituents and partners at the national level, resulting in enhanced and more direct appreciation of tools and good practices to promote enterprise sustainability through workplace cooperation, and facilitated reflections on the roles and needs for participating institutions in carrying them forward and utilising them through their own program and initiatives. National forums and the development and dissemination of different knowledge products were important channels of knowledge sharing and dissemination, and the statements of interest and commitment made by a number of institutions in taking up and replicating the programs or integrating its tools into their own initiatives demonstrate the success of the knowledge sharing initiatives. At the enterprise-level, the focus on tools and the establishment of teams are designed to ensure the durability of the benefits achieved. At the institutional level, the project has established solid and sound building blocks towards greater capacity for sustainable enterprises as is evidenced by requests for continuing support in this field by tripartite constituents and partners, and pledges of commitment.



To achieve these ends, resources have been allocated to achieve outcomes in the training and capacity building components, reflecting project priorities as they emerge in project objectives and technical requirements. The research and consultations helped to generate an initial layer of understanding among constituents on relevant issues in Thailand's hotel sector. All milestones were reached, including the completion of the research and sector assessment, target sector identification process through consultations and validation meetings. Tripartite PACs were established to provide strategic advice on project implementation. The investigation for sector assessment and the sharing of the findings of the studies with inputs from technical experts and their interactive discussions and reviews contributed to increasing tripartite increased understanding and awareness. The project developed new tools for enterprises and knowledge resources to the benefit of national institutions, trained tripartite representatives on the fundamentals for promoting sustainable enterprises with greener workplaces, established a pool of technical experts at the national level on the use of the new tools, and pilot tested the tools at the enterprise level with concrete improvements in productivity and resource efficiency, environmental performance, OHS and workplace cooperation. As such, the agenda of sustainable enterprises has gained momentum and stronger commitments for the continuation of such measures by enterprises have been made nationally.

The training and capacity building component comprised two large elements: the training of tripartite constituents and partners and the enterprise-level program. The development of the enterprise tools and training packages and the pilot roll-out of the enterprise programs and the collaboration with national and sectoral institutions concerned were key and essential building blocks. They formed a technical core of the project, and contributed to building capacity of technical organizations and tripartite institutions through the collaboration with local bodies as well as the documentation of concrete results and lessons learnt. All these arrangements fed into the second training and experience-sharing workshop for tripartite constituents and partners and into national forum for knowledge dissemination.³⁰

Management-staff teams developed green improvement plans delineating key areas of focus for improvement actions and were implemented following the training programs. Follow-up advisory support and coaching were provided by a team of experts. At the enterprise level, the combined approach of training and application within the workplace with systematic follow-up of additional technical expertise and monitoring was found as an effective approach to capacity building and resulted in the implementation of actions in the areas of energy and resource efficiency, waste management, occupational health and safety using and enhancing teamwork and mechanisms of workplace cooperation. **Examples of benefits and results at the enterprise level include up to 30% energy savings, reduced water consumption by 16,000 m³/year, reduced occupied floor area by up to 40% due to rearrangement of workplace organization, over 40% reduction in food waste, reviewed and improved occupational health and safety systems, including handling of chemical hazards, establishment of worker-management teams to lead improvement actions.** In terms of institutional capacity building, additional assistance to employers' organizations was provided through support for the development of the web-based green information services aimed at providing access to information resources and practical examples to businesses interested in greening their operations. The project has made important achievements in terms of capacity building for tripartite constituents and partners simultaneously in a bid to further enhance the institutionalisation of the approach and optimize the learnings and value of the outputs and results of Phase I, which will allow the project to maximize outreach and impact. Main

³⁰ The enterprise tools and training package for the hotel sector comprise: 1) a core set of materials covering joint problem solving tools and techniques (e.g. fishbone diagram and eco-mapping), core concepts on environmental management (including behavioural changes and good housekeeping for energy and water conservation, the basics on waste management, key notions and tools on cleaner production); workplace relations and worker management cooperation, as well as OHS and the 5S; and 2) a series of elective modules on topics that include energy efficiency, water management, waste management and green procurement, OHS level 2, HR for service excellence.



milestones have included the completion of the research, target sector selection process including consultations and validation meetings.

The research and consultations helped to gain an initial understanding among tripartite constituents of linkages between resource efficiency, productivity and working conditions at work, as well as the challenges and pressures, facing enterprises in specific sectors and potential to address them. The training workshops fostered a better understanding of the conceptual framework that provides the foundation for initiatives promoting green jobs and principles of a just transition, notions of sustainable enterprises, and practical approaches to promote enterprise sustainability and greener workplaces (with a particular focus on the GBA approach, and the results it delivered). They also helped constituents and partners to reflect on their roles and potential areas of work to support enterprise sustainability. The training was regarded by participants as beneficial and well executed.³¹

Based on the pilot demonstration implementation, the training is apparently well designed, and successful in catalysing a process of positive change at the enterprise level through mechanisms of worker-employer cooperation. The participating enterprises realised positive benefits in the areas of energy efficiency, water and waste management, as well as occupational health and safety. The collaboration with local and national institutions translated into their ability to deliver, through their trainers, the GBA training program. Knowledge-sharing, including the showcasing of the project approach was undertaken through product development and the organization and participation in events of different types, allowing the tailoring of knowledge-sharing efforts to different audiences and settings. Its achievements is clearly demonstrated by the very good attendance at the events organized, and by the explicit statement of commitment and interest by constituents and partners to take up and utilise tools and principles developed or shared, and continue/start more intensive collaboration in this field.

Issues impairing the achievement of project objectives/outcomes, proposed solutions and actions taken or to be taken

Major issues have already been encountered, are currently emerging, or are foreseen. One such issue refers to delays in administrative setbacks. In particular, the personnel set up of the project had knockdown effects on the schedule of activities in the first year of the project. In response to this involved remedial action taken to offset delays in implementation, including parallel implementation of activities. This succeeded in ensuring timely delivery of all outputs and project completion respecting the overall original project timeframe. The project has developed and implemented a workable enterprise improvement model based on employer-worker cooperation for the introduction of measures that promote productivity, working conditions for workers and overall competitiveness of enterprises including environmental performance. Phase I has established the ground for collaboration with constituents, local institutions, and industry organizations. The project shall have to leverage achievements and the momentum created to expand its impact. Discussions with all parties concerned have taken place on the strategy for future undertakings. A second phase will both expand the model and its tool and training package so far developed and secure a higher level of institutionalization at the national level. This will be achieved by deepening collaborations with constituents and relevant government/technical institutions to help them strengthen the ability to integrate the GBA enterprise scheme and tools into their programs and initiatives and enhance service delivery

³¹ This was confirmed in survey findings on the foundation training: the average feedback rating was 4.5 for Thailand (training on Green jobs greener Business 2011) and 3.4 on a scale from 1 to 4 for the Green Jobs Greener Business Plus. [See ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific [International Labour Organization Multi-Bilateral Programme of Technical Cooperation], Progress Report/Final Report of the Greener Business Asia [7 July 2009 – 31 December 2012], Mimeographed, 2013], *ibid.*

capacity. A certain level of dissemination of this approach and tools to new countries in the region is also envisaged. A project document for GBA Phase II developed in consultation with ILO colleagues, constituents and partners and the Government of Japan has been approved. There is a clear interest and commitment in drawing upon the work of GBA and collaborating with the ILO for supporting sustainable enterprises with greener workplaces.³²

To the light house: lessons learned from the greening-effort case study in Thailand's hotel sector

1. Capacity building and work with partner entities

- 1.1) The novelty of issues related to climate change and other environmental challenges to national and local entities/constituents means that their capacity building is an incremental process and time-consuming.
- 1.2) Foundation training for entities/constituents on green meetings/ green business has been instrumental to introducing new concept and issues to entities/constituents and other national institutions and to establish a base of understanding and commitment and a first layer of capacity in this new field.
- 1.3) Regarding capacity building of tripartite entities/constituents, particularly of worker-level actors [including trade unions], the resulting choices of sector and locales, coupled with a general very low organized mechanisms scenario for masses of actors could and has posed challenges potential success in terms of outreach and representation thereof among target entities/enterprises. Despite efforts to maximise participants among the enterprises with such mechanisms in the demonstration program and consultations on enterprise selection process, a greater reach could enable greater levels of capacity building among social partners and stronger levels of social dialogue at the micro-operational level.³³ The project took action to address the challenge and increase capacity building opportunities for social partners by extending the trainings for constituents and partners, incorporating tools and learnings from the enterprise programs, as evidenced in the Green Jobs Greener Business Plus training, and by carrying out an additional mini-workshop for trade unions representatives. These enabled representatives from tripartite organizations and partners to gained a more in depth knowledge of practical tools and the GBA methodology for supporting sustainable enterprises and greener workplaces using a model of worker-employer cooperation as well as reflect on their particular roles and potential areas of actions to promote them.
- 1.4) A combined approach of training and application within the workplace with systematic follow-up of additional technical expertise and monitoring is an effective approach to capacity building in line with best practice
- 1.5) The use of the management-staff cooperation model, involving a series of applied exercises around brainstorming, problem identification, and analysis, together with technical inputs, has overall resulted in achievement of environmental gains at the micro-operational level and increased levels of dialogue between management and staff.

³² For example during the Green Jobs, Greener Business Plus workshops, trade unions expressed interest in focused assistance in relation to green jobs and greener workplaces, in particular in educational activities – trainings/training of trainers, the establishment of green networks among factories/industrial areas, campaigns and other awareness raising initiatives, and employers' organizations expressed interest in ILO support to help in collecting and disseminating more information and good practices from Thailand and other countries. Explicit statements of interest in collaboration were also made Thailand's DASTA.

³³ As evidenced in Thailand's GBS project's capacity building efforts in Phuket's hotel sector.

2. Improving the existing corpus of knowledge

- 2.1) The projects/initiatives examined collected detailed information on components concerned and participating entities and managed to document concrete and, in many cases, quantifiable changes and benefits, often demonstrating business cases for improvements. This is instrumental to the assessment and demonstration of the soundness of the newly developed and piloted concepts/programs and is instrumental in generating the interests of industries and institutional partners.
- 2.2) The projects/initiatives established multiple channels for knowledge dissemination, including web-based platforms in collaboration with institutions concerned to reach out to their members in the sectors involved.³⁴
- 2.3) A gendered analysis of each sector of focus would have allowed any such project/initiative to address gender issues more explicitly and systematically in the interventions.
- 2.4) Given the novelty of the projects/initiatives and the topics to be addressed, these success stories relied on a 'broad' results framework which allowed for rapid adaptation along the course of project implementation. It is to be noted, however, that although this proved very useful in answering to unanticipated requests, it was not necessarily an ideal situation to conduct and monitor in an effective way the activities relating to institutional capacity building and knowledge sharing.
- 2.5) The project documented learnings generated in the course of the implementation of its different components in different reports. Consolidating and reviewing overall learnings will be a valuable exercise for the development and preparations of activities in the next phase.

3. Practical strategies for thematic issues

- 3.1) As a result of their participation in the training and advisory support programmes, entities developed and implemented actions to achieve better environmental practices in terms of waste management, energy efficiency, water management, while also implementing OHS improvement actions. Teamwork within the enterprises made collective action possible in realising improved performance and cost saving
- 3.2) The fact that 'greening' of entities/enterprises can be effectively recognised as a shared concern among the human resources component [including employers and workers], makes it a good starting platform for management-staff cooperation and joint/collective actions, which can be mutually agreed upon and implemented.
- 3.3) Integrating environmental issues into a broader framework of micro-level/enterprise/household improvement [covering also issues related to HR/labour practices and business competitiveness] appears an effective approach.
- 3.4) As envisaged in the logic of the project, micro-level/workplace/household cooperation is a means to foster positive changes in competitiveness and working conditions through enhanced environmental performance. Simultaneously, micro/workplace cooperation, as an end in itself, is strengthened by the very undertaking of joint green initiatives.

4. Mainstreaming successful approaches and achieving sustainability of the impacts achieved

³⁴ In fact, this may even be used for business and practical purposes. For example, In terms of business turnover, CVENT has processed over \$2 billion in online payments and has managed over 30 million event registrations and survey responses for its clients. A leading authority on Strategic Meetings Management (SMM), CVENT's technology has been used to implement SMM programs around the world. See <http://www.cvent.com/en/event-management-software/green-meetings-made-easy.shtml>.

- 4.1) The importance of documenting and demonstrating concrete and whenever possible measurable results of the enterprise program and benefits for all parties concerned was key in generating interest and commitment among constituents and potential national partners in further collaborations and replication of the model.
- 4.2) At the micro-operational level, the focus on systems and tools (as opposed to awareness-raising and imparted knowledge) in the training course and its emphasis on mechanisms for micro-level cooperation, mean that the benefits of the program and the process of improvement appear durable.
- 4.3) In specific areas of intervention, such as measures relating to resource efficiency and recycling, more intensive involvement of local governments and greater attention to the larger context of the enterprise intervention would allow greater impact of the enterprise programmes at the local level.
- 4.4) In order to sustain the momentum evolved by the first phase and seek greater impact for the second phase, the expansion of engagement with other actors, including industry associations, and other line ministries relevant to the climate change debate, will be highly valuable.

Salient Features of Green Meetings/Conventions Revisited

Based on the initial set of salient features of green meetings as postulated by **Phutiratana**, we shall add on two additional features drawn from the two real-world case studies presented here to arrive at the following **12 stylized features and concepts** of green meetings/conventions:

- 1) Green meetings represent a shift in a MICE perception/thinking in light of the ever-growing environmental bearings imposed by the MICE sector;
- 2) Green meeting practices are based on the combined application of specific technological advances and human collective action to attain environmental and entrepreneurial efficiency;
- 3) Both theoretical/technical and practical elements are instrumental and as important in the process;
- 4) The human component of green meetings comprises at least quadripartite subgroups [i.e. it is not restricted to industrial players only]: 1) MICE hosts and participants; 2) MICE practitioners; 3) the government; and 4) international regional and local entities such as associations concerned and environmentally concerned agencies;
- 5) In the age of globalization and localization combined, the concept of green meetings requires contributions and participation on the parts of global, regional, and local players so as to be more comprehensive and pervasive. No single economy, entity, or player could solely cope with the overarching environmental exigency of the MICE sector. To be relevant and effective, green meetings shall need to gather a constructive momentum, involving all constituents and potential players across all strata - both external and from within.
- 6) The 'green meeting' concept *per se* is a global node of ever-expanding business activities. Increasingly, this trend continues to grow as environmental impacts of human activities at large and MICE activities in particular are becoming more pronounced;³⁵
- 7) Technological requirements in the administration and implementation of event greening do not strictly and solely involve cutting-edge, state-of-the-arts technology although any such technological initiatives

³⁵ For example, In terms of its business turnover, CVENT has processed over \$2 billion in online payments and has managed over 30 million event registrations and survey responses for its clients. A leading authority on Strategic Meetings Management (SMM), CVENT's technology has been used to implement SMM programs around the world. See <http://www.cvent.com/en/event-management-software/green-meetings-made-easy.shtml>.

could well be and have often been a welcome move where appropriate.³⁶ In the main, standard modern-technology facilities adequately cater for the needs of the MICE sector. As such, use of reliable telecommunications systems already in existence is still relevant and applicable in MICE marketing and MICE implementation processes. Essentially, it is the meticulous planning and application of standard modern technologies across all aspects of green meetings, rather than the sheer use of the most recent frontier that carries more weight in the sector;

- 8) Time-honored best practices and innovative initiatives are equally important. While, proven practices are generally recognized standard practices in the MICE sector which may be replicated (with adjustments as appropriate at times), innovative initiatives are a *modus operandi* through which room for improvement is actually realized;
- 9) Innovation is an area in which both large-scale MICE enterprises and SME players enjoy a level playing field, whereby constituents in both categories are free to innovate ways to improve their efficiency and social value for the purposes of realizing green meetings;
- 10) In all probabilities, the notion and rendering of event greening are likely to grow in practice as the world economy and the world population expands in tandem with the increasingly deteriorating environmental conditions. In actual fact, **“meetings on green meetings”** and ensuing MICE logistics arrangements *per se* are likely to take center stage in the wake of a more environmentally conscious world community;
- 11) The green meetings logistics and suppliers sub-sectors serving the green meeting concept have taken shape firmly and continue to grow along the line with the positive **“green meeting bandwagon”**; and
- 12) Success stories in this regard may be replicated at the regional and global levels. This aim is particularly desirable if the ‘green meeting’ notion is to trigger and bring about sustainable and durable changes and improvement in real terms.

³⁶ MICE/meeting professionals are not complaining about the raft of new products. Rather, these professionals make efforts to become acquainted with them as soon as they are introduced [MPI, 2012 Business Barometer Annual, p.2].



Conclusions

From the theoretical/conceptual framework postulated in Part 1 and two case studies presented in Part 2 of this report, it is undeniably evident that 'green meetings'/'event greening' as a concept is highly relevant to and is of tremendous practical use for the MICE sector and beyond. In light of greater regional integration [including the forthcoming ASEAN Community] and globalization with their associated environmental impacts, it is envisaged that only collective action efficiently designed and implemented could counterbalance and redress the damage so far caused, be it unintentionally or deliberately through man-made factors. This concept has proven effective both conceptually and practically. However, its potential effect could only be realized through timely actual action on the part of humanity as such.



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