



Workshop:

## “How can responsible tourism contribute to sustainable development in Myanmar?”

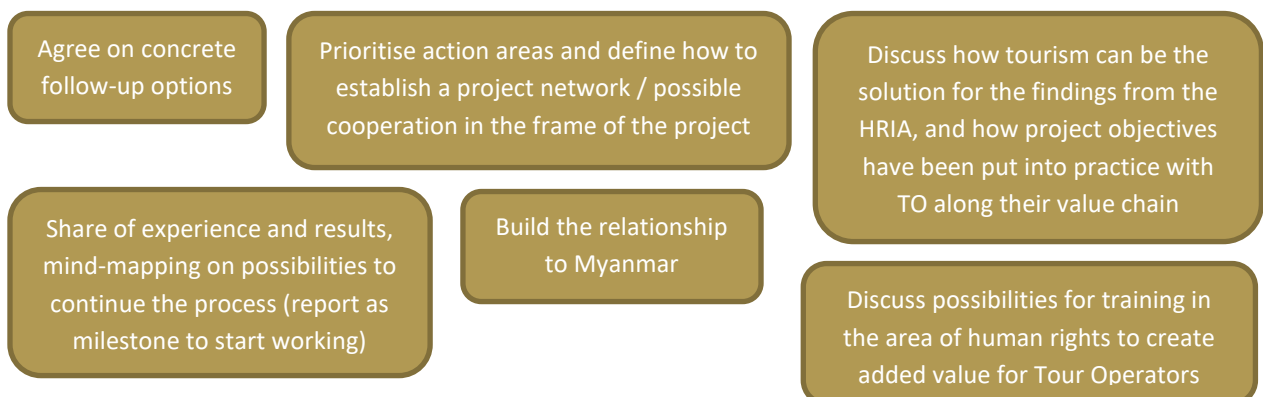
Tuesday, 05 March 2020, 9:30 am – 12:15 pm CET

### About the workshop

On 05 March 2020, the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism (Roundtable) gathered 15 tourism-related stakeholders in a workshop in Berlin. Roundtable members and other interested stakeholders from tourism associations, tour operators, civil society, academia, and tourism certification convened to:

1. **Present the report** with key findings of the practice-oriented value-chain focused human-rights impact assessment, conducted in Thailand and Myanmar in September 2019 by the Roundtable.
2. Get an **overview of transcending development and trends in Myanmar** as well as **European perspectives** on tourism development in Myanmar.
3. **Discuss** possible challenges within the risk areas that were defined in the report. **Prioritise on relevant areas of action** (Economic inclusion, Protection of cultural heritage) for Myanmar, and **find potential follow-up measures** and proposals for a solution to how tourism and the tourism industry can contribute to sustainable development.

### Main expectations of the participants



### Introduction & Presentation of the on-site assessment in Myanmar & Thailand

Antje Monshausen (Tourism Watch) and Matthias Leisinger (focusright)

- National action plans on business and human rights (NAPs) are currently developed in many states worldwide. Those NAPs are a response to the UN Guiding Principles (UNGPs) to give guidance to businesses on a national level how to act responsibly concerning human rights due diligence. NAPs are voluntary, but on national levels, there are individual laws on specific related topics (e.g. Modern Slavery Act in the UK).

- Objectives of the HRIA project:
  - Facilitate **access to sector-specific information** on human rights issues for tour operators in selected destinations;
  - Provide support for the **identification and prioritization of impact areas** within the tourism value chain;
  - Guide tour operators in **taking concrete measures to address issues** identified and implement due diligence strategies in a targeted and pragmatic manner.
- For the discussion on the HRIA in Myanmar & Thailand it is important to keep in mind: the assessment was done from the value chain-perspective of a European tour operator

### Presentation: Development and trends in tourism in Myanmar

Win Min (Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business)

- There is a new tourism law in Myanmar since 2018, which gives the state committees more power, but the effects of this law are not foreseeable yet. A national tourism masterplan is coming soon, regional masterplans are being developed.
- CBT is currently only used as a tool by the government, very little community initiatives
- Need for businesses to work with established stakeholders in the human rights sector
- Myanmar Responsible Tourism Institute (MRTI) is doing assessments on the site and is working with different international organizations → they need to play a key role in sustainable tourism development
- There are 11 national tourism associations in Myanmar who need to play a key role in the transition to sustainable tourism development
- Current challenges:
  - Myanmar laws are too old, need to be compared with international laws (acting according to Myanmar law as a business is not enough to reach sustainable development)
  - Labour conditions and safety
  - Environmental impacts
  - Land acquisition
  - Corruption / Business integrity
- People / Organizations / Tour Operators can only make a difference by coming to Myanmar

### Presentation: Transcending developments with regard to Myanmar (European perspective)

Petra Thomas (forum anders reisen)

- Varied travel history in Myanmar:
  - The socialist regime closed Myanmar in 1988.
  - 1996 “Visit Myanmar” Campaign: only focussed on a positive image, the military government is not interested in tourism, no focus on the possible source of income
  - By 2007, visitor numbers had slowly increased to 220,000 a year. Since the beginning of the process of democratization, Myanmar trips have developed rapidly.
  - Around 400,000 tourists came in 2011, and in 2014 over a million foreign visitors are said to have been counted for the first time. 1,700,000 international guests were expected in 2016. 45,000 of the reported tourist arrivals came from Germany, twice as many as five years earlier.

- The official statements of the »Ministry of Hotels & Tourism« speak now of over a million tourist arrivals. But these statistics also include Business travellers and cross-border commuters, especially from Thailand and China.
- The growing demand led to a construction boom - quality standards were often at the bottom. Accommodations have doubled in 2015. At times the overnight prices increased fourfold. Officially, the number of hotels and guesthouses is expected to have increased from 622 in 2008 to 1,279.
- Main touristic hotspots: Yangon with the Shwedagon Pagoda, The last royal city Mandalay, the Bagan temple plain, Inle Lake, Golden Rock
- Tourism Masterplan 2013-2020 was overtaken by reality
- Biggest challenge: growing Asian Market (other needs of travel)

### Interactive Working Groups on Challenges / Expectations and Ideas / Solutions

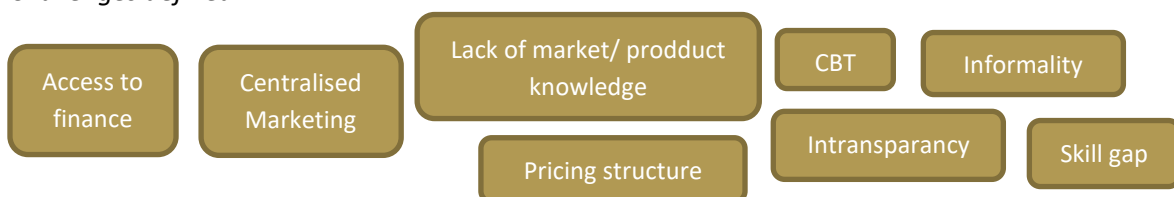
The workshop participants worked in groups discussing challenges and opportunities in the destinations assessed in Myanmar. They prioritized the human rights-related risk issues from the report, to be discussed in more detail:

- Children’s rights (7 votes)
- **Economic inclusion (12 votes)**
- Environmental impacts (4 votes)
- Lack of tourism governance (4 votes)
- Land rights (0 votes)
- **Protection of cultural heritage (11 votes)**
- Working conditions (6 votes)

The two bold marked risk areas were defined as most relevant for the workshop participants. In two groups the topics “Economic Inclusion” and “Protection of cultural heritage” were discussed and concrete measures that could be taken by tour operators and other stakeholders identified.

#### Economic inclusion

*Challenges defined:*



*Possible solutions:*

- ➔ Find good/best practice examples for local/regional products, initiatives, projects and collect them on a platform to share knowledge and experience
- ➔ Improve distribution/logistics management
- ➔ Promote transparency
- ➔ Raise/create awareness and set standards for CBT
- ➔ Support the development of skills (education of local tour operators, vendors etc.)
- ➔ Support product development by visualizing (e.g. by translating to different languages, adding pictures etc.)

## Protection of cultural heritage

Challenges defined:



Possible solutions:

- ➔ Awareness creation for tourists and guides
  - Look how communication and content of existing CoC/ brochures could be framed (not only regarding cultural heritage sites and “translated” according to culture and needs/ operational level of a target group
    - ➔ CBI, MCRB: include the topic in ongoing training
  - Brochure “Dos and Don’ts” should be distributed to European travel associations, TOs and travellers
    - ➔ German Travel Association (DRV): get in contact with MCRB/ CBI, think of best-practice how to distribute topics to customers; MCRB, DRV: approach ECTAA (European Federation of Travel Associations) and sustainable committees of European national travel associations; Roundtable: approach ECTAA regarding follow-up workshop
  - Existing Code of Conduct (Travelife/ ITC) for Myanmar incoming tour operators should be adapted to fit needs and language of tour operators (“hands-on”), and distributed to members of Union of Myanmar Tour Operators (UMTA) and Myanmar Hotel Association
    - ➔ CBI, MCRB, UMTA: frame what should be in CoC; CBI: distribution/ capacity building to UMTA members; MCRB: approach Hotel Association; Travelife: approach Myanmar TO members and request needs and adaption in coordination with CBI
- ➔ Political dialogue regarding cultural heritage sites in Myanmar
  - ➔ MCRB: work on a lobby plan regarding this topic and share it with Roundtable
  - ➔ Roundtable: write an official letter to national politics (where TOs from European sending market stand behind) to demand more involvement and information of local industry and stakeholders
- ➔ Dialogue with UNESCO/NGOs/ funding governments
  - ➔ Roundtable NGO members: present case of Bagan at UNESCO meeting in Paris 2020
- ➔ Address land rights and illegal building
  - Collect 3-4 obvious examples of hotels that are violating land rights (e.g. in the red zone in Bagan) and work with tourism stakeholders (incoming and sending) on a statement not to contract these hotels (preferential policy)
  - Challenge: Where is the “red line”, how to get independent information, who can publish such a document (needs to be an international organization), needs strategic discussion with stakeholders



- Goal: rather change mindset than “shaming-blaming” approach
  - MCRB, CBI, Travelife: follow-up with national associations, stakeholder workshops;
  - Roundtable: follow-up with MCRB, CBI, Travelife how to address this issue and how to support local workshops
- ➔ Work on Capacity Building in Myanmar Universities with tourism institutes (e.g. National Management Degree College, Yangon University of Economy);
  - MCRB and RT collaborate on how to develop trainings and approach universities

### Next steps

- The [HRIA tool](#) is now available online, **feedback on the content is very welcome** and can be sent to [info@humanrights-in-tourism.net](mailto:info@humanrights-in-tourism.net)
- The [report](#) is available for download. It is the starting point for the upcoming work.
  - Need to focus also on the topics that have not been discussed in today’s workshop.
  - Need to go through the report and see where possible synergies are. The Roundtable, therefore, depends on strong members and their willingness to contribute.
  - Need to support DMCs to constantly take sustainability and human rights-related topics into account when developing products and marketing activities (USP etc.).
- TOs can use RT tools and the HRIA report not only to focus on the two assessed countries but to start assessing risks and impacts along their value-chain in destinations around the world.
- The **results will be disseminated and discussed** by Roundtable members (e.g. tourism associations, RT representatives, NGOs etc.) and their channels (e.g. newsletters, webinars, workshops, training etc.). This includes the Roundtable [Symposium in Switzerland \(25 June 2020\)](#) etc. The Roundtable is also exploring how the results can be made available to relevant stakeholders in Thailand and Myanmar through local partners. Any ideas and suggestions in this regard are very welcome.

### List of participants

| Nr | Name                      | Organisation                            |
|----|---------------------------|---|
| 1  | Aung Lei Lei              | HNE Eberswalde                          |
| 2  | Busche, Dorothea          | DRV                                     |
| 3  | Hofmann, Andreas          | GIZ                                     |
| 4  | Kusters, Naut             | Travelife for Tour Operators            |
| 5  | Leisinger, Matthias       | focusright                              |
| 6  | Louwman-Vogels, Charlotte | Fair Tourism                            |
| 7  | Maurer, Mechtild          | ECPAT Germany                           |
| 8  | Monshausen, Antje         | Bread for the World/ Tourism Watch      |
| 9  | Pelikan, Johanna          | Alsharq Reise                           |
| 10 | Scherpenzeel, Jeanette    | CBI                                     |
| 11 | Schreiber, Jara           | Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism      |
| 12 | Stechl, Katharina         | Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism      |
| 13 | Thomas, Petra             | forum anders reisen                     |
| 14 | Win Min                   | Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business |

