\textbf{UNWTO Study of The Tourism Labour Market in the Asia Pacific region}

Commissioned by the UNWTO Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific
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\textbf{The Asia Pacific Tourism Labour Market}

- Asia Pacific region has witnessed considerable growth in the last decade.
- In 2007 Asia Pacific was the world’s second best performing region in terms of arrivals with an increase of 10% over the previous year to 184 million arrivals (UNWTO 2009; 2008).
- Region is experiencing:
  - Labour/skilled labour competition and shortages,
  - Quality of jobs,
  - Demographic changes,
  - Political factors.
UNWTO Study of the Asia Pacific Tourism Labour Market

- UNWTO Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific commissioned a scoping study to examine the labour market situation, characteristics and related issues in the tourism industries of 10 key countries in the Asia Pacific region and provide benchmarks of:
  - Scope and coverage of national tourism labour statistics.
  - Analysis of the working conditions in the tourism labour market.
  - Gap analysis of demand for, and supply of, tourism labour in the region.
  - The contribution of tourism labour to poverty alleviation.
  - Future trends and challenges impacting on the tourism labour market.

UNWTO Study of the Asia Pacific Tourism Labour Market

- Countries: Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand.

- Opinion leader survey:
  - Sample of opinion leaders in each of the countries – 33 respondents.
  - 30 questions
  - Self-completed questionnaire

- Secondary sources:
  - Government, academic and other non-governmental sources such as the OECD, ILO and peak tourism bodies in the region such as the PATA.
The Asia Pacific Tourism Labour Market

• Characterized by:
  – Variety of employment options incl. low/semi skilled to executive/professional.
  – Poor working conditions including wages in certain sectors.
  – Labour mobility
  – Lack of training and career development opportunities.

• Influenced by:
  – Demographic changes.
  – Political factors and crises.
  – Competition for labour.

Study Findings

• Shortage of skilled labour in all countries.
  – Shortage of labour most acute in accommodation and F&B sectors.
  – Shortage at professional/management levels.
  – Shortage of skilled employees with foreign language skills.
Study Findings

• The supply of labour in the Asia Pacific region is inextricably linked to the inherent characteristics of the tourism industries.
  – Wages and working conditions,
  – Lack of career opportunities,
  – Negative perceptions/image of employment.

Factors currently impacting on supply and demand

• Wages lower than most other industries making it difficult to be competitive and recruit and retain staff – high labour mobility.
• Negative perceptions of the tourism industries both in terms of a working environment and career progression opportunities, especially amongst young people.
• Need for further development of skills and capabilities to meet the demand for labour at the professional/management level.
• Improved capabilities required regarding effective HR management and strategies of tourism businesses.
• Need for improved capacity in tertiary level education and training programs.
Future Trends and Challenges in the Tourism Labour Market

• Ongoing skills shortages – not meeting demand.
• Continued poor perception of tourism as a career option/desirable employer given wages and working conditions.
• Continued high levels of labour mobility as a result of reduced job security and tenure.
• Building capacity within labour market to meet demand for professional/managerial level positions.
• Overcoming aversion to education and training, particularly by SMEs.
• Scale of impact/recovery from global economic slowdown/recession.

The Way Forward

• Scope and coverage of national statistics
  – UNWTO and ILO (2008) have noted, “the world of work in tourism is generally not well-known because reliable data on employment in the tourism industries are not properly identified separately or poorly done” (p.v).
  – Access to relevant, timely and available data on the tourism industries in the region an issue.
  – To accurately monitor the tourism labour market situation in each country and across the region longitudinal research, improved data sources and robust statistical collections on employment and conditions in the tourism industries are instigated.
  – A regional labour market barometer - provide benchmarks and indicators of current trends in the labour market to inform the sector’s policy development and strategic planning.
The Way Forward

• HR and working conditions.
• Re-imaging employment and careers in the tourism industries.
• Developing skill capacity.
• Government-sector collaborations.
• Research and statistics.
• Contribution to poverty alleviation: strategies and initiatives to match demand for labour.