



## Health care tourism trends and lessons learned in developing tourism products for PHU QUOC city, Vietnam

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### Abstract

Health care tourism has been recognized by the World Tourism Organization. It is forecasted to be one of the tourism trends that will develop strongly in this world XXI century. Especially after the COVID-19 pandemic with its huge consequences is seen as an important "catalyst" for the rapid development of health care tourism healthy from 2021 until now. With that trend, Healthcare Tourism is suitable to develop products that complement Phu Quoc's specific tourism products to enrich the tourist experience, bringing revenue to the destination and contribute to realizing the goal of sustainable tourism development. This article discusses experiences in developing health care tourism products in the world, Some characteristics of health care tourism products, Potential for developing tourism products and solutions for product development. Health care tourism products in Phu Quoc city.

**Keywords:** Health care tourism products, Phu Quoc tourist destination, world tourism organization

### Introduction

#### Lessons learned in developing health care tourism products around the world

India is a country known as the cradle of yoga and meditation. With strengths in mental and physical treatments using yoga, traditional medicine, and nature, this country has developed a comprehensive form of health care tourism, creating tours. Full health care package, bringing a special experience with clear improvement results for visitors after the tour. Health care tourism makes India the destination for this product with the fastest growth rate of 22%/year. With the goal of developing a health care tourism product line, India has launched a strategy to attract high-end and luxury health care tourists, from which the flow of affordable tourists will increase according to the trend. Many high-end healthcare destinations are being developed continuously, notably Ananda in the Himalayas and Soukya Holistic Health Care Center in Bangalore.

Grasping the trend, to ensure the quality of this special tourism product, while supporting the development of healthcare facilities, the Indian Ministry of Tourism has developed Guidelines for the Development of Healthcare Tourism. health care, with specifically regulated issues such as: clarifying the concept of health care tourism, training programs for health care tourism human resources, financial support for building health care facilities. health care, promotion... In addition, to control the quality of health care services, the Indian Ministry of Tourism also coordinates with the health care service certification board and hospitals to organize Assessing the quality of health care centers nationwide and issuing certificates, while providing guidance on improving service quality.

Thailand is a developed country in both medical tourism and wellness tourism. Because Thailand is famous as an exciting travel destination, many tourists choose to stay in hotels and spa resorts that combine beautiful scenery, beaches and cultural activities, as well as like enjoying some wellness traditions like Thai massage or Buddhist meditation, these activities have also become globalized in recent years. In

addition, the Thai government has identified tourism as a key economic sector of this country. Since 2004, this country has set out a strategy to become the medical center of Asia, and from then until Today, they continue to make efforts for that strategy. The Thai Ministry of Health sets three key goals: medical services, health services including traditional massage, spa and medicinal products... Investment in medical tourism is also encouraged, especially in key tourist areas of Thailand such as Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, Surat Thani, Pattaya, and Hua Hin. In early September 2016, through the program "Come to Thailand for your health", travel agencies have established open connections with private health care centers providing comprehensive services. for foreign tourists to Thailand, and at the same time introduce to the world health care services for foreigners.

China, with its vast area, populous population, long-standing historical culture, natural conditions, majestic and pristine mountains, ancient villages and towns imbued with cultures from 56 ethnic groups, The rich cuisine accumulated over thousands of years has created many advantages for China in economic development in general and tourism in particular.

The Academy's report shows that in 2019 China recorded 145 million domestic tourist trips and the country's annual tourism revenue reached 6.63 trillion yuan. Over the past decade, China has emerged as a market attracting an increasing number of international tourists, according to the 2019 tourism development report recently published by the China Tourism Research Institute. Accordingly, the country's international tourist market maintains stable growth with 141 million visitors, reaching a revenue of 130 billion USD, growing 3% in 2019; Also according to this report, the Asian region is the main international tourist market, accounting for 60% of visitors to China, followed by Europe and North America, the number of visitors respectively accounting for 20%. % and 10%. Notably, linking the development of cultural tourism and eco-tourism, health care is becoming a new driving force in

tourism market development in China, through employment. Enrich the supply of tourism products, improve service quality, increase uniqueness and excitement, meet the needs of tourists to learn about culture, rest, and improve their health.

Faced with innovation and structural adjustment of the global tourism market and tourist tastes, the world's second largest economy has proposed many mechanisms and policies to develop the industry, applying recessionary measures. taxes and convenient immigration documents to promote the international tourist market to continue to develop as well as focus on developing domestic tourists.

### **Some important characteristics of health care tourism products focused on applying in developing tourism products in Phu Quoc city**

**a. Health care tourism models:** Same as other types of tourism other tourism products, health care tourism products are a combination of services, goods and amenities provided to satisfy the health care needs of tourists during a travel trip, created by combining combines tourism resources (cultural tourism resources and natural tourism resources), infrastructure, and technical facilities to serve tourism and people.

But health care tourism products are not simply relaxing or soaking in hot water, but must also be intentional or have a positive contribution to the psychology, spirit and emotions of tourists. Health care tourism is not as limited as regular health care services. Wellness tourism is much larger than a narrowly defined group of typical wellness businesses, such as spas, health retreats, hot/mineral springs, and boot camps. Current popular models include:

- **Spa:** Means water therapy. Currently, Spa is described as a therapy to improve overall health through a series of specialized methods that restore and refresh the mind, body and mind.
- **Beauty and anti-aging:** technologies, products that help improve an individual's body shape, skin & appearance.
- **Sports & Fitness (Sport and Fitness):** forms of physical improvement an individual's physical strength through specialized sports activities and guidance by experts
- **Spiritual tourism:** is a journey to find connection connecting with the inner self (Mansfeld & McIntosh, 2009) such as pilgrimage to sacred religious sites, etc.

Resort tourism combined with participating in fitness courses, meditation, yoga, health recovery, convalescence, disease prevention or reducing stress in life, smoking cessation or weight loss is currently very popular in the world. gender. Some researchers also group hiking, nature exploration and volunteering activities into wellness tourism products.

Basic nature of popular health tourism services in the world is traveling to participate in health-promoting activities such as cycling and mountain climbing. Exercise and sports improve health; kufung traditionally; practice yoga, meditate; practice...; Swimming in the sea, hot springs, mud bath; therapeutic massage, herbal sauna...; Healthy cuisine, full of nutrients; fasting or following body transformation

programs; Rest moderately and reasonably; Visit famous tourist destinations and resorts. Connect and interact with local people; experience indigenous culture; Experience natural activities to reduce stress and relax. However, each country is associated with its natural characteristics and national cultural identity in tourism, creating unique diversity. For example, in Japan with onsen bathing, Korea with sea salt baths and yoga in India, Myanmar with Mahasi meditation center...

**b. Healthcare tourists:** These are people who choose to use healthcare services while traveling. Health care tourists can be divided into two groups, including:

- Tourists whose main purpose (mainly) is health care tourism: Are tourists whose sole or main purpose is to maintain and improve their health.
- Tourists whose secondary purpose is health care: Are tourists who consider health care as a secondary purpose, they participate in health care and maintenance activities while traveling with their friends. Other main purposes such as commercial, public service,... Wellness tourists generally have high spending levels. Currently, there are mainly middle-aged people with high income and qualifications. The top international tourist sending markets today are from Europe and North America, with the top five markets being the US, France, Germany, Austria and Japan. It is forecasted that in the future the markets that will grow will be from Asia, the Middle East and Latin America.
- New trend: Tourists in any market segment are interested in safe forms of tourism, tourism products that ensure mental and physical health. This is one of the trends that will have a great influence on the international and domestic tourism market.
- Competition in health care tourism is not by price but by uniqueness. Like other forms of specialty travel, wellness travel is not an ordinary experience. Each destination has its own unique flavor related to health, associated with local culture, natural assets, food... These unique and authentic experiences can be built upon indigenous healing practices; ancient/spiritual traditions; native plants and forests; special mud, minerals and water; vernacular architecture; street vibe; local ingredients and culinary traditions; History and culture; etc. Because each destination is different. Price is not considered a competitive factor that helps a tourist destination attract tourists, it is the uniqueness that creates that.

### **Potential for developing health care tourism products in Phu Quoc city**

Phu Quoc destination includes 40 large and small islands with a total area of 58,890.76 hectares, of which Phu Quoc island with an area of 56,729.07 hectares accounts for 96.3% of the total natural area. The widest distance is 25 km and the longest is 50 km, the island has 99 mountains with the highest mountain at an altitude of 603m. Destination Phu Quoc, in terms of distance to urban centers of Southeast Asian countries, is the closest point to any location in Vietnam: 3 km from the nearest point in Cambodia; About 500 km from the Thai tourism industrial park; Eastern Malaysia 700 km; 1,000 km from Singapore.

Phu Quoc with a system of 14 beautiful beaches on the island such as: Bai Sao, Bai Dai, Bai Truong, Bai Vong, Bai

Khem, Bai Thom... and many other beaches in the islands of the An Thoi archipelago are potential and advantages. Phu Quoc's invaluable natural resources. Pristine natural environment, diverse ecosystems, especially marine biodiversity, with seagrass beds, coral reefs, and rare marine species.

Along with that, Phu Quoc National Park and Marine Protected Area, this land accounts for more than 2/3 of the natural area and is the core area of the Kien Giang World Biosphere Reserve, with evergreen forests and melaleuca forests., mangrove forests, rocky mountain forests, coral, seagrass... Phu Quoc has 3 main rivers including: Cua Can, Duong Dong and Dam Dai, which are very impressive to tourists when coming to the island. In addition, traditional marine cultural values such as fishing festivals and historical-cultural relics, cultural activities of Ham Ninh fishing village, and the typical Phu Quoc origin museum on the island... are key factors. attractive factor for tourists. Phu Quoc possesses unique natural elements to develop health care tourism products such as:

- Health care services for tourists with physical and mental activities such as bicycle tours, beach sports
- Health care services at tourist accommodation establishments
- Cosmetic and beauty care center,
- Oriental medicine area, meditation garden
- Macrobiotic restaurant chain, organic farm...
- Experience the primeval forest park,
- Nursing sports, natural water park, sailing club sports...
- Bathing in the stream restores health
- Providing outstanding services in preventive medicine to build high-tech health management and examination centers, high-end health care models and top-notch nursing to increase physical value and spirit for visitors
- Exploiting the value of island ecosystems On the length of about 150km of coastline around Phu Quoc island, there are many beaches of tourist value. Phu Quoc's coastline is not uniform but varies in different locations. That means the beaches stretching along the island's coastline will vary in quality.

### **Solutions for developing health care tourism products in Phu Quoc city**

Trends and experiences of countries around the world in developing health care tourism show that developing health care tourism in Phu Quoc currently requires many tasks and solutions as follows:

- Develop policies to develop health care tourism. To develop health care tourism in Phu Quoc, it is necessary to identify and plan policies, plans, strategies, and projects to develop health care tourism in each stage, based on the values of the resources. tourism resource. At the same time, create mechanisms to attract investment, encourage the participation of individuals, businesses, and people in developing health care tourism, harmonious development, and close links between localities, domestic and international destinations.
- Linking between departments, sectors, businesses and localities in building a supply chain of health care tourism products and services, focusing on indigenous products and promoting the strengths of medicinal resources, minerals, resources...

- Develop high-quality tourism human resources to meet the needs of health care tourism. Human resources participating in this type require skills and in-depth expertise in health, the human body, and the use of therapies and medicinal herbs in health care, thus requiring knowledge about medicine and pharmacy for tourism human resources. In addition, it is necessary to organize human resource training, improve both quality and quantity of health care tourism human resources, and do research and study in countries with strong development in health care tourism such as China., Japan, Korea.
- Invest heavily in developing infrastructure systems and technical materials to serve health care tourism with modern, high-quality facilities and infrastructure systems. Implement plans and investment programs on infrastructure and facilities to serve health care tourism, attract and call for infrastructure investment from businesses, non-state and non-state economic sectors. people.
- Applying the development of information technology, science and technology in developing health care tourism. New, modern technologies in health care and rehabilitation need to be applied, technologies in medicinal processing, cuisine, exercise and sports practice, beauty and care technology. skin,...need to be applied and popularized at health care tourism destinations.
- Strengthen promotion of Phu Quoc health care tourism domestically and internationally. Health care tourism is not really known to many tourists, so it is necessary to develop strategies to promote health care tourism in Phu Quoc to tourists such as building traditional campaigns, Release media publications on healthcare tourism, focusing on key international healthcare tourism markets

### **Conclusion**

Phu Quoc is an island city with very favorable conditions, blessed by nature with an extremely ideal natural environment with a warm climate all year round, a fresh environment, poetic natural landscapes, and natural resources. Diverse tourism resources are an important and ideal condition for developing health care tourism. Developing health care tourism products will be of great significance in diversifying Phu Quoc tourism products, meeting better and better the needs and trends of the market and contributing to the achievement of goals. Developing tourism in a sustainable direction, associated with the reasonable use of resources and being environmentally friendly.

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