

GLOBAL DESTINATION MARKETING FRAMEWORKS

A COMPARATIVE STRATEGIC ANALYSIS FOR SRI LANKA TOURISM



AUSTRALIA | THAILAND | MALDIVES | VIETNAM | INDIA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International tourism promotion has evolved beyond conventional destination advertising. Successful destination marketing organizations increasingly combine global advertising campaigns, international public relations, celebrity endorsements, airline partnerships, travel-distribution networks, digital platforms, outdoor advertising, cultural diplomacy, trade exhibitions and structured familiarization programmes.

This report examines five destinations: Australia, Thailand, the Maldives, Vietnam and India, to identify their promotional strategies, the organizations and commercial partners involved, the international markets they target, the media platforms they use and the mechanisms through which they connect destination awareness with actual tourism sales.

The study focuses on six principal areas:

1. International advertising and media procurement: Global television, digital streaming, social media, international travel magazines, outdoor advertising and specialist advertising agencies.
2. Public relations and destination ambassadors: International PR companies, celebrity endorsements, content creators, cultural personalities and media engagement.
3. Aviation, cruise and travel-distribution partnerships: Joint campaigns with airlines, online travel agencies, tour operators, cruise companies and international travel sellers.
4. Familiarization and hosted-buyer programmes: Organized visits for journalists, television crews, influencers, travel agents, tour operators, hotel representatives and other industry stakeholders.
5. Tourism trade development and regulation: International travel exhibitions, professional training programmes, certification, licensing and rules governing representation at national tourism pavilions.
6. Strategic applications for Sri Lanka: Practical measures for developing an integrated international tourism marketing framework.

The five countries offer different but complementary models.

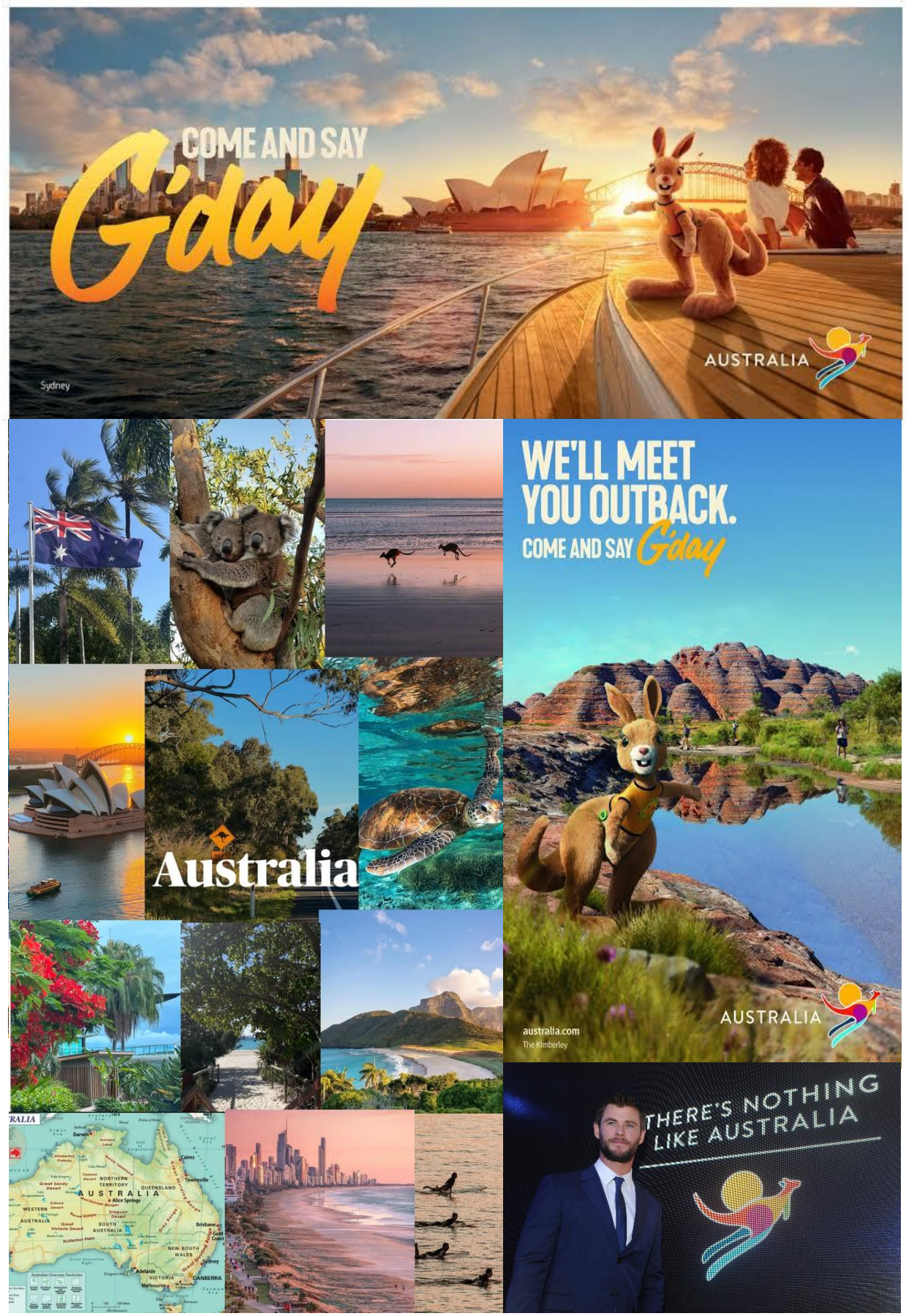
- Australia demonstrates the value of a consistent national brand, market-specific advertising, specialist creative and media agencies, airline partnerships, international media hosting and professional travel-agent training.
- Thailand integrates tourism with cultural soft power, celebrity advocacy, food, film, fashion, festivals, Muay Thai, influencer marketing and travel-distribution platforms.
- The Maldives demonstrates how a small island destination can achieve international visibility through sports partnerships, airline co-marketing, luxury positioning, travel-agent networks and targeted international advertising.

- Vietnam combines digital destination content, international broadcast partnerships, culinary promotion, heritage tourism, sustainable tourism and hosted-buyer programmes.
- India promotes specialized tourism circuits, spiritual and pilgrimage tourism, overseas trade engagement, international media campaigns and destination-specific products.

The central finding is that Sri Lanka should move towards a coordinated international marketing system in which advertising, public relations, diplomatic networks, airline cooperation, specialist tourism products and commercial distribution reinforce one another.

A successful campaign should not merely generate international attention. It should give prospective travellers a clear reason to visit, connect them with bookable tourism products and establish measurable outcomes for public expenditure.

1. AUSTRALIA: A BENCHMARK FOR GLOBAL DESTINATION MARKETING



1.1. Institutional structure and global brand

Tourism Australia's principal international marketing platform is Tourism Australia, the national tourism marketing organization responsible for promoting Australia as an international holiday destination.

Its marketing strategy combines a consistent national identity with locally adapted campaigns for priority source markets. Rather than using exactly the same creative material everywhere, Australia adjusts its personalities, stories, imagery and promotional messages according to the interests of audiences in individual countries.

Its principal campaign platform is Come and Say G'day, launched in October 2022 and subsequently developed through additional international campaign activations.

The campaign uses Ruby, a kangaroo character, as a recognizable destination-brand ambassador. The character is voiced by Australian actress Rose Byrne.

The campaign's creative direction associates Australia with:

- Warm hospitality and the Australian way of life.
- Native wildlife and natural attractions.
- Indigenous cultural heritage.
- Coastal holidays and outdoor experiences.
- Food, wine and regional tourism.
- Sustainable travel and distinctive local experiences.

Australia also uses specialist campaigns such as Work and Play the Aussie Way, which targets working-holiday visitors and younger travellers, particularly in Western European and North American markets.

This approach allows the country to maintain a unified international brand while developing separate messages for leisure travellers, young visitors, working-holiday travellers, luxury tourists and other segments.

1.2. Major International Tourist Source Markets

Australia attracts international visitors from neighboring countries, major Asian economies, North America and Europe. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Australia received approximately 9.10 million short-term visitor arrivals during the financial year 2025-26, an increase of 8.3% compared with the preceding year.

The ten leading source countries, ranked by short-term visitor arrivals during 2025-26, were:

Rank	Country of Residence	Visitor Arrivals
1	New Zealand	1,422,790
2	China	1,127,110
3	United States	755,500
4	United Kingdom	751,420
5	Singapore	448,310
6	Japan	447,590
7	India	435,570
8	South Korea	407,600
9	Hong Kong	252,720
10	Indonesia	244,240

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Overseas Arrivals and Departures, Australia – 2025-26 Financial Year.

New Zealand was Australia's largest source market, accounting for approximately 15.6% of short-term visitor arrivals. China ranked second, followed by the United States and the United Kingdom. The leading markets demonstrate the importance of Australia's regional connections with New Zealand and Asia, alongside established long-haul markets in North America and Europe.

The ABS also identifies holidays as the most common reason for international visitors to travel to Australia, accounting for 45.4% of visitor arrivals in 2025–26. Visiting friends and relatives represented another major travel purpose.

These statistics provide a useful basis for understanding Australia's international tourism market distribution and identifying the geographical markets in which its destination-marketing activities operate.

1.3. Tourism Infrastructure, Destination Appeal and Signature Experiences - Australia

Australia's destination appeal rests on the combination of internationally recognizable natural landmarks, extensive coastal landscapes, distinctive wildlife, Indigenous-led cultural experiences, and tourism infrastructure that supports both independent travel and organized excursions. Its tourism offering is not limited to major cities: visitors can combine urban attractions with marine activities, national parks, outback journeys, regional food experiences, and accommodation located within or near distinctive natural environments.

1.3.1. Natural attractions and purpose-built visitor experiences

- **The Great Barrier Reef, Queensland:** The reef provides opportunities for snorkeling, scuba diving, glass-bottom boat excursions, and guided marine experiences. Visitors can access reef excursions from coastal gateways such as Cairns and Port Douglas, while island accommodation offers opportunities to stay closer to reef environments. The attraction's appeal lies in experiencing a large coral reef ecosystem and observing marine life rather than simply visiting a beach.
- **Uluru - Kata Tjuta National Park, Northern Territory:** Uluru and the domes of Kata Tjuta offer a different experience from Australia's coastal destinations. Visitors can observe the changing colors of Uluru at sunrise and sunset, explore designated walking routes, and participate in experiences led by Aboriginal guides. The Wintjiri Wiru cultural storytelling experience combines Anangu storytelling with a nighttime presentation using drones, sound, and light. This provides a specific example of how a natural landmark can be experienced through Indigenous interpretation rather than scenery alone.
- **The Great Ocean Road, Victoria:** This coastal touring route connects ocean viewpoints, the Twelve Apostles, beaches, and walking areas within the Great Otway National Park. Its value lies in the journey itself: visitors can drive between coastal settlements, stop at viewpoints, walk through forest environments, and observe wildlife. It is particularly suited to multi-day self-drive itineraries originating from Melbourne.
- **Kangaroo Island, South Australia:** Kangaroo Island offers opportunities to observe native wildlife, including kangaroos, koalas, seals, and Australian sea lions. At Seal Bay, visitors can observe a sea-lion colony through designated visitor experiences. The island also combines wildlife viewing with coastal scenery and regional food production, making it suitable for travelers seeking a nature-focused itinerary beyond the major mainland cities.
- **Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory:** Kakadu combines wetlands, wildlife, Aboriginal rock-art sites, and guided cultural interpretation. Visitor facilities and designated viewing areas help travelers access sites such as Burrungkuy (Nourlangie) and Ubirr. The park's tourism development planning has also included visitor-service hubs, accommodation improvements, campground upgrades, and access improvements. This illustrates the importance of investing in facilities that make remote natural and cultural attractions accessible without treating the environment as an ordinary urban tourist site.

1.3.2. Accommodation that forms part of the destination experience

Australia offers accommodation ranging from hostels, caravan parks, and campgrounds to regional hotels, island resorts, and high-end wilderness lodges. The distinguishing feature is that accommodation can be selected according to the experience a visitor wishes to have.

- **Wilderness lodges:** Properties such as Arkaba in the Flinders Ranges provide a base for wildlife and landscape experiences in a private conservation setting.
- **Remote luxury accommodation:** Longitude 131° near Uluru-Kata Tjuta offers visitors a high-end stay associated with the Red Centre landscape.
- **Island and reef accommodation:** Lizard Island Resort provides an example of accommodation that emphasizes proximity to the Great Barrier Reef, ocean views, and access to marine activities.
- **Camping and caravan parks:** These options enable visitors to explore national parks and regional routes with different levels of expenditure and independence.

The strategic distinction is that accommodation is not presented merely as somewhere to sleep. In some locations, it is an integral part of the experience, providing access to remote landscapes, guided excursions, local food, and opportunities to observe nature. However, remote lodges and island resorts are premium products; their existence should not be used to suggest that Australia is an inexpensive destination.

1.3.3. Food experiences linked to place

Australia can offer visitors food experiences connected to particular regions and local produce rather than relying exclusively on restaurant dining in major cities.

- **Tasmania:** Oyster harvesting and other seafood experiences connect visitors with coastal food production.
- **Northern Queensland:** Mud-crab experiences provide a regional food attraction.
- **Melbourne:** Laneway cafés and specialty coffee offer a recognizable urban food experience.
- **Uluru and the Red Centre:** Guided food experiences using native ingredients, including finger lime and wattleseed, introduce visitors to Australian native foods.
- **The Daintree Rainforest:** Dining experiences in a rainforest setting combine regional produce with the surrounding natural environment.

These examples demonstrate how food can encourage visitors to travel beyond a single city and spend time in regional destinations. They also provide opportunities for tourism operators to connect restaurants, local producers, guided experiences, and accommodation within a single itinerary.

1.3.4. Participatory Cultural, Indigenous and Nature-Based Experiences

Australia - Indigenous culture, food production and nature-based participation

Experiences offered to visitors:

- **Aboriginal-led cultural experiences:** Visitors join Indigenous guides to learn about traditional knowledge, bush foods, local ecosystems, storytelling, art and cultural practices. Tourism Australia's Discover Aboriginal Experiences collective brings together more than 200 Indigenous-led experiences.
- **Bush food foraging:** In places such as the Daintree Rainforest, visitors can join Indigenous guides to learn traditional foraging and spearfishing techniques.
- **Oyster farm experiences:** On the Hawkesbury River, visitors can visit working oyster farms, learn about oyster cultivation and harvest practices, and shuck and taste fresh oysters themselves.

Relevance and potential applications for Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka could develop experiences that allow tourists to participate in traditional livelihoods and food production, including:

- Guided visits to tea estates, where visitors participate in tea plucking and learn the process of tea production.
- Cinnamon experiences in the Southern Province, including demonstrations of cinnamon peeling, processing and product preparation.
- Community-led experiences with traditional fishing communities, including demonstrations of lagoon fishing and seafood preparation.
- Indigenous cultural experiences developed in consultation with Vedda communities, with their consent and control over how their cultural knowledge is presented.

The important lesson is to make local knowledge and livelihoods part of the tourism product, rather than presenting communities merely as attractions.

1.3.5. Visitor access, costs, and practical considerations

Australia's tourism infrastructure supports road trips, guided excursions, walking experiences, marine tours, and stays in regional destinations. However, the distances between attractions can be substantial. A visitor planning to combine Sydney, the Great Barrier Reef, and Uluru, for example, needs to account for domestic transport, travel time, and accommodation costs rather than assuming that these attractions are close to one another.

The country offers different expenditure levels through hostels, camping, caravan parks, standard hotels, and premium lodges. Nevertheless, long-distance transport, remote-area transfers, guided excursions, and island accommodation can significantly increase the total cost of a holiday. Australia's value proposition is therefore better described as **a broad choice of experiences and accommodation standards**, rather than as a low-cost destination.

For safety and visitor confidence, itinerary planning should account for local conditions, particularly in remote areas, national parks, and marine environments. Visitors should follow park guidance, use appropriate operators for marine activities, and consider seasonal conditions when planning long-distance journeys.

Why Australia is worth visiting from a destination-product perspective: Australia can offer a traveler several distinct experiences within one national itinerary: coral-reef activities, coastal road trips, wildlife observation, Indigenous-guided cultural experiences, regional food, and remote-landscape accommodation. Its advantage is the combination of these experiences with facilities and organized activities that help visitors access them.

1.4. Major Tourism Promotion Fairs and Events

1. G'day Australia 2026 - Darwin, Northern Territory

Organizer: Tourism Australia, in partnership with Tourism and Events Northern Territory
Dates: 13 - 15 October 2026
Venue: Darwin Convention Centre, Darwin/Garramilla
Primary audience: International travel agents who have completed Tourism Australia's Aussie Specialist Program, together with Australian tourism businesses.

G'day Australia is a destination-promotion event designed to strengthen the ability of international travel agents to sell Australian holidays. Unlike a public tourism festival, it is an industry-focused programme combining scheduled business meetings, product training, networking, and destination familiarization.

For the 2026 edition, Tourism Australia announced participation by approximately 300 qualified Aussie Specialist travel agents from international markets. The programme brings these agents into direct contact with Australian tourism businesses, enabling them to learn about accommodation, tours, transport, dining, and regional visitor experiences.

The event's trade-show format allows international agents to meet Australian suppliers at designated booths through scheduled appointments. These meetings provide an opportunity for tourism operators to explain their products, answer questions about itineraries and services, and establish commercial relationships with agents who may subsequently recommend or sell their products to travelers.

The familiarization component

A distinctive feature of G'day Australia is that the programme extends beyond the convention venue. Participating agents can take part in pre-event or post-event familiarization itineraries supported by Australia's state and territory tourism organizations.

The purpose is to allow agents to experience Australian tourism products directly rather than relying solely on brochures, online information, or presentations. Depending on their assigned itinerary, participants can become familiar with regional attractions, accommodation, cultural experiences, and tourism services that they may later recommend to clients.

Darwin's role as host also creates an opportunity to introduce the Northern Territory to international travel sellers. This matters because travel agents who are familiar with a destination beyond its best-known cities may be better positioned to recommend regional itineraries and extend visitor spending beyond established tourism gateways.

Tourism-marketing significance: G'day Australia connects destination promotion with the people responsible for selling holidays. Its value lies in building product knowledge, facilitating direct contact between Australian suppliers and overseas travel sellers, and allowing those sellers to experience tourism products firsthand.

Important distinction: G'day Australia is an industry training and familiarization event, not a general-public tourism fair. It should not be described as an event where ordinary tourists can simply purchase admission and participate in all activities.

1.5. Creative agencies and international media procurement

Tourism Australia's international marketing activities demonstrate the importance of appointing specialist agencies through structured procurement arrangements.

Creative and digital agencies

In July 2024, Tourism Australia appointed the following agencies to a panel for integrated global creative and digital services:

- Accenture Song
- The Monkeys
- Droga5

The arrangement was structured around an initial three-year contract, with options for two additional one-year extensions.

These agencies provide capabilities associated with campaign strategy, creative development, advertising concepts, digital content and the adaptation of campaign material for different markets.

The Monkeys has also been associated with the development and extension of Australian tourism campaign creative.

Media planning and buying

Tourism Australia's media-buying arrangements have included UM (Universal McCann), which has been associated with media strategy, planning and buying.

Media agencies perform a different function from creative agencies. They determine where advertisements should appear, which audiences should be targeted, how expenditure should be allocated and how campaign delivery should be assessed.

Digital infrastructure

Digitas has been associated with digital user-experience services and web infrastructure, including Adobe Experience Manager.

This illustrates how destination marketing requires more than the production of promotional videos. International visitors also need accessible websites, relevant destination information, campaign landing pages and digital pathways through which they can explore and plan their holidays.

Public relations

International public relations arrangements associated with Tourism Australia's marketing operations have included:

- Poem, associated with global public relations.
- opr, an agency associated with Ogilvy PR.
- FORWARD.
- Weber Shandwick.

The relevant roles may differ by market, campaign and contract period. A current procurement review should establish the agency responsible for each market and the precise scope of its appointment.

The broader lesson is that creative production, media buying, public relations and digital infrastructure should be treated as distinct professional functions, even when they are coordinated within a single global marketing strategy.

1.6. International television and digital streaming

Australia uses international broadcast and digital entertainment platforms to bring destination stories to audiences who may not be actively searching for holiday advertisements.

Netflix and destination storytelling

Tourism Australia's earlier international promotional activities included collaboration with Netflix on a travel-focused series showcasing Australian destinations and tourism operators.

The initiative used a long-form entertainment format to introduce international viewers to Australian landscapes, experiences and sustainable tourism businesses.

The distinction between this format and a conventional advertisement is significant. A television commercial may communicate a destination's main selling points in seconds, while a travel series can show how visitors actually experience a destination.

For Sri Lanka, comparable content could follow a traveller through the island's tea country, cultural heritage sites, wildlife destinations, coastal towns and culinary experiences. The objective would be to develop an engaging story that introduces several tourism products within a coherent narrative.

The precise audience figures and commercial terms of individual streaming partnerships should be verified before being used to calculate campaign performance.

NBC and late-night television

Australian tourism promotion has also gained exposure through international entertainment programming, including appearances associated with NBC's The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon.

Such appearances can introduce a destination to audiences who would not necessarily encounter a tourism advertisement during ordinary travel research.

However, an appearance or programme segment should be distinguished from a paid advertising placement. Its value depends on the nature of the arrangement, audience exposure, subsequent publicity and whether the content generates measurable interest in visiting Australia.

Digital and social media

Tourism Australia's international campaigns also use digital video, social media, campaign websites and market-specific content.

These channels allow the organization to:

- Distribute shorter versions of campaign films.
- Adapt creative material to different languages and audiences.
- Promote individual destinations and experiences.

- Retarget people who have already engaged with campaign content.
- Direct interested travellers towards tourism operators and booking platforms.

1.7. International outdoor advertising

Australia has used high-visibility outdoor advertising to reinforce its destination brand in major international cities.

A notable example associated with the Come and Say G'day campaign involved three-dimensional digital out-of-home advertising in Seoul, South Korea.

The campaign featured Ruby the Kangaroo in a visually distinctive installation intended to attract attention in a busy urban environment. The reported launch reach exceeded 930,000 consumers.

The purpose of such advertising is not merely to display a tourism slogan. The creative execution is designed to attract attention, encourage social sharing and make the destination recognizable in a competitive urban media environment.

Potential outdoor advertising formats include:

- Large digital billboards in commercial districts.
- Three-dimensional digital installations.
- Airport advertising.
- Railway and metro advertising.
- Bus and taxi branding.
- Digital screens in shopping centres.
- Outdoor advertising around major cultural and sporting events.

For Sri Lanka, outdoor advertising should be selected according to the source market, audience profile, season and intended campaign objective. A high-cost installation may create visibility, but its commercial value should be assessed alongside reach, digital engagement, website traffic and subsequent travel enquiries.

1.8. Leading Tourism Promotion, Public Relations and Communications Companies Working with Australian Government Tourism Bodies

Australia's international tourism promotion involves a combination of government tourism organizations and specialist private-sector agencies. These agencies provide creative and digital services, media planning and buying, destination marketing, public relations, travel-trade representation, content production and promotional campaign management.

At the national level, Tourism Australia engages specialist agencies to support its international marketing activities. State and territory tourism organizations also work with external agencies to promote regional destinations, cultural experiences, tourism events and visitor attractions.

The following companies illustrate the different roles played by private-sector agencies in Australia's tourism promotion framework.

1.8.1. Publicis Media Australia (Zenith Media)

Company profile

Publicis Media Australia, trading as Zenith Media, is a media agency responsible for media strategy, planning and buying. Its work involves identifying appropriate advertising channels, selecting target audiences, allocating advertising expenditure and supporting the delivery of marketing campaigns.

Government relationship

On 25 June 2026, Tourism Australia announced that Publicis Media Australia had been appointed to provide media services under an initial three-year agreement commencing in July 2026. The contract has a maximum potential value of AUD 189 million and includes options for two additional one-year extensions.

The appointment followed a competitive tender process conducted in accordance with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules.

Scope of services

The appointment supports Tourism Australia's international media program, including campaigns such as *Come and Say G'day*. The agency's responsibilities relate to the media services required to communicate Australia's tourism brand to international audiences.

Relevant activities include:

- International media strategy and planning.
- Media buying and advertising placement.
- Audience targeting across international markets.
- Allocation and management of campaign media expenditure.

- Supporting the distribution of tourism advertising through appropriate media channels.
- Contributing to the delivery of Tourism Australia's international marketing campaigns.

Documented promotional activity

Tourism Australia's *Come and Say G'day* campaign uses market-specific creative content to promote Australia as a holiday destination. The August 2025 installment featured personalities associated with several international markets, including Robert Irwin in the United States, Nigella Lawson in the United Kingdom, Yosh Yu in China, Sara Tendulkar in India and Abareru-kun in Japan.

Tourism Australia reported that this campaign installment had generated close to AUD 400 million in earned media value and more than one billion views.

These figures were reported by Tourism Australia and relate to the campaign's reported performance; they should not be interpreted as independently audited results.

Relevance to tourism promotion

The Zenith appointment demonstrates how a national tourism organization can engage a specialist media agency through a formal procurement process to support international advertising and destination marketing.

The relationship provides a documented example of a private agency delivering media services for a national government tourism marketing organization.

1.8.2. Accenture Song

Company profile

Accenture Song is the creative, marketing and digital business of Accenture. Its capabilities include creative strategy, campaign development, digital marketing, customer experience and technology-enabled marketing services.

Government relationship

On 9 July 2024, Tourism Australia announced the appointment of Accenture Song, The Monkeys and Droga5 to a panel providing integrated global creative and digital services.

The arrangement commenced in July 2024 and was structured as an initial three-year contract with options for two additional one-year extensions, allowing a potential total term of five years.

Scope of services

The appointment was intended to support Tourism Australia's international creative and digital marketing activities.

Relevant capabilities include:

- Creative and campaign strategy.
- Development of advertising concepts.
- Production and adaptation of promotional content.
- Digital marketing and customer-experience services.
- Development of creative material for international audiences.
- Coordination of creative and digital capabilities within Tourism Australia's global marketing activities.

Documented promotional activity

Tourism Australia identified the three agencies as partners intended to help communicate Australia's tourism offering internationally and strengthen the country's presence in key overseas markets.

The announcement referred to Tourism Australia's global marketing activities across 15 key international markets.

The appointment forms part of the agency's broader approach of combining creative development and digital capabilities to support its international destination brand.

Relevance to tourism promotion

Accenture Song demonstrates how a national tourism organization can engage a major creative and digital services provider to support international destination marketing.

Its role differs from that of a dedicated PR agency because the appointment specifically concerns integrated creative and digital services.

1.8.3. The Monkeys

Company profile

The Monkeys is an Australian creative agency that operates as part of Accenture Song. Its work includes advertising concepts, creative campaigns, brand storytelling and the development of promotional material.

Government relationship

The Monkeys was appointed alongside Accenture Song and Droga5 to Tourism Australia's global creative and digital services panel in July 2024.

The appointment followed a competitive tender process and formed part of the arrangement covering an initial three-year period, with options for two additional one-year extensions.

Scope of services

The agency's relevant capabilities include:

- Creative development for tourism advertising.
- Campaign concepts and destination storytelling.
- Promotional content for international markets.
- Adaptation of creative material to market-specific audiences.
- Development of campaign assets designed to communicate Australia's tourism experiences.

Documented promotional activity

Tourism Australia's *Come and Say G'day* campaign provides an example of creative work developed with The Monkeys.

In November 2024, Tourism Australia publicized *Howzat for a holiday?*, a cricket-themed promotional initiative associated with Australian cricket captain Pat Cummins. The campaign was designed to appeal particularly to audiences in India and the United Kingdom by connecting cricket with the experience of visiting Australia.

Tourism Australia identified The Monkeys, part of Accenture Song, as its creative agency for the initiative.

The campaign used the popularity of cricket to introduce audiences to Australian destinations and experiences, linking a familiar sporting interest with international holiday promotion.

Relevance to tourism promotion

The Monkeys illustrates how a creative agency can translate a national tourism brand into market-specific promotional campaigns. Its work demonstrates the use of sport, personalities and destination storytelling to connect tourism advertising with the interests of prospective visitors.

1.8.4. Droga5

Company profile

Droga5 is an international creative advertising agency within Accenture Song. It develops advertising campaigns, brand communications and creative concepts for organizations operating in different markets.

Government relationship

Droga5 was appointed to Tourism Australia's global creative and digital services panel alongside Accenture Song and The Monkeys in July 2024.

The appointment was announced following a competitive procurement process.

Scope of services

The relevant capabilities associated with the appointment include:

- Creative advertising development.
- International campaign concepts.
- Brand communication and storytelling.
- Promotional material for different media formats.
- Creative support for destination marketing across international markets.

Documented government appointment

Tourism Australia's announcement confirms Droga5's appointment to the creative and digital services panel. The announcement identifies the collective capabilities of the three agencies as part of Tourism Australia's approach to international marketing.

The appointment establishes a documented relationship between Droga5 and Australia's national tourism marketing organization. It does not, by itself, establish that Droga5 independently manages all Tourism Australia campaigns or public relations activities.

Relevance to tourism promotion

Droga5 represents the creative advertising component of Australia's international tourism promotion system. Its appointment illustrates how a government tourism organization can procure specialist creative capabilities to support the development of a recognizable national brand and international advertising campaigns.

1.8.5. Access PR

Company profile

Access PR is an independent Australian communications agency established in 2008. It works across public relations, strategic communications, media relations, destination publicity, events and organizational communications.

Its tourism-related work includes destination promotion and publicity for major events.

Government relationship

Access PR identifies Tourism and Events NT as a client for which it has served as PR agency of record since 2017.

Tourism and Events NT is the Northern Territory's tourism and events promotion organization. Access PR reports managing ongoing destination publicity and major-event PR across Australia and New Zealand.

This is a documented relationship with a territory-level tourism organization rather than a national contract with Tourism Australia.

Scope of services

Access PR's published tourism work includes:

- Communications strategy and implementation.
- Proactive and reactive media relations.
- Publicity and destination storytelling.
- Planning and hosting familiarization visits for media representatives.
- Content creation.
- Ambassador projects.
- Publicity for major tourism events.
- Communications involving Aboriginal cultures, communities, creatives and talent.

Documented promotional activities

Access PR identifies several major events promoted through its work with Tourism and Events NT:

- **Parrtjima:** An Aboriginal light festival that showcases Indigenous art, culture and storytelling.
- **BASSINTHEGRASS:** A major music festival in the Northern Territory.
- **MXGP Australia:** An international motocross event.
- **Million Dollar Fish:** A fishing-based tourism promotion and competition.
- **Betr Darwin Triple Crown:** A major motorsport event associated with Darwin.

The agency reports providing publicity and communications support for these events alongside broader destination promotion for the Northern Territory.

Its work involves media engagement and the development of content that presents the territory as a destination for holidays, cultural experiences and business events.

Relevance to tourism promotion

Access PR demonstrates how a government tourism organization can use an external communications agency to maintain ongoing media coverage while promoting individual events and regional experiences.

Its approach combines destination publicity, media familiarization, content creation and event communications rather than relying exclusively on paid advertising.

1.8.6. Progressive PR

Company profile

Progressive PR is an Australian public relations agency with a specialist travel and tourism practice. Its work covers destinations, visitor attractions, events and travel-related experiences.

The agency identifies media relations as a core capability and supplements media publicity with influencer engagement, hosted media events and familiarization visits.

Tourism-sector relationship

Progressive PR identifies itself as the retained PR agency for Grampians Tourism, a regional tourism organization in Victoria.

It also reports having worked on a campaign basis with several Australian tourism destinations and visitor attractions.

The published relationship with Grampians Tourism is evidence of regional destination PR work; it should not be confused with a direct national-government contract with Tourism Australia.

Scope of services

Progressive PR's tourism-related activities include:

- Destination publicity and media relations.
- Regional and national PR campaigns.
- Seasonal media releases.
- Familiarization visits for journalists.
- Influencer engagement.
- Media events.
- Publicity for tourism attractions and experiences.
- Engagement with travel, lifestyle, food, arts, family and tourism-industry media.

Documented promotional activity: Grampians Tourism, 2023

In 2023, Progressive PR reported undertaking five major PR campaigns for Grampians Tourism, alongside seasonal media releases and familiarization visits.

The campaigns aimed to increase awareness of the region and encourage visitation. The agency developed story ideas and pitched them to metropolitan, regional and national media outlets.

Reported coverage included:

- *Australian Women's Weekly*.
- *Delicious*.
- *Country Style*.

- *Take 5*.
- *Herald Sun*.
- *Escape*.
- Sky News.
- Channel 9's *Postcards*.
- Channel 10's *Must Do Melbourne*.

The agency reported an estimated reach of 11.2 million across its 2023 activities and an advertising space rate of approximately AUD 2 million. These are agency-reported results and should be identified as such.

Progressive PR has also identified work involving attractions such as Luna Park, Eureka Skydeck, Sydney Harbour BridgeClimb, Sovereign Hill and Puffing Billy Railway.

Relevance to tourism promotion

Progressive PR demonstrates how regional tourism organizations can use specialist PR agencies to secure publicity for destinations and attractions.

Its approach emphasizes editorial coverage, journalist familiarization visits and targeted storytelling to encourage potential visitors to explore destinations beyond Australia's best-known cities.

1.8.7. dtb! Advertising

Company profile

dtb! Advertising is an Australian destination and tourism marketing agency. It works with tourism operators, destination organizations, councils and government agencies to develop campaigns intended to increase visitation, visitor spending and awareness of tourism experiences.

The company reports more than 20 years of experience in destination marketing.

Government relationship

dtb! has a documented relationship with Tourism & Events Queensland, the Queensland Government's tourism marketing and destination-development organization.

The agency's published case study identifies it as Tourism & Events Queensland's official advertising sales agency from 2015 to 2020. Its current destination-marketing webpage also describes its relationship with Tourism & Events Queensland as extending for more than five years.

The documented historical case study provides specific evidence of work undertaken for the Queensland tourism organization.

Scope of services

The company's tourism marketing capabilities include:

- Destination marketing and campaign strategy.
- Advertising sales and media placement.
- Digital tourism marketing.
- Visitor guides.
- Social media marketing.
- Video production.
- Public relations.
- Destination content development.
- Marketing plans tailored to regional tourism organizations.
- Industry and stakeholder engagement.
- Lead generation and promotional support.

Documented promotional activities

During its work with Tourism & Events Queensland, dtb! supported tourism marketing across 13 regional tourism organization areas.

The published case study identifies activities including:

- Development of marketing and campaign strategies.
- Media planning and buying.
- Advertising sales.
- Campaigns tailored to different regions and target audiences.
- Development of an online portal through which regional tourism organizations could view campaigns, submit media-planning briefs, access advertising guidelines, and book and pay for advertising placements.
- Collaboration with media organizations and publishers.
- Coordination of marketing activity across Queensland and other relevant markets.

The case study describes the objective as helping Queensland's tourism industry achieve more targeted media placement, improved media-buying rates and more measurable campaign performance.

Relevance to tourism promotion

dtb! provides an example of how a state-level tourism organization can work with an external marketing agency to coordinate advertising, support regional tourism bodies and promote destinations through a combination of media planning, digital marketing, visitor information and PR.

Its documented work demonstrates how tourism promotion can be organized across multiple regional destinations rather than focusing exclusively on a single city or attraction.

1.8.8. GTI Tourism

Company profile

GTI Tourism is an Australian tourism marketing, destination representation and public relations agency established in 2006.

The agency works with national tourism offices, hotels, airlines, tour operators and accommodation providers. Its services cover destination marketing, PR, travel-trade representation, content production, social media and business-event marketing.

Documented relationship with Tourism Australia

GTI Tourism states that it launched its destination marketing and PR division in 2008, with Tourism Australia, Vanuatu, Kenya and Papua New Guinea among its clients at that time.

This establishes a historical client relationship with Tourism Australia. The published company history does not, by itself, establish that GTI Tourism currently holds a national tourism promotion contract with the Australian Government.

Scope of services

GTI Tourism's published services include:

- **Public relations:** Media relations, press-office support, campaign strategy, journalist engagement and destination publicity.
- **Destination representation:** Representing tourism destinations and products in target markets.
- **Travel-trade marketing:** Engaging travel agents, wholesalers, online travel agencies and other travel sellers.
- **Familiarization visits:** Organizing visits for journalists, influencers and tourism-industry representatives.
- **Content marketing:** Developing videos, photography, written content and other promotional material.
- **Social media management:** Developing content and managing engagement across social platforms.
- **Consumer marketing:** Planning and implementing integrated promotional campaigns.
- **Brand partnerships and ambassadors:** Connecting destinations and tourism products with relevant personalities and partner organizations.
- **Business-event marketing:** Promoting destinations, accommodation and venues to conference organizers and business-event planners.

Documented tourism-sector activities

GTI Tourism's published portfolio includes work for national tourism offices and international travel brands.

Examples include:

- **Vanuatu Tourism Office:** The agency reports winning a competitive bid to host the television travel program *Travel Guides* in Vanuatu and negotiating the use of cast images and quotations for a subsequent digital advertising campaign.
- **New Caledonia Tourism:** Its published work includes campaigns using music, destination content, influencer activity and television-related publicity to increase awareness of New Caledonia among Australian and New Zealand audiences.
- **Singapore Tourism Board:** GTI reports providing sales representation in Victoria in 2023, engaging travel-trade and business-events contacts through sales visits, training, partner events and industry activities.

These examples demonstrate GTI Tourism's experience working with tourism organizations and destination brands. They should not be interpreted as evidence that all these activities were undertaken under contracts with the Australian Government.

Relevance to tourism promotion

GTI Tourism illustrates the role of a specialist agency in connecting destination marketing with travel distribution, media publicity and tourism-industry relationships.

Its combination of PR, travel-trade representation, familiarization visits, digital content and consumer marketing provides an example of how tourism agencies can support destination awareness and encourage prospective visitors to consider booking a holiday.

1.9. Market-specific ambassadors and the Friends of Australia programme

Australia uses a combination of a central campaign character and personalities who are familiar to individual international markets.

The Friends of Australia programme brings together influential people from areas such as sport, food, fashion, entertainment, environmental advocacy, business and the arts.

The network has been described as comprising more than 180 advocates. Its purpose is to extend the destination brand through individuals who can communicate with different audiences.

Sara Tendulkar - India

Sara Tendulkar has been associated with Tourism Australia's promotional activities targeting India and the wider Friends of Australia initiative.

Her public profile provides an opportunity to reach audiences familiar with her in the Indian market.

The broader strategy is to select a personality whose existing audience matches the intended tourism segment, rather than selecting a celebrity solely because of international fame.

Market-specific personalities

The 2025 chapter of Come and Say G'day featured personalities for different markets.

Target market	Personality
United States	Robert Irwin, wildlife conservationist
United Kingdom	Nigella Lawson, food writer and television personality
China	Yosh Yu, actor
India	Sara Tendulkar
Japan	Abareru-kun, comedian and media personality

Australian actor Thomas Weatherall also featured in the campaign's creative material.

The campaign's announced investment was A$130 million in August 2025. This amount relates to the announced campaign investment and should not be treated as a standard annual advertising budget for all Tourism Australia activities.

The principal lesson is that destination marketing can be adapted to different cultural interests. Wildlife may be a useful entry point in one market, food in another and contemporary entertainment in a third.

1.10. Qantas Airways and airline co-marketing

Tourism Australia's relationship with Qantas Airways, the national carrier, demonstrates how tourism advertising can be integrated into the travel experience.

Campaign films and promotional assets associated with Come and Say G'day have been integrated into Qantas inflight entertainment and airline marketing activities.

Such arrangements allow the destination brand to reach passengers while they are travelling, considering holidays or engaging with airline content.

Potential airline promotional activities include:

- Destination films in inflight entertainment systems.
- Co-branded advertising.
- Joint digital campaigns.
- Destination pages on airline websites.
- Travel-package promotions.
- Campaigns targeting the airline's customer database.
- Familiarization trips for airline and travel-industry representatives.
- Joint participation in tourism exhibitions.

Tourism Australia also maintains strategic partnerships with seven major international airline groups:

1. Qantas Airways.
2. Singapore Airlines.
3. Qatar Airways.
4. China Southern Airlines.
5. China Eastern Airlines.
6. Air China.
7. Sichuan Airlines.

The partnerships support joint marketing and the development of access to Australia through priority international markets.

The agency also works with other airlines on market-specific initiatives.

For Sri Lanka, this model is relevant because tourism marketing and aviation connectivity should be planned together. A campaign in a particular country is more useful when travellers can identify convenient flight options and access bookable holiday packages.

1.11. International travel distribution and the Aussie Specialist Program

Australia has developed a structured system for educating overseas travel agents about the destination.

The Aussie Specialist Program is an online training platform through which international travel agents can learn about Australian destinations, tourism products and experiences.

The programme helps participating agents build destination knowledge and improve their ability to recommend Australian holidays.

Its broader commercial framework connects travel-agent education with Tourism Australia's distribution partnerships and marketing activities. Eligible partners may receive trade support or participate in cooperative marketing arrangements under the relevant programme conditions.

Tourism Australia also reports working with more than 140 key distribution partners, including wholesalers, retailers and online travel agencies.

These partnerships are selected according to factors such as strategic alignment, target audiences, shared marketing investment, staff training and commitment to selling Australian tourism products.

The model creates a direct relationship between destination promotion and the businesses responsible for selling holidays.

Application to Sri Lanka

A Sri Lankan equivalent could include:

- An online destination-training portal for overseas travel agents.
- Short modules on cultural heritage, wildlife, beaches, tea country, wellness and adventure tourism.
- A directory of licensed Sri Lankan tourism businesses.
- Downloadable itinerary and destination resources.
- Periodic online briefings for overseas travel sellers.
- Certification for agents who complete the training.
- Eligibility for selected cooperative marketing opportunities based on clearly defined criteria.

Such a programme would help ensure that agents recommending Sri Lanka possess accurate knowledge of its tourism products and practical travel arrangements.

1.12. International media hosting and the Australian Tourism Exchange

Tourism Australia operates an International Media Hosting Program for journalists, broadcasters and digital creators.

The programme targets media from markets including Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Participants may be selected for their ability to reach audiences relevant to Australian tourism.

The programme includes several categories:

- **Media familiarizations:** Newspapers, magazines, travel writers, wire services, radio and online publications.
- **Broadcast familiarizations:** Television crews and producers developing audiovisual content.
- **Influencer familiarizations**: Digital creators with audiences relevant to Australian tourism.

Itineraries are developed around the editorial interests of participating media. A wildlife publication may be offered a different itinerary from a food magazine or a luxury travel programme.

G'day Stories - South Australia, March 2026

Tourism Australia's G'day Stories programme brought together 38 media representatives and content creators from 11 international markets in South Australia.

Named publications included:

- Travel + Leisure
- Esquire
- Le Parisien
- National Geographic Traveler China
- The Straits Times
- Epicure

The programme involved a three-day event, with familiarization itineraries before and after the main programme. More than 50 different itineraries were reported across Australia's states and territories.

The programme was associated with international media engagement leading up to the Australian Tourism Exchange.

Australian Tourism Exchange

The Australian Tourism Exchange is a major business-to-business event connecting Australian tourism businesses with international travel buyers.

The 2025 programme in Brisbane included:

- Scheduled business appointments.
- An International Media Marketplace in partnership with TravMedia.
- Destination presentations.
- Press updates and networking.
- Pre-event and post-event familiarization tours.
- Meetings between international media and Australian tourism operators.

Eligible media delegates received support under the programme's published arrangements, which included specified travel and accommodation benefits.

The important feature is the integration of media exposure, product familiarization and direct commercial contact.

1.13. Key lessons from Australia

Australia demonstrates that an international tourism marketing programme can be organized around a consistent brand while allowing considerable flexibility in the execution.

The most transferable practices for Sri Lanka are:

1. Establish a recognizable national campaign identity.
2. Adapt the creative content to the interests of individual source markets.
3. Appoint specialist agencies for creative development, media buying, public relations and digital services.
4. Negotiate structured airline co-marketing agreements.
5. Develop a professional training programme for overseas travel agents.
6. Maintain a formal international media-hosting programme.
7. Connect familiarization tours to tourism trade events and commercial appointments.
8. Measure campaign results using more than advertising reach alone.

2. THAILAND: SOFT POWER, CELEBRITY ADVOCACY AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISM PROMOTION



2.1. Institutional structure and campaign identity

Thailand's principal tourism marketing organization is the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), operating under the Ministry of Tourism and Sports.

Its international destination brand is Amazing Thailand. Over time, TAT has developed different campaign themes to address changing traveller interests, including:

- Amazing Thailand.
- Amazing Thailand: New Chapters.
- Open to the New Shades.
- Amazing Thailand: Your Stories Never End.
- BE MY GUEST.
- Amazing Thailand Beyond Experience.
- Thais Always Care.

These campaigns serve different purposes. Some promote the country as a general holiday destination, while others emphasize specific experiences, visitor segments, cultural activities or service-related messages.

Thailand's promotional approach is closely associated with its soft-power strategy, which emphasizes five principal areas:

1. Food - Thai cuisine, culinary experiences and food tourism.
2. Film - Cinema, television productions and film-induced tourism.
3. Fashion - Thai design, fashion and lifestyle.
4. Festival - Cultural celebrations and major events.
5. Fight - Muay Thai and associated sports tourism.

This approach allows Thailand to promote the country through experiences that already have international recognition.

2.2. Major International Tourist Source Markets

Thailand attracts international visitors from neighboring Southeast Asian countries, China, South Asia, East Asia and Europe. According to Thailand's Ministry of Tourism and Sports, the country received approximately 32.97 million international visitors in 2025.

The ten leading international source markets by visitor arrivals in 2025 were:

Rank	Country	Visitor Arrivals
1	Malaysia	4,520,856
2	China	4,473,992
3	India	2,487,319
4	Russia	1,898,837
5	South Korea	1,555,227
6	Japan	1,091,227
7	United Kingdom	1,083,162
8	United States	1,081,929
9	Taiwan	987,633
10	Singapore	967,341

Source: Thailand's Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2025 international tourist arrival statistics.

Malaysia and China were Thailand's two largest source markets, each generating approximately 4.5 million visitor arrivals. India ranked third, with approximately 2.49 million visitors, followed by Russia and South Korea.

The composition of these markets demonstrates Thailand's substantial regional visitor base, particularly in Southeast and East Asia, alongside established demand from India, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. These markets provide an important reference point for examining how Thailand adapts its tourism campaigns to different geographical audiences.

2.3. Tourism Infrastructure, Destination Appeal and Signature Experiences - Thailand

Thailand's appeal lies in the range of holidays visitors can construct within one country: a large-city stay, a northern mountain itinerary, a forest-based excursion, a beach holiday, or a combination of these. Its tourism product is supported by a wide range of accommodation and visitor services, allowing destinations to serve different budgets and travel styles. Rather than treating all of Thailand as a single beach destination, its distinct regions offer different reasons to visit.

2.3.1. Northern Thailand: Mountain landscapes and locally rooted stays

Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai combines mountain scenery, temples, local markets, botanical attractions, and Lanna cultural heritage. Visitors can explore Wat Phra That Doi Suthep, visit Doi Inthanon, browse Thapae Walking Street, and experience local food and handicrafts. The city also functions as a base for trips into surrounding rural areas.

Mae Kampong: This village in Chiang Mai Province is associated with ecotourism and homestay experiences. Staying in or visiting a village setting gives travelers a different experience from a conventional city hotel: the itinerary can include village walks, local food, forest surroundings, and interaction with the community.

Doi Inthanon: The mountain area offers cooler conditions, forest landscapes, walking opportunities, and viewpoints. It provides an alternative for visitors who want to combine a northern city stay with outdoor activities.

The appeal of northern Thailand is therefore not just its scenery. The combination of established visitor services in Chiang Mai and excursions into mountain and village environments enables travelers to choose between convenience and a more locally rooted experience.

2.3.2. Southern Thailand: Beaches, islands, and marine activities

Ko Lanta, Krabi Province: Ko Lanta offers a comparatively relaxed island environment with several beaches, forested hills, waterfalls, and access to marine activities. The Tourism Authority of Thailand identifies Tanod Cape Viewpoint, Baan Sangka U Sea Gypsy House, and the island's coastal areas among its highlights. Its accommodation and activity options make it suitable for families, couples, independent travelers, and divers.

Ko Ngai, Ko Kradan, and Ko Muk: These islands near Ko Lanta offer opportunities for beach stays, snorkeling, and a quieter island experience. Their appeal is distinct from a holiday centered on a major city: visitors can organize a stay around time on the water and access to smaller island environments.

The Ko Lanta National Park area: The southern part of Ko Lanta provides access to the national park headquarters and lighthouse, combining coastal scenery with a designated protected area.

Thailand's island offering should not be described as uniform. Some locations are developed and provide extensive accommodation and visitor services, while others are more appropriate for travelers seeking quieter surroundings. This variety allows the destination to accommodate different preferences without claiming that every island provides the same experience.

2.3.3. Accommodation and the range of travel budgets

Thailand's accommodation options include city hotels, boutique properties, island resorts, guesthouses, and simpler accommodation for independent travelers. The practical appeal is the ability to combine different standards of accommodation within one trip, for example, a city hotel in Bangkok, a locally oriented stay in northern Thailand, and a beach property in the south.

This flexibility matters to visitors comparing total holiday costs. A traveler does not necessarily have to book a resort for the entire stay; the choice of location, room standard, transport, and activities determines the overall budget. However, prices vary according to season, location, and property category. Thailand should therefore be described as offering **a range of price points**, not as universally inexpensive.

For a destination-planning perspective, the range of accommodation is especially useful when constructing packages for different visitor segments: family holidays, independent travel, short city breaks, and longer regional itineraries.

2.3.4. Food experiences and local dining environments

Thailand's food offering can be experienced through everyday local dining, specialist restaurants, markets, and regional dishes.

- **Chiang Mai:** Khao soi, a northern Thai curry-noodle dish, provides a specific regional food experience.
- **Bangkok:** Markets such as Khlong Lat Mayom Floating Market provide opportunities to explore local food and market culture.
- **Chiang Mai's Thapae Walking Street:** The market environment combines local food, shopping, and handmade products.
- **Regional dining:** Visitors can encounter different ingredients, cooking traditions, and flavors as they move between northern and southern Thailand.

These experiences give travelers reasons to explore neighborhoods and regional centers beyond major sightseeing stops. They also create direct opportunities for local restaurants,

market vendors, and small businesses to benefit from visitor spending. The official Tourism Authority of Thailand lists local food destinations, restaurants, and markets in its visitor information.

2.3.5. Participatory Culinary, Agricultural and Craft Experiences

Cooking, handicrafts and agricultural participation

Experiences offered to visitors:

- **Thai cooking classes:** Tourists learn to prepare traditional Thai dishes, often with local instructors and ingredients sourced from local markets.
- **Agricultural participation:** Community tourism programmes allow visitors to experience rice harvesting, collect vegetables and herbs, visit plantations and learn about traditional agricultural practices.
- **Traditional handicraft workshops:** Visitors can participate in weaving, basket-making, tie-dyeing and other local craft activities.
- **Pottery-making:** Thailand's tourism product platform features community-based pottery workshops where visitors learn from local potters and create their own pieces.

Relevance and potential applications for Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka could develop similar visitor-participation programmes through:

- Traditional Sri Lankan cooking classes, including preparation of rice and curry, hoppers, string hoppers, sambols and regional dishes.
- Paddy-field experiences in rural villages, allowing visitors to participate in selected stages of traditional rice cultivation.
- Pottery workshops in traditional pottery communities, where tourists can shape and decorate their own clay products.
- Batik-making, handloom weaving, Dumbara weaving and traditional mask-carving workshops.
- Village-based programmes where tourists visit local markets, collect ingredients and prepare a traditional meal with a host family.

This would create tourism products around Sri Lanka's existing cultural and agricultural resources while providing income opportunities for local communities.

2.3.6. Practical access and visitor considerations

Thailand's range of established tourism destinations allows travelers to combine city, mountain, and island stays, but the practicality of each itinerary depends on the transport connections and travel time involved. Visitors should check transfer arrangements when traveling between mainland gateways and islands and should use reputable operators for boat excursions and outdoor activities.

Safety should not be expressed as a blanket claim that every part of the country is safe. Visitors need to consider local travel advice, road conditions, sea conditions, weather, and the suitability of activities for their experience level. In destinations such as Ko Lanta, visitors should also respect protected areas and follow local guidance for marine activities.

Why Thailand is worth visiting from a destination-product perspective: Thailand combines a well-established range of visitor services with markedly different regional experiences. A visitor can choose northern mountain and village stays, city-based food and market experiences, or southern island holidays. The strength of the offer is the ability to combine these products and adjust the accommodation standard and itinerary to suit different budgets.

2.4. Amazing Thailand: Your Stories Never End

On 11 November 2024, TAT announced a television-commercial series under the campaign Amazing Thailand: Your Stories Never End.

The campaign included:

- A two-minute thematic commercial.
- A 30-second version for short-haul markets.
- A 30-second version for long-haul markets.
- A sustainability-focused version titled Your Green Side Stories.
- Versions with and without subtitles.

The use of different commercial lengths allows TAT to adapt its creative material to different media environments.

A two-minute film can establish an emotional connection with a destination, while a 30-second advertisement can communicate the central message more quickly in a television or digital advertising environment.

For Sri Lanka, similar adaptations could be developed for:

- Short-haul regional holidays.
- Long-haul cultural itineraries.
- Wildlife and nature tourism.
- Ayurveda and wellness.
- Luxury accommodation.
- Surfing and coastal holidays.

- Culinary tourism.
- Buddhist heritage.

The key is to retain a recognizable national brand while adapting the content to the intended audience and channel.

2.5. International television and BBC StoryWorks

Thailand provides a useful example of cultural promotion through international media production.

On 10 April 2024, TAT announced a 30-second animated advertisement promoting Songkran, the Thai New Year festival.

The advertisement was produced by BBC StoryWorks Commercial Productions in Singapore and was scheduled to run from 10 April to 15 June 2024 for BBC audiences worldwide.

The creative concept used an animated traveller to communicate the cultural and social significance of Songkran.

Three operational features are worth noting:

- The international production partner was identified.
- The advertisement promoted a specific cultural event rather than attempting to promote every aspect of Thailand.
- The campaign was scheduled around the festival period.

The precise television channels, programme slots, media-buying arrangements and audience figures should be distinguished from the general announcement of a BBC-associated campaign.

Application to Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has several cultural and seasonal experiences that could support similar campaigns:

- Esala Perahera in Kandy.
- Vesak celebrations.
- Sinhala and Tamil New Year.
- The southern and eastern surfing seasons.
- Wildlife migrations and national-park experiences.
- Tea-country travel.
- Buddhist heritage and pilgrimage.
- Traditional cuisine and regional festivals.

An international campaign should be scheduled to generate interest before the relevant travel period, allowing tour operators and accommodation providers to package the experience.

2.6. Celebrity ambassador: Lalisa “Lisa” Manobal

Thailand has used celebrity advocacy to connect its destination brand with international audiences.

Lalisa Manobal, internationally known as Lisa of BLACKPINK, was announced as an Amazing Thailand Ambassador for a campaign introduced around the end of 2025 and the beginning of 2026.

The campaign was designed to use her international recognition to showcase destinations and experiences across Thailand.

The locations associated with the campaign included:

- Yaowarat in Bangkok.
- Koh Samui.
- Koh He in Phuket.
- Prasat Hin Phanom Rung in Buri Ram.
- Ayutthaya.

The approach connects a globally recognized personality with specific destinations rather than relying on a general endorsement of the country.

This can help audiences discover places beyond the most familiar tourist locations.

Application to Sri Lanka

A Sri Lankan ambassador programme could be organized around different tourism products rather than relying on a single personality.

For example:

- A wildlife conservationist could promote national parks and responsible wildlife tourism.
- A chef could promote Sri Lankan cuisine and culinary travel.
- A travel presenter could showcase regional itineraries.
- A sporting personality could promote surfing, hiking or adventure tourism.
- A cultural figure could introduce heritage, festivals and traditional arts.

The selection process should consider audience location, credibility, content quality, market relevance and the ability to convert attention into interest in travelling.

2.7. BE MY GUEST: international influencer familiarization

In June 2025, Thailand's tourism authorities announced the BE MY GUEST initiative, bringing international influencers together with Thai creators to experience selected destinations.

The announced programme included ten international influencers from markets such as:

- The United Arab Emirates.
- Australia.

- Spain.
- The United States.
- China.
- Hong Kong.
- Taiwan.

Named international participants included French fashion designer Christophe Nicolas Guillarme, UK wellness personality Scott Thomas, and MMA athletes Khalil Rountree Jr. and Mia Kang.

Ten Thai influencers also participated. Named Thai personalities included Bee Namthip, Yoshi Rinrada, KongGreenGreen and Nisamanee.N.

Participants were organized into curated three-day routes covering different tourism experiences.

The themes included:

- Gastronomy in Phetchaburi.
- Wellness in Khao Yai and Nakhon Nayok.
- Wellness experiences in Krabi and Trang.
- Culture and the arts in Sukhothai, Nan and Chiang Rai.
- Muay Thai.
- Sustainable tourism.

The programme was scheduled to culminate in the Amazing Thailand Saneh Thai Gala Night on 30 June 2025.

Why the programme matters

Thailand did not simply invite influencers to visit one resort and produce general holiday content. It designed different itineraries around identifiable tourism products and locations.

This approach helps diversify destination promotion beyond the most widely recognized cities and beaches.

For Sri Lanka, a comparable programme could include separate routes for:

- Anuradhapura, Mihintale and Polonnaruwa.
- Kandy, the central highlands and tea estates.
- Yala, Udawalawe and other wildlife destinations.
- Galle, the southern coast and surfing locations.
- Ayurveda and wellness.
- Culinary experiences.
- Hiking and adventure tourism.

Participants should be matched to the relevant itinerary. A food creator should have access to meaningful culinary experiences, while a wildlife specialist should be offered a programme designed around responsible wildlife observation and conservation.

2.8. Airline partnerships and aviation-led tourism promotion

On 8 July 2025, TAT announced an Airline Focus Partnership Meeting involving more than 50 airlines and tourism stakeholders.

Named participants included:

- Qatar Airways.
- Emirates.
- Japan Airlines.
- All Nippon Airways (ANA).
- Air China.
- Cathay Pacific.
- Malaysia Airlines.
- Philippine Airlines.
- Thai Airways International.
- Thai AirAsia.
- Bangkok Airways.
- Nok Air.
- Aeroflot.

The meeting also involved the Airline Operators Committee, Airports of Thailand, the International Air Transport Association, the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand and U-Tapao Airport Authority.

The objectives included joint marketing, improved connectivity and increased flight capacity.

This was a broad coordination initiative. Participation in the meeting should not automatically be interpreted as a separately funded advertising contract with every airline.

Air-mazing Thailand

TAT also conducted the Air-mazing Thailand: The Amazing Airline FAM Trip in April 2024.

The four-day programme was designed to demonstrate Thailand's airport network and the accessibility of destinations through cooperation with airlines and aviation authorities.

The two initiatives demonstrate complementary approaches:

- Airline meetings support coordination and the development of commercial opportunities.
- Familiarization visits allow aviation and tourism stakeholders to experience the destination and assess its potential.

Application to Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka could organize an annual airline partnership meeting with relevant international and regional carriers.

The programme could examine:

- Existing passenger flows.
- Potential new routes.
- Seasonal capacity.
- Joint destination campaigns.
- Promotional fares.
- Travel-package development.
- Airline website and social media placements.
- Inflight destination content.
- Familiarization visits for airline representatives.

2.9. Major Tourism Promotion Fairs and Events

Thailand uses major public festivals to create reasons for international visitors to travel during particular periods and to experience cultural activities in specific destinations. These events complement its tourism promotion by making festivals, regional traditions, entertainment, and local participation part of the holiday itself.

2.9.1. Maha Songkran World Water Festival

Organizer: Tourism Authority of Thailand and relevant public-sector and local partners
Location: Bangkok and other destinations across Thailand
Timing: April, during the Thai New Year period

Songkran is Thailand's traditional New Year celebration. The festival is associated with water-related activities, but it also includes religious and cultural practices, family traditions, and community celebrations.

The Maha Songkran World Water Festival forms part of the wider effort to attract international visitors to experience the New Year period in Thailand. The country's official tourism authorities have promoted multiple Songkran events across different regions rather than treating the festival as an activity confined to a single location.

For visitors, activities may include:

- Participating in organized public water celebrations in designated areas.
- Watching cultural performances and festival parades.
- Visiting temples and observing traditional New Year practices.
- Experiencing local food, public entertainment, and community celebrations.
- Combining the festival with visits to other attractions in the host city or region.

In 2026, Thailand's government tourism information listed 67 major Songkran-related events across the country. These included celebrations in Bangkok, music and entertainment events, and activities in regional destinations. The range of locations allows travelers to select an experience that suits their itinerary rather than assuming that all Songkran celebrations are identical.

Tourism-marketing significance: Songkran creates a strong seasonal reason to visit Thailand and distributes festival-related activity across several destinations. It can encourage visitors to plan their trips around a specific cultural period and spend money on accommodation, food, transport, and local experiences.

2.9.2. Thailand Tourism Festival 2026

Organizer: Tourism Authority of Thailand
Location: Thailand; the 2026 edition featured dedicated tourism-experience zones
Audience: Domestic travelers, international visitors, and people exploring holiday options within Thailand

The Thailand Tourism Festival is a public-facing event that brings together tourism products and experiences from different parts of the country. Its value is that visitors can explore multiple regional tourism offerings in one place, rather than having to travel to each destination before deciding which products interest them.

The 2026 festival included an Amazing Thailand zone featuring destination-promotion displays, campaign-related photo opportunities, activities involving entertainers and online personalities, craft workshops, travel information, and interactive technology.

The festival also included an area associated with craft villages and local creative products. Visitors could explore craft-related activities and obtain information about destinations and travel opportunities from the Tourism Authority of Thailand's visitor-information service.

The use of interactive installations and photo opportunities provides a way for visitors to engage with destination content physically, rather than simply viewing conventional promotional displays. Travel-information services also allow attendees to move from general inspiration toward researching destinations and possible itineraries.

Tourism-marketing significance: The festival operates as a tourism showcase for the Thai domestic market while also introducing visitors to regional experiences that may influence future travel decisions. It brings destination information, cultural activities, creative products, and visitor engagement together in one event.

2.9.3. Phuket Vegetarian Festival

Location: Phuket, particularly Phuket Town and participating shrines
Timing: Traditionally held during the ninth lunar month of the Chinese calendar; dates vary annually
Audience: Visitors interested in religious traditions, cultural practices, and regional festivals

Phuket's Vegetarian Festival is a distinctive cultural event associated with the island's Chinese-Thai communities and Taoist traditions. During the festival, participating devotees observe vegetarian or vegan dietary practices, while shrines host ceremonies and processions.

Visitors can experience a combination of religious observances, processions, ceremonial activities, and food stalls offering vegetarian and vegan dishes. The event is particularly associated with Phuket's shrine culture and local community traditions.

The festival is different from Thailand's major water celebrations and music festivals because its principal attraction is the opportunity to observe a specific religious and cultural tradition. It can appeal to travelers interested in cultural tourism and regional festivals rather than solely beach holidays.

Visitors should observe shrine rules, respect religious practices, and follow local guidance around processions and ceremonial activities.

Tourism-marketing significance: The festival gives Phuket a distinctive cultural attraction beyond its coastal tourism products. It can encourage visitors to schedule trips around the festival period and explore the island's food culture, heritage, and local communities.

2.10. Digital travel platforms and specialist media

Thailand's promotional ecosystem includes digital travel platforms and targeted industry media.

AirAsia MOVE

AirAsia MOVE is a digital travel platform that combines travel-search and booking functions. Its commercial role differs from that of a general social media platform because users can progress from discovering a destination to searching for flights and accommodation.

For Sri Lanka, partnerships with digital travel platforms could connect promotional content to bookable packages, provided that the terms of each arrangement are negotiated and its effectiveness can be measured.

Singapore Press Holdings and golf tourism

Thailand's promotional activities have included targeted golf-related marketing through Singapore Press Holdings-associated platforms.

Such activity illustrates the value of reaching a specialized audience instead of advertising to every traveller in the same way.

Golf tourism, for example, may justify a separate campaign aimed at travellers interested in golf resorts, premium accommodation, leisure packages and sporting facilities.

Sri Lanka could consider similar specialized campaigns for wildlife, surfing, diving, wellness, food, heritage and adventure travel.

2.11. Film-induced tourism

Thailand also benefits from international film and television productions that generate interest in filming locations.

A prominent example is HBO's The White Lotus, whose third season was filmed in Thailand and featured locations associated with Koh Samui and other Thai destinations.

Film-induced tourism can increase awareness of places that viewers may subsequently wish to visit.

However, the appearance of a location in an international production should not automatically be described as a paid tourism campaign. The distinction between a production taking place in a destination and a tourism authority financing or coordinating its promotion is important.

Application to Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka could develop a more systematic film-tourism programme by:

- Identifying internationally recognizable filming locations.
- Developing official filming-location itineraries.
- Coordinating with film-production companies.
- Supporting location information and filming permissions.
- Producing behind-the-scenes destination content where rights permit.
- Connecting film locations with local accommodation and tour operators.

2.12. International tourism events and remote-worker promotion

Thailand also uses international tourism events and specialist programmes to engage commercial audiences.

Relevant activities include participation in Pacific Asia Travel Association events, including the PATA Destination Marketing Forum, and programmes associated with Workation Paradise.

These activities serve different purposes.

Tourism trade forums provide opportunities to meet travel-industry representatives, exchange marketing knowledge and develop commercial relationships.

Workation initiatives target travellers who combine employment with extended stays in a destination.

Sri Lanka could develop a specific international campaign for remote workers and longer-stay visitors, subject to the applicable visa framework, accommodation capacity, internet connectivity and the needs of the target market.

2.13. Thailand's tour-operator licensing framework

Thailand's tourism business and tour-guide regulation provides an additional institutional comparison.

The relevant framework is administered by the Department of Tourism under the Tourism Business and Guide Act.

The framework regulates tour businesses and tour guides through licensing and related requirements.

Areas that require attention include:

- Business registration and eligibility.
- Required business documentation.
- Financial security and statutory fees.
- Consumer protection.
- Tourist accident insurance where required.
- Individual tour-guide licensing and qualifications.
- Regulatory inspections and compliance.

Section 35 of the Tourism Business and Guide Act is associated with licensing fees and financial security requirements for tour operators.

Foreign ownership restrictions and the eligibility of foreign businesses depend on the applicable Thai legal framework. It would be inaccurate to assume that every foreign operator is subject to exactly the same requirements without examining the relevant company structure and legal provisions.

Application to Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka could review the extent to which its tourism registration, licensing and professional development arrangements support:

- Consumer protection.
- Clear standards for incoming tour operators.
- Professional qualifications.
- Transparent participation in official promotional programmes.
- Reliable information about registered tourism businesses.
- Accountability for publicly supported marketing activities.

The objective should be to protect the quality and credibility of the tourism industry while maintaining a competitive environment for legitimate operators.

2.14. Leading Tourism Promotion, Public Relations and Marketing Companies Working with Thailand's Tourism Authority

Thailand's international tourism promotion involves the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), international public relations agencies, digital marketing companies, creative agencies, and commercial partners. TAT operates under Thailand's Ministry of Tourism and Sports and promotes the country internationally through the *Amazing Thailand* brand.

Private-sector agencies support different aspects of tourism promotion, including international media relations, destination storytelling, influencer campaigns, press familiarization trips, digital advertising, market-specific public relations, and tourism trade engagement. TAT also conducts public relations through its own International Public Relations Division, which manages media relationships, distributes press releases, arranges interviews, organizes media familiarization trips, and coordinates crisis communications (Tourism Authority of Thailand, n.d.).

The following companies and partnerships illustrate Thailand's approach to international tourism promotion.

2.14.1. Ruder Finn Era Thailand

Company Profile

Ruder Finn Era is an integrated communications and public relations agency with an established operation in Bangkok, Thailand. Its services include public relations, integrated marketing, creative communications, influencer marketing, corporate reputation management, and digital communications. The agency works across several sectors, including travel, hospitality, lifestyle, consumer brands, and technology.

Government Relationship

Ruder Finn Era's official Thailand portfolio identifies the Tourism Authority of Thailand as a client. The agency has documented work supporting TAT's *Amazing Thailand* destination-

promotion activities, including its collaboration with GoPro for the Songkran festival campaign.

Documented Promotional Activity: GoPro x Tourism Authority of Thailand — Stoked to Get Soaked

The campaign presented Thailand's Songkran celebrations through first-person content created by GoPro users and international content creators. It aimed to introduce global audiences to the Thai New Year festival through authentic experiences rather than conventional tourism advertising.

The campaign involved:

- Bringing together 13 GoPro creators from Asia-Pacific, Brazil, Spain, South Korea, India, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan.
- Organizing six days and five nights of Songkran-related activities in Chiang Mai.
- Coordinating creator logistics, festival access, and content planning.
- Producing influencer content showing the festival from participants' perspectives.
- Amplifying the content through social media and tourism-related digital communications.
- Encouraging international audiences to learn about Songkran and consider visiting Thailand.

Ruder Finn Era reports that the campaign achieved a potential reach of 80 million, generated 290 pieces of influencer content, recorded an average engagement rate of 8.7%, and produced a reported public relations value of US$371,000. These are agency-reported campaign results.

Relevance to Tourism Promotion

This collaboration demonstrates how Thailand's tourism authority has worked with a communications agency and a consumer technology brand to promote a major cultural festival internationally. The campaign combined experiential content, influencer participation, social media distribution, and destination branding.

2.14.2. Related

Company Profile

Related is a travel and hospitality communications agency specializing in public relations, destination marketing, media engagement, and promotional campaigns. Its services include press-office management, media relations, influencer collaborations, travel-trade marketing, and event coordination.

Government Relationship

On 21 October 2024, Related announced that it had been appointed as the Tourism Authority of Thailand's public relations representative in the Nordic region and marketing representative in Finland, with the arrangement effective from 1 October 2024.

The appointment was announced by Related and included comments from the Director of TAT's Stockholm Office confirming the collaboration.

Scope of Services

The documented responsibilities included:

- Managing press-office activities and preparing press releases.
- Organizing press trips for journalists.
- Coordinating influencer collaborations.
- Developing tourism marketing campaigns and promotional events.
- Organizing familiarization trips for relevant media and tourism stakeholders.
- Coordinating campaigns with travel agencies in Finland.
- Supporting participation in tourism trade shows.
- Promoting Thailand's cultural heritage, natural attractions, cuisine, and local travel experiences.

The arrangement was designed to increase awareness of Thailand among Nordic travelers and present the country as a destination offering experiences beyond conventional beach holidays.

Relevance to Tourism Promotion

Related's appointment demonstrates the use of a market-specific international PR representative to adapt tourism communications to the interests of travelers in selected European markets. Its responsibilities combined media publicity with travel-trade engagement and promotional activities.

Evidence note: The appointment was announced in October 2024. The announcement establishes the appointment at that time; a current contract term has not been independently confirmed.

2.14.3. dePaRture PR

Company Profile

dePaRture PR, also referred to as dPR, is a public relations agency specializing in travel, lifestyle, and professional-services communications. Its tourism-related services include consumer public relations, travel-trade communications, press-office management, influencer marketing, content creation, broadcast PR, and brand partnerships.

Government Relationship

The agency's published client portfolio identifies the Tourism Authority of Thailand as a client and states that it has provided consumer and travel-trade public relations services in the United Kingdom and Ireland since 2017.

Its published portfolio describes the agency as a continuing PR partner for Thailand in these markets.

Scope of Services

The agency's stated services for TAT include:

- Managing the press office and distributing press releases.
- Organizing press trips for travel journalists.
- Developing influencer marketing activities.
- Producing tourism-related content.
- Participating in consumer and tourism trade shows.
- Coordinating broadcast public relations.
- Developing brand partnerships.
- Communicating Thailand's tourism products to consumers and travel-industry professionals.

These activities support destination awareness, international media exposure, and relationships with businesses involved in selling holidays.

Relevance to Tourism Promotion

The relationship illustrates how Thailand uses a specialist PR agency to maintain a presence in overseas markets. By combining media relations, influencer campaigns, consumer communications, and travel-trade engagement, the agency supports the promotion of Thailand to both potential visitors and tourism-industry stakeholders.

Evidence note: The relationship since 2017 is stated in dePaRture PR's published client portfolio. The portfolio supports the reported relationship, although the precise duration of any current contract is not specified.

2.14.4. B2B Baltic Travel

Company Profile

B2B Baltic Travel is a travel-industry and tourism marketing business based in the Baltic region. Its expertise includes travel-industry representation, local-market knowledge, and relationships with media organizations and travel agencies.

The company focuses on connecting tourism products with businesses and consumers in geographically defined markets.

Government Relationship

On 5 November 2020, the Tourism Authority of Thailand's Stockholm Office announced that it had appointed B2B Baltic Travel as its marketing and public relations representative in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, effective 1 November 2020.

The appointment was intended to strengthen Thailand's tourism promotion in the Baltic countries and encourage more travelers from the region to visit Thailand.

Scope of Services

The documented responsibilities included:

- Representing Thailand's tourism interests in the Baltic region.
- Supporting marketing and public relations activities.
- Working with local media and travel agencies.
- Communicating Thailand's tourism offerings to Baltic audiences.
- Promoting Thailand's beaches, cultural heritage, gastronomy, nature-based experiences, and city tourism.
- Supporting destination awareness through local-market relationships.

The appointment emphasized the value of communicating with potential visitors through organizations familiar with the region's media environment and travel industry.

Relevance to Tourism Promotion

B2B Baltic Travel demonstrates how a national tourism authority can appoint a local representative to reach smaller international source markets. The arrangement provides an example of using local knowledge, language capabilities, and established industry relationships to support destination marketing.

Evidence note: The appointment was announced in November 2020. The available announcement establishes the historical appointment but does not confirm whether the contract remains active in 2026.

2.14.5. Quinn

Company Profile

Quinn is a public relations agency specializing in travel, lifestyle, and destination communications. Its services include media relations, digital content development, social media publicity, and integrated marketing campaigns.

Government Relationship

On 30 October 2017, the public relations publication O'Dwyer's reported that the Tourism Authority of Thailand had hired Quinn to promote Thailand in the New York and Los Angeles markets in the United States.

The reported contract commenced in October 2017 and continued until 30 September 2018.

Scope of Services

The reported assignment included:

- Securing coverage in US broadcast, online, and print media.
- Increasing Thailand's visibility through social media.
- Creating branded content for digital platforms, blogs, and interactive channels.
- Supporting TAT's *Open to the New Shades* tourism campaign.
- Executing integrated promotional campaigns targeting US audiences.
- Communicating Thailand's local culture and distinctive travel experiences.

The objective was to increase awareness of Thailand as a major Southeast Asian holiday destination among potential American visitors.

Relevance to Tourism Promotion

Quinn's appointment demonstrates how Thailand's tourism authority used an overseas PR agency to promote its destination brand in specific US markets. The campaign combined traditional media relations with digital publicity and branded content.

Evidence note: The reported contract ended on 30 September 2018. This is a historical government appointment, not evidence of a current contract.

2.14.6. Additional Tourism Marketing and Communications Partners

In addition to the public relations agencies directly associated with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Thailand’s tourism-promotion landscape includes specialist hospitality PR agencies, destination-marketing media companies, digital technology partnerships, airline collaborations, and TAT’s own international public relations operations.

1. Shine PR: Luxury Travel and Hospitality Communications

Shine PR is a public relations agency established in 2010 that specializes in luxury travel and hospitality brands in Southeast Asia. Its services focus on promoting hotels, villas, resorts, and other luxury travel products to international audiences.

The agency works with travel and lifestyle media across markets including the United Kingdom, Thailand, Australia, China, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Japan, and the United States. Its media network includes print and online publications covering travel, honeymoons, weddings, spas, yachting, and design. Shine PR also works with professional bloggers and social media influencers to secure online exposure for its clients.

The agency’s specialization in luxury hospitality communications provides services relevant to tourism businesses seeking international media visibility and targeted promotion of premium travel experiences. However, the available company information does not establish a direct contractual relationship between Shine PR and TAT.

Official company website: https://www.shine-pr.com/

2. BIGMAP Travel Media: Destination Marketing and Location-Based Advertising

BIGMAP Travel Media operates through Big Map Thailand Co., Ltd. and specializes in destination information, tourism-related media, travel content, and advertising aimed at reaching travelers throughout Thailand. The company reports more than 20 years of experience in Thai media and tourism and field research and content-production experience covering more than 60 provinces.

Its services include tourism maps, location-based travel media, photography and video production, reviews, branded content, digital amplification, and integrated marketing campaigns. Its media formats include physical advertising, digital displays, travel guides, maps, magazines, and editorial content. These services enable brands to communicate with travelers at destinations, transit points, rest stops, accommodation areas, and other locations associated with travel decisions.

BIGMAP also develops destination-specific content and advertising campaigns for hotels, resorts, restaurants, consumer brands, provinces, cities, tourist destinations, events, and festivals. Its approach combines physical media, editorial content, and digital distribution to reach audiences at different stages of the travel journey.

The company's destination-marketing and media-production services are relevant to tourism promotion, particularly campaigns that combine destination information with advertising and locally produced travel content. However, the available company information does not establish a direct contractual relationship between BIGMAP Travel Media and TAT.

Official company website: https://www.bigmaptravel.com/en

3. Baidu: Digital Marketing and AI-Based Tourism Promotion in China

On 27 February 2025, TAT signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) with Beijing Baidu Netcom Science Technology to strengthen Thailand's tourism appeal among Chinese travelers. The agreement was announced by TAT on 28 February 2025 and formed part of the *Amazing Thailand Grand Tourism and Sports Year 2025* initiative.

The collaboration focuses on using Baidu's digital platforms, artificial intelligence capabilities, and online reach to promote Thailand as a tourism destination in China. The proposed activities include digital marketing, AI-powered travel insights, customized content, and campaigns intended to strengthen awareness of Thailand's tourism offerings among Chinese audiences.

The partnership reflects the importance of digital platforms in destination marketing, particularly in source markets where local search engines and digital services play a significant role in how travelers discover destinations and access travel information.

According to TAT, Baidu operates in Thailand through its official Southeast Asian representative, Yunshang Technology, and local partner We Bridge Marketing Solution. Baidu's broader technology services include Baidu Maps, Baidu Cloud, and AI-related solutions.

TAT reported that Thailand received more than 35.54 million international visitors in 2024, including 6.73 million Chinese tourists. The LOI was intended to support further promotion of Thailand in the Chinese market.

This collaboration is a digital marketing and technology partnership rather than a conventional public relations agency appointment.

Official source**:** https://www.tatnews.org/2025/02/tat-partners-with-baidu-to-enhance-thailands-appeal-among-chinese-travellers/

4. Emirates: Airline Partnership for International Tourism Promotion

On 24 February 2022, TAT and Emirates signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) to strengthen tourism promotion and attract international travelers to Thailand. TAT announced the agreement on 25 February 2022 as part of the *Visit Thailand Year 2022: Amazing New Chapters* campaign.

The agreement provided a framework for joint initiatives intended to enhance the marketing and promotional activities of both organizations. Under the arrangement, TAT would support Emirates in developing passenger traffic from selected strategic markets by working with tour operators and travel agents and supporting promotional giveaways, special packages, incentives, and marketing expenditure in agreed markets.

Emirates, in turn, would promote Thailand to customers across its international network and work with travel agents in key markets. The agreement also included opportunities for joint familiarization trips designed to appeal to different customer segments.

The partnership illustrates how a national tourism authority can work with an international airline to combine destination promotion with airline distribution networks, travel-industry relationships, and coordinated marketing activities.

The agreement was announced in 2022. The cited announcement establishes the signing and intended areas of cooperation but does not, by itself, confirm the partnership's current contractual status.

Official source: https://www.tatnews.org/2022/02/tat-and-emirates-sign-tourism-agreement-to-boost-tourism-to-thailand/

5. TAT's International Public Relations Division

TAT also conducts international tourism publicity through its own International Public Relations Division. The division works with traditional and online media channels to promote Thailand as a tourism destination to travelers worldwide.

TAT Newsroom serves as the division's official newsroom and provides international media with press releases, information on festivals and events, Thai travel news, destination features, and videos.

The division's responsibilities include:

- Preparing and distributing press releases and photographic materials.
- Responding to inquiries from local and international media.
- Arranging media interviews with TAT executives.
- Organizing roadshows and media familiarization trips.
- Providing information about Thai destinations, attractions, and tourism experiences.
- Maintaining relationships with media organizations and journalists.
- Facilitating visits to Thailand by corporate and media VIP guests.
- Handling crisis communications relating to tourism publicity and media engagement.

These functions enable TAT to communicate tourism information directly to international media, support journalists covering Thailand, facilitate destination exposure through media visits, and maintain communication channels during issues that may affect the country's tourism image.

The division's work operates alongside external public relations agencies and other marketing partners. TAT's official newsroom provides a direct institutional channel for tourism announcements and destination information.

Official source: https://www.tatnews.org/tat-newsroom/

2.15. Key lessons from Thailand

Thailand demonstrates the value of integrating culture, entertainment, commercial partnerships and tourism products.

The most relevant practices are:

1. Use international celebrities where they have a clear connection to the target market.
2. Develop distinct itineraries for different tourism segments.
3. Promote festivals and cultural experiences in advance of the relevant travel season.
4. Coordinate tourism marketing with airlines and digital travel platforms.
5. Encourage film-induced tourism through location-based products.
6. Develop campaigns for specialized audiences, including golf and wellness travellers.
7. Use familiarization visits to generate relevant content rather than generic publicity.
8. Maintain an effective regulatory framework for tourism businesses and guides.

3. MALDIVES: LUXURY POSITIONING, INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND TARGETED MARKETING



3.1. Institutional structure and destination identity

The principal destination-marketing body is the Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC), operating under the Visit Maldives brand.

Its established destination slogan is The Sunny Side of Life.

The Maldives positions itself internationally through a combination of luxury resorts, private islands, marine experiences, honeymoon travel, wellness, diving and local-island tourism.

Its promotional activity covers important source markets in Europe, China, Russia, India and the Middle East.

The Maldives is especially relevant to Sri Lanka because it demonstrates how a small island destination can use international partnerships to achieve visibility beyond what might be possible through conventional advertising alone.

3.2. Major International Tourist Source Markets

The Maldives attracts international visitors from major Asian and European markets, with demand supported by its international resort sector and island-based tourism products. According to the Maldives Monetary Authority, the country received 2,246,516 tourist arrivals in 2025, representing an increase from 2,046,615 arrivals in 2024.

The leading international source markets during 2025 included China, Russia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and India.

The following table presents the ten leading markets reported in the Ministry of Tourism and Environment's 2025 market statistics as of 8 March 2025. The figures are cumulative arrivals up to that date and must not be interpreted as full-year totals.

Rank	Country	Arrivals as of 8 March 2025
1	China	62,278
2	Russia	48,651
3	United Kingdom	48,364
4	Italy	45,320
5	Germany	31,389
6	India	22,956
7	France	19,940
8	United States	14,607
9	Poland	11,041
10	Switzerland	10,440

Source: Maldives Ministry of Tourism and Environment, 2025 tourist arrival statistics, as of 8 March 2025.

Full-year figures published by the Maldives Monetary Authority confirm that China remained a leading source market in 2025, with 329,110 arrivals. Russia contributed 278,761 arrivals,

while the United Kingdom accounted for 202,172 arrivals. Germany recorded 167,822 arrivals, and India recorded 131,625.

The source-market distribution demonstrates the importance of both Asian and European visitors to the Maldives. These markets provide a basis for examining the country's international destination marketing, airline partnerships, luxury tourism positioning and overseas travel-trade engagement.

3.3. Tourism Infrastructure, Destination Appeal and Signature Experiences - Maldives

The Maldives is widely associated with private-island resorts and overwater villas, but its tourism infrastructure extends beyond luxury resort accommodation. Visitors can choose between resort islands, hotels, guesthouses on inhabited islands, and liveaboard safari vessels. These options create different ways to experience the country's marine environment, local communities, and island life.

3.3.1. Resort islands, local-island accommodation, and liveaboard stays

The Maldives' accommodation system is distinctive because different types of property can be located on separate islands or serve different visitor needs.

- **Resort islands:** These offer an integrated holiday experience in which accommodation, dining, swimming, excursions, and other facilities are organized around the resort.
- **Guesthouses on inhabited islands:** These provide an alternative to staying exclusively on a private resort island. Visitors can stay within an inhabited community, eat at local establishments, and arrange excursions through local tourism businesses.
- **Hotels:** Hotels provide another accommodation option, including for visitors whose itineraries include time in Malé or other inhabited locations.
- **Safari vessels:** Liveaboard vessels enable visitors to spend several days moving between marine locations, particularly those interested in diving and snorkeling.

The Ministry of Tourism recognizes resorts, hotels, guesthouses, and vessels as accommodation categories under the country's tourism framework. The official Visit Maldives visitor information also describes local-island guesthouses as a way to experience everyday island life while arranging water-based activities.

The significance of this range is that the Maldives can serve more than one type of traveler. A private resort may suit a visitor seeking an enclosed luxury holiday, while a guesthouse-based stay may provide greater interaction with local communities and a different expenditure profile. Guesthouse travel should not automatically be described as cheap, but it can provide an alternative to the private-resort model.

3.3.2. Marine life and named underwater destinations

The Maldives' natural appeal is particularly dependent on its reefs, atolls, channels, and marine ecosystems. The value of these attractions lies in the opportunity to observe marine life in specific locations rather than simply in the presence of beaches.

- **South Ari Atoll:** This is one of the country's recognized areas for whale-shark encounters. Excursions are organized around the opportunity to observe these animals in their natural environment.
- **Baa Atoll and Hanifaru Bay:** Hanifaru Bay is known for seasonal aggregations of manta rays. The Visit Maldives visitor information identifies the May-to-November period as relevant to the seasonal marine activity described for the area. Visitors should check current conditions and applicable conservation rules before planning an excursion. Hanifaru Bay is primarily a snorkeling experience; scuba diving is restricted there.
- **Addu Atoll:** Addu offers diving opportunities and encounters with marine life such as rays and turtles. Its location in the southern Maldives provides a different setting from the more frequently visited areas around North Malé.
- **Dhigurah and other inhabited islands:** Local-island accommodation can provide a base for marine excursions while allowing visitors to experience inhabited-island environments rather than staying exclusively on a resort island.

These products are best understood as nature-based experiences that require responsible visitor behavior. Operators and visitors must follow relevant guidance on wildlife encounters and protected areas so that tourism does not disrupt the marine environments on which these experiences depend.

3.3.3. Local food and everyday island life

A stay on an inhabited island can introduce visitors to a side of the Maldives that differs from the resort dining experience. Local cafés, community settings, and traditional food provide opportunities to encounter daily island life.

Visitors can explore local dishes such as **mas huni**, commonly served as a breakfast dish, and **garudhiya**, a fish-based broth. These food experiences are most relevant when linked to local dining and inhabited-island stays rather than presented as generic luxury-resort amenities.

The destination value is twofold: visitors gain a more locally grounded experience, while expenditure can reach community-based accommodation and food businesses. This is a distinct product from the resort's self-contained dining environment and can be developed as part of a broader island itinerary. Visit Maldives' local-island visitor information highlights the opportunity to experience local cuisine, cafés, and everyday island activities.

3.3.4. Participatory Marine and Local-Island Experiences

Island life, traditional fishing and marine experiences

Experiences offered to visitors:

- **Traditional fishing experiences:** Visitors can join fishing trips and experience the relationship between island communities and the surrounding ocean.
- **Local island experiences:** Tourists can explore inhabited islands, visit harbours and local cafés, learn about island customs, discover traditional crafts and experience local cuisine.
- **Bodu Beru cultural experiences:** Visitors can experience traditional Maldivian drumming and dance, which form an important part of the country's cultural identity.
- **Marine activities:** Snorkelling, diving, kayaking, paddleboarding and boat excursions allow visitors to actively explore marine environments.

Relevance and potential applications for Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka could strengthen its coastal and island tourism products through:

- Traditional fishing experiences in coastal and lagoon communities, including demonstrations of traditional fishing methods.
- Lagoon-based tourism in areas such as Puttalam, Kalpitiya and Batticaloa, combining boat rides, local seafood and community interaction.
- Traditional fishing-boat experiences and demonstrations of net-making and net-mending.
- Community-led seafood preparation and cooking experiences.
- Coral reef education, supervised marine conservation activities and responsible visitor participation in coastal clean-ups.

The lesson from the Maldives is that the ocean itself can become an interactive tourism product, rather than being marketed only as a setting for beach holidays.

3.3.5. Cost, transfers, and practical planning

The Maldives should not be described simply as an expensive destination or, conversely, as an affordable one. The total cost depends heavily on accommodation type, island location, meal arrangements, excursions, and the transfer required between the international gateway and the place of stay.

A resort holiday may involve a substantial overall expenditure, especially when transfers and activities are included. A guesthouse stay can provide an alternative, but visitors still need to budget for transport between islands and paid excursions. Liveaboard trips have a different cost structure because accommodation, travel between marine locations, and some activities may be combined within one package.

Visitors should confirm their accommodation and transfer arrangements before arrival. They should also check the registered status of the accommodation provider and the practical details of marine excursions. Responsible snorkeling and diving practices are especially important in areas known for manta rays, whale sharks, and coral reefs.

Why the Maldives is worth visiting from a destination-product perspective: Its strongest differentiator is the combination of atoll geography, marine biodiversity, resort-island accommodation, local-island guesthouses, and liveaboard stays. The Maldives can offer both a private resort experience and a more community-connected island stay, while marine destinations such as South Ari Atoll and Hanifaru Bay provide specific reasons to visit at particular times or for particular activities.

3.4. Major Tourism Promotion Fairs and Events

Travel Trade Maldives (TTM)

Organizer: Maldives Getaways and associated tourism-industry partners, with Visit Maldives Corporation participating as a destination partner
Location: Malé, Maldives
Audience: Resort and hotel representatives, international tour operators, travel agents, and tourism-industry stakeholders

Travel Trade Maldives is a business-to-business tourism event intended to strengthen commercial connections between Maldivian tourism providers and international travel sellers. It is distinct from a public tourism festival: its principal purpose is to support business meetings, industry networking, and commercial cooperation.

The 2026 edition marked the event's tenth year. According to Visit Maldives Corporation, the event brought together more than 130 resorts and hotels and over 250 travel operators and agents representing the Maldives' principal source markets.

The programme provides a setting in which tourism providers can meet potential commercial partners, discuss tourism products, develop relationships, and exchange information about emerging market preferences.

What happens at the event?

The event's principal activities include:

- Meetings between resort and hotel representatives and international travel operators.
- Networking among tourism businesses and travel sellers.
- Discussions about destination products, accommodation, and tourism-market developments.
- Opportunities to develop partnerships and strengthen commercial relationships.
- Industry engagement involving Visit Maldives Corporation and participating tourism businesses.

The event helps connect the Maldives' accommodation and tourism businesses with the international companies that package, distribute, and sell holidays. For example, a resort can use trade meetings to discuss its product with tour operators that serve particular source markets, while travel sellers can learn about available accommodation and tourism services.

Tourism-marketing significance: The event links destination promotion to the commercial relationships through which visitors book their holidays. Its principal value is not direct public entertainment but the development of partnerships that can support future bookings and international market access.

Important distinction: TTM is a trade event. It should not be described as a public festival where ordinary tourists attend cultural performances or participate in recreational activities.

3.5. Liverpool Football Club partnership

In April 2025, the Maldivian President attended the launch of a tourism-promotion campaign involving Liverpool Football Club and MMPRC/Visit Maldives.

The UK outdoor activation began on 27 March 2025.

The campaign incorporated several forms of advertising and brand visibility:

- More than 100 branded taxis in London.
- Bus advertising.
- London Underground advertising.
- Major airport advertising.
- Business-class lounge advertising.
- LED signage during Premier League home matches.
- Stadium branding.
- Visibility through Liverpool FC's official publications.
- Billboards across Europe targeting high-value travellers.

The activation was designed to combine outdoor advertising with the international visibility associated with a major football club.

Strategic significance:

The campaign used several environments in which travellers and potential holidaymakers could encounter the Maldives brand.

A person might see the destination on a taxi, encounter it again in a transport environment and subsequently recognize it through football-related content.

This repeated exposure can reinforce destination recognition.

The publicly described campaign does not, by itself, establish the full contractual cost, the precise location of every European billboard or the number of additional visitors generated.

Those measures should be distinguished from the confirmed existence of the partnership and the reported advertising activity.

3.6. London outdoor advertising and European roadshows

In June 2025, Visit Maldives announced a summer campaign involving London Underground advertising, buses, digital promotion and influencer-led activity.

The Maldives also organized Visit Maldives Week roadshows in Europe.

The reported itinerary for May 2025 included:

- Rome.
- Milan.
- Lyon.
- Paris.

The roadshows ran from 14 to 20 May 2025.

The combination of outdoor advertising and roadshows is important because the two activities have different purposes.

Outdoor advertising builds public awareness, while roadshows provide opportunities to meet travel agents, tour operators, tourism businesses and other commercial stakeholders.

For Sri Lanka, a similar programme could combine advertising in selected cities with a series of meetings involving airlines, travel companies, tour operators and the tourism trade.

3.7. Emirates partnership

On 30 April 2025, MMPRC and Emirates renewed a strategic tourism-marketing partnership.

The agreement was formalized at Arabian Travel Market 2025 in Dubai.

The announced areas of cooperation included:

- Joint marketing campaigns.
- Customized travel packages.
- Cooperation with tour operators and travel agencies.
- Familiarization opportunities.
- International destination promotion through the airline's network.

The partnership demonstrates how an airline can contribute more than passenger transport. It can provide marketing channels, access to travel sellers and opportunities to promote destination packages.

For Sri Lanka, joint campaigns could be structured around specific markets and travel periods, with clearly defined responsibilities for each partner.

3.8. Qatar Airways partnership

MMPRC also announced a partnership with Qatar Airways on 30 April 2025.

The agreement established a framework for destination promotion and commercial cooperation.

The announced areas included:

- Joint destination-marketing campaigns.
- Direct-to-consumer promotions.
- Travel-trade partnerships.
- Media engagement.
- Trade education.
- Promotion through Qatar Airways' international network.

The airline's network of more than 170 destinations was cited in the announcement.

The commercial value of such a partnership lies in connecting destination awareness with travel access and distribution.

For a tourism authority, the relevant questions include whether the campaign promotes particular routes, whether travel packages are available, whether the airline contributes marketing resources and how the results will be measured.

3.9. Maldivian: cooperation with the national airline

In August 2024, MMPRC and Maldivian, the national airline, announced an agreement for collaborative destination marketing.

The agreement included cooperation on branded advertising, promotional activities and international campaigns.

This demonstrates that a destination authority can work with both international carriers and its national airline.

The two relationships serve different purposes. International airlines can connect the destination to overseas markets, while a national carrier may contribute to domestic connectivity, regional access and the wider destination-marketing programme.

3.10. Online travel agencies and commercial distribution

The Maldives also uses digital travel platforms and specialist travel sellers to promote its tourism products.

3.10.1. Fliggy - China

MMPRC's promotional strategy has included a formal cooperation arrangement with Fliggy, Alibaba's travel platform in China.

The purpose of this type of partnership is to improve the Maldives' exposure to Chinese outbound travellers through an established digital travel-distribution channel.

A travel platform is commercially different from a general social network. It can combine destination information with accommodation listings, travel products and booking opportunities.

For Sri Lanka, comparable partnerships could be explored with relevant international travel platforms, depending on the target market, commercial terms and ability to measure bookings or referrals.

3.10.2. Travelbag and DNATA UK

The Maldives has also collaborated with Travelbag, associated with DNATA UK, on consumer travel marketing.

A joint campaign ran from May 2023 to April 2024.

The announced promotional channels included:

- Online marketing.
- Social media.
- Print advertising.

The campaign aimed to reach more than 2.5 million people in the UK market.

The significance of this arrangement is that Travelbag operates within the travel-selling environment. Destination promotion can therefore be connected to holiday packages rather than remaining at the level of general awareness.

3.10.3. 2HUB Education - India

Visit Maldives has worked with 2HUB Education in India on travel-trade training, educational webinars and multi-city business-to-business roadshows.

Such activities can help overseas travel agents understand the destination, identify suitable products and develop commercial relationships with Maldivian tourism businesses.

Destination management companies

In European markets, MMPRC has also worked with destination management companies, including Resort Life Travel, to promote resort and guesthouse packages.

Destination management companies can help overseas travel sellers connect with local accommodation, transport, excursions and other services.

3.11. International Tourism Promotion, Public Relations Agencies and Government Partnerships

The Maldives' international tourism promotion is led by Visit Maldives Corporation (VMC), formerly known as the Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC). The corporation is responsible for promoting the Maldives as an international tourism destination under the national destination brand, *Maldives - The Sunny Side of Life*.

The Maldives has adopted a market-specific approach to international tourism promotion, engaging external public relations (PR), marketing and destination-representation agencies to support its activities in overseas markets. These agencies help communicate destination information, develop media relationships, coordinate promotional campaigns and engage travel-industry stakeholders.

Rather than relying exclusively on one international PR company, the national tourism authority has used agencies with knowledge of particular markets, languages, media environments and travel industries.

3.11.1. Government Institution Responsible for Tourism Promotion

Visit Maldives Corporation (VMC)
Official website: https://corporate.visitmaldives.com/

Institutional profile

- Visit Maldives Corporation is the Maldives' national tourism marketing organization.
- It was previously known as the Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC).
- The corporation promotes the Maldives internationally under the *Sunny Side of Life* destination identity.

- Its promotional activities include international advertising, public relations, destination branding, digital marketing, travel-trade engagement, tourism exhibitions, airline partnerships and media familiarization programmes.

International PR and marketing responsibilities

The corporation's international promotional activities include:

- Appointing external PR agencies to support destination promotion in overseas markets.
- Coordinating media outreach and distributing destination information to international publications.
- Engaging travel journalists, broadcasters, digital creators and influencers.
- Conducting joint marketing campaigns with airlines, tour operators and travel-distribution platforms.
- Participating in international tourism exhibitions, roadshows and business-to-business events.
- Organizing promotional activities designed to strengthen the Maldives' visibility in priority source markets.

The corporation's official publications document the appointment of PR representatives across several international markets, including the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Australia, China, Japan, India, Italy, Russia and the Middle East.

3.11.2. International PR Agencies Appointed by the Maldivian National Tourism Authority

The following companies appear in Visit Maldives Corporation's official announcements or annual reporting as PR representatives for particular markets. Their appointments and activities are documented primarily for 2019–2023. The historical appointments establish their experience working with the Maldivian national tourism authority but do not establish that every agency continues to hold an active contract in 2026.

1) Interface Tourism - France

Official website: https://www.interface-tourism.com/

Company profile

Interface Tourism is a communications, marketing and public relations agency specializing in the travel and tourism sector. Its services include tourism marketing, destination publicity, media relations and integrated communications campaigns.

Government relationship

In October 2020, MMPRC announced Interface Tourism as its appointed PR representative for France. The appointment aimed to increase the Maldives' visibility in the French market and strengthen relationships with media organizations and travel-industry professionals.

Documented promotional activities

The official announcement identified several activities associated with the Maldives' French-market promotion:

- A media familiarization trip conducted in February 2020.
- Participation in the *Rediscover Maldives* webinar series.
- Planned group media press trips.
- Consumer-facing newsletter promotion with the tour operator VeryChic.
- Promotional cooperation involving the tour operator Amplitudes.
- Digital and social media advertising activities associated with the wider market campaign.

The announcement also identified additional promotional initiatives planned for 2020. These planned activities should be distinguished from activities confirmed as completed.

Role in tourism promotion

Interface Tourism illustrates the use of a specialist tourism communications agency to support destination publicity, media engagement and consumer marketing in a particular international market.

2) Bullfrog + Baum - United States

Official website: https://bullfrogandbaum.com/

Company profile

Bullfrog + Baum is a marketing communications agency established in 2000. Its areas of expertise include hospitality, public relations, brand development, creative communications, digital marketing and event planning.

The company works with hospitality businesses, restaurants, hotels, tourism organizations, products and events.

Government relationship

MMPRC appointed Bullfrog + Baum as its PR representative for the United States in July 2020. The appointment was publicly announced on 27 September 2020.

The stated objective was to increase awareness of the Maldives among American travelers and strengthen the destination's visibility in US media and the travel industry.

Scope of work

The company's relevant capabilities include:

- Media relations and destination publicity.
- Strategic marketing communications.
- Brand positioning and storytelling.
- Creative and digital promotional campaigns.

- Hospitality and tourism communications.
- Event planning and promotional activities.

Role in tourism promotion

The appointment demonstrates how a national tourism authority can engage a specialist agency with hospitality and lifestyle expertise to communicate a destination's attractions to an overseas audience.

The documented appointment relates to the US market in 2020; a current contract has not been established by that announcement.

3) Anne Wild & Associates - Australia

Official website: https://www.annewild.com.au/

Company profile

Anne Wild & Associates (AWA) is an Australian public relations and communications agency. Its relevant services include strategic communications, media relations, publicity, campaign development and communications planning.

Government relationship

Visit Maldives announced on 17 December 2020 that Anne Wild & Associates had been appointed as the Maldives' PR representative for Australia.

The appointment was intended to strengthen the destination's visibility among Australian media and travel-industry audiences.

Relevant services

- Media relations and destination publicity.
- Public relations campaign development.
- Strategic communications.
- Travel-industry communications.
- Promotion of destination news and visitor experiences.
- Engagement with relevant media and consumer audiences.

Role in tourism promotion

The appointment provides an example of the Maldives using a locally based Australian agency to communicate with the Australian travel market and support its international destination-marketing activities.

The historical appointment does not independently establish the agency's current contractual status.

4) GEC PR Travel & Lifestyle - United Kingdom

Official website: https://www.gecpr.com/

Company profile

GEC PR Travel & Lifestyle is a public relations agency with expertise in travel, lifestyle, luxury, corporate communications and wellness.

Its work includes media outreach, tailored PR campaigns, destination publicity and communications designed to increase brand visibility.

Government relationship

Visit Maldives reported on 30 September 2020 that GEC PR had represented the Maldives in the UK market for the preceding four years.

Its appointment aimed to maintain the destination's visibility and increase outreach to British media and travel-industry professionals.

Documented promotional activities

The official announcement identified several activities undertaken in the UK market during 2020:

- A promotional campaign with TripAdvisor.
- A campaign with *Travel Weekly*.
- Exposure through the BBC Travel Show.
- A familiarization trip for a *Telegraph* journalist in August 2020.
- Participation in the UNITE Indian Ocean and Middle East event.
- Media interview opportunities involving the Managing Director of MMPRC.
- Participation in the *Rediscover Maldives* campaign and associated webinar series.

The announcement also described additional campaigns planned with Skyscanner and Travelzoo, outdoor advertising and cooperation with Qatar Airways. These were plans announced at the time, not evidence that every activity was completed.

Role in tourism promotion

GEC PR demonstrates how a destination authority can combine media relations, travel-publication partnerships, journalist familiarization and consumer-facing promotion in a major source market.

5) Eastbound Tourism LLC - Middle East

Official website: https://www.eastboundtourism.com/

Company profile

Eastbound Tourism is a travel representation and marketing organization serving tourism-related businesses and destinations. Its work combines travel-industry relationships with marketing and communications capabilities.

Government relationship

MMPRC appointed Eastbound Tourism LLC as its PR representative for the Middle Eastern market. The appointment was documented in an official announcement dated 15 October 2020.

The objective was to increase the Maldives' visibility and distribute destination information to media organizations and travel-industry professionals in the region.

Relevant services

The company's relevant capabilities include:

- Travel-industry representation.
- Marketing and business development.
- Public relations and media outreach.
- Digital marketing and communications.
- Creative and promotional services.
- Engagement with travel-trade and consumer audiences.

Documented promotional context

Visit Maldives' announcement described the agency's role in the wider effort to promote the destination in the Middle East. The corporation's regional marketing activities included travel-industry engagement, promotional campaigns and communications with media and travel sellers.

The announcement confirms Eastbound's appointment as a regional representative but does not establish that the agency personally conducted every promotional activity mentioned in the wider campaign.

Role in tourism promotion

Eastbound illustrates a regional representation model through which a destination authority can access local travel-industry relationships and communications expertise.

6) Travel Link Marketing Co. - China

Official website: https://www.travellinkmarketing.com/

Company profile

Travel Link Group is a tourism marketing company founded in 2005. Its published profile describes services for destinations, airlines, hotels, rail travel, cruising, shopping, attractions and other travel-related products.

Its China operations have provided tourism marketing and communications services across the Chinese travel market.

Government relationship

Visit Maldives announced on 19 November 2020 that Travel Link Marketing Co. had been appointed as the PR representative for the Chinese market.

The company had represented MMPRC in promotional activities intended to strengthen the Maldives' visibility among Chinese travelers.

Documented promotional activities

The official announcement identified the following activities:

- Management of the Maldives' WeChat and Weibo social media accounts.
- Outdoor advertising in Beijing, Guangzhou and Shanghai.
- Outdoor advertising at Beijing Capital International Airport, including an LED screen near the express gate in Terminal Three.
- Destination promotion through Mafengwo and TongCheng.
- Promotional content in *Voyage Magazine*.
- Integrated webinars conducted between May and October 2020.
- Development of a travel-trade information portal through WeChat.
- An online roadshow announced for 30 November 2020.

The social media management arrangement was reported as operating from 2019 at the time of the announcement.

Role in tourism promotion

Travel Link provides a documented example of market-specific destination promotion using Chinese social media, digital travel platforms, airport advertising and travel-trade communications.

The case demonstrates the importance of adapting tourism marketing to the digital platforms and travel-distribution environment of the target market.

7) Travel Link Marketing Co. Ltd. - Japan

Official website: https://www.travellinkmarketing.com/

Company profile

Travel Link Marketing's Japan operations form part of the wider Travel Link network. The company's Tokyo office was established in February 2020 as a branch of Travel Link China.

Government relationship

Visit Maldives announced on 7 December 2020 that Travel Link Marketing Co. Ltd. had been appointed as the PR representative for the Japanese market.

The appointment was intended to strengthen relationships with Japanese media organizations and travel-industry stakeholders and improve awareness of the Maldives as an international destination.

Documented activities

The official announcement described the agency's early work in:

- Establishing relationships with Japanese media organizations.
- Building connections with travel-industry professionals.
- Supporting destination publicity.
- Promoting the Maldives through travel-industry engagement.
- Supporting participation in JATA Online Travel Mart 2020.
- Supporting the JATA destination webinar series, scheduled for December 2020.

Role in tourism promotion

The appointment demonstrates how a destination authority can establish a market-specific PR presence to develop relationships with overseas travel sellers and media organizations.

The 2020 announcement documents the historical appointment and initial activities; it does not establish a current contract.

8) Kaus Media Services - Germany

Company profile

Kaus Media Services (KMS) is a public relations, creative, sales and marketing company specializing in tourism and entertainment. Its published profile describes experience in tourism marketing, media relations and communications for the European market.

Government relationship

MMPRC appointed Kaus Media Services as its PR representative for Germany. The appointment was announced on 28 October 2020.

The agency was responsible for supporting the Maldives' publicity and destination-marketing efforts in the German market.

Documented promotional activities

Visit Maldives reported the following activities associated with its German-speaking market promotion in 2020:

- Participation in the *Sun Will Shine Again* Facebook Live event.
- The *Rediscover Maldives* press conference.
- The *Rediscover Maldives* webinar series.
- Media interview opportunities.
- Free advertising for the Maldives on 730 McDonald's screens across Germany, Switzerland and Austria.

The announcement also referred to outdoor advertising and joint promotional activities with tour operators and airlines planned for the remainder of 2020.

Further documented activity

In March 2022, MMPRC participated in TravMedia's International Media Marketplace in Germany through Kaus Media Services. The event connected tourism businesses with journalists, editors, influencers and broadcasters and offered opportunities to develop relationships with travel-industry partners from Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Role in tourism promotion

Kaus Media Services illustrates the use of a specialist PR agency to support media relations, destination publicity and travel-industry engagement across German-speaking Europe.

9) Think Strawberries - India

Company profile

Think Strawberries is a tourism marketing and destination-representation company founded in 2010. Its published profile describes experience representing travel and tourism brands through its offices in India, Dubai and Singapore.

Its services include tourism marketing, destination representation, communications and engagement with travel-industry stakeholders.

Government relationship

MMPRC appointed Think Strawberries as its PR representative for India. Visit Maldives announced the appointment on 8 October 2020.

The objective was to increase the Maldives' visibility among Indian travelers and strengthen communication with Indian media and travel-industry audiences.

Documented promotional activities

The official announcement described several initiatives associated with the Indian market:

- A joint campaign with KAYAK, featuring *Visit Maldives…Later* advertising.
- An online travel-trade webinar.
- Participation in SATTE GenX, a virtual tourism-industry exhibition.
- A six-month campaign with WeddingSutra, a platform serving the wedding market.
- A nationwide radio campaign announced for Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Thiruvananthapuram and Kochi.
- Additional familiarization trips and a campaign with VOOT announced as upcoming activities.

The announcement distinguished completed activities from campaigns planned at that time.

Further documented activity

Visit Maldives' 2023 annual reporting describes an India media familiarization trip conducted from 20 to 26 February 2023. Five journalists from Indian publications participated, accompanied by a PR representative from Think Strawberries.

The trip focused on affordable luxury and island life and included accommodation and tourism experiences at selected Maldivian resorts and guesthouses.

Role in tourism promotion

Think Strawberries illustrates the use of destination PR, travel-industry exhibitions, digital campaigns, wedding tourism promotion and journalist familiarization to reach a major regional source market.

10) TMI Consultancy - Russia and CIS countries

Government relationship

MMPRC's 2020 annual report lists TMI Consultancy as a PR representative for Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

The listing establishes the company's historical association with the Maldives' international PR representation network.

Documented role

The official annual report identifies the company and its designated market but does not provide enough detail in the cited listing to establish a complete profile of its individual campaigns, services or results.

The company's inclusion should therefore be understood as evidence of a historical PR representation appointment rather than proof of a current contract or particular campaign outcomes.

11) AIGO S.r.l. - Italy

Government relationship

MMPRC's 2020 annual report lists AIGO S.r.l. as a PR representative for Italy.

The listing documents the company's historical inclusion in the Maldives' international tourism PR representation network.

Documented role

The annual report identifies AIGO and its designated market. The listing alone does not establish the detailed scope, duration or results of a specific contract.

The company is relevant to a review of the Maldives' historical market-specific PR arrangements, but the 2020 listing should not be interpreted as confirmation of a current appointment.

12) Pacific World Travel - Selected Southeast Asian markets

Government relationship

MMPRC's 2020 annual report lists Pacific World Travel as a PR representative for Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia.

This establishes a historical association with the Maldives' international tourism representation arrangements in those markets.

Documented role

The annual report identifies the company and the countries assigned to it. The cited listing does not provide sufficient detail to establish its specific campaign activities, contract duration or promotional results.

The entry demonstrates that the Maldives' historical representation model included regional coverage across several Southeast Asian markets rather than relying exclusively on separate agencies for every country.

13) S Marketing and Communications Co. Ltd. - South Korea

Government relationship

MMPRC's annual reporting identifies S Marketing and Communications Co. Ltd. as a PR representative associated with South Korea.

The company also appears in the corporation's 2020 annual report as its representative for the South Korean market.

Documented role

The official reporting establishes the company's historical role in the Maldives' market-specific representation network. The available listing does not, by itself, establish a complete account of the agency's services, individual campaigns or current contractual status.

3.11.3. Additional Tourism Marketing and Media Company in the Maldives

The Travel Guys (Pvt) Ltd - Travelution Media

Website: https://travelution.media/

Company profile

The Travel Guys is a Maldivian company operating Travelution Media, a platform focused on tourism, travel and hospitality.

Its activities include tourism journalism, destination storytelling, industry features, visual content, promotional partnerships and travel-sector publications.

Relevant promotional activities

- **Tourism content creation:** Producing articles, interviews and visual content about Maldivian destinations and visitor experiences.
- **Travel-industry publicity:** Featuring resorts, tourism businesses, industry developments and destination experiences.
- **Tourism publications:** Publishing material that communicates Maldivian tourism products to industry and international audiences.
- **Marketing partnerships:** Working with tourism businesses and hospitality brands to support their visibility.
- **Destination storytelling:** Highlighting local culture, heritage, marine activities, accommodation and other tourism experiences.

In November 2024, The Travel Guys launched the third edition of its Travelution magazine at the World Travel Market in London. The publication featured Maldivian tourism, culture, resorts and hospitality.

Role in tourism promotion

The company provides an example of a locally based tourism media and marketing organization that supports destination visibility through editorial content, industry relationships and promotional partnerships.

Its tourism marketing activities are documented. The evidence cited here does not establish that it was appointed as Visit Maldives Corporation's official PR representative.

3.11.4. Current Government Procurement of International PR Services

Visit Maldives Corporation's procurement records demonstrate that market-specific PR procurement continues to form part of its international tourism promotion approach.

Official procurement notices published in 2026 included the following:

Japan - Visit Maldives Week 2026

The corporation issued procurement notices seeking a PR agency to support Visit Maldives Week in Japan, scheduled for 28 September–2 October 2026, across Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya.

The published scope included:

- Coordination of meetings and event logistics.
- Engagement with Japanese media and influencers.
- Support for event PR and content localization.
- Distribution of destination information.
- Media monitoring and reporting.
- Coordination of the promotional programme with Visit Maldives Corporation.

Middle East - Arabian Travel Market and regional promotional activities

Visit Maldives issued notices seeking PR agency support for regional activities associated with the Arabian Travel Market, Visit Maldives Week in Arabia and a Maldivian evening.

The procurement scope concerned event support, media relations, travel-trade engagement and destination publicity.

Australia - Visit Maldives Week

The corporation issued a procurement notice for PR support for Visit Maldives Week in Australia.

The published requirements included:

- Arranging meetings with tour operators, travel agents, airlines, hotel partners and other travel-industry stakeholders.
- Coordinating media interviews and press meetings.
- Engaging Australian media and pitching destination stories.
- Preparing and distributing event-related press releases.
- Supporting promotional activities before the roadshow.
- Maintaining trade-contact databases and reporting on engagement activities.

Significance of the procurement model

These notices demonstrate that Visit Maldives Corporation defines PR requirements according to particular markets, events and campaign periods. They also show that the scope of external agency work can extend beyond publicity to include logistics, media coordination, travel-trade engagement and campaign reporting.

The procurement notices establish that the corporation sought PR services for these activities. They do not, by themselves, identify the successful bidder or establish that a particular agency received the contract.

3.11.7. Key Features of the Maldives' International PR Representation Model

The Maldives' approach combines a central national tourism marketing organization with external agencies that possess knowledge of individual overseas markets.

The documented model includes:

1. **Market-specific representation:** Agencies are selected to support tourism promotion in particular countries or regions.
2. **Local media knowledge:** Representatives support access to media, travel publications and travel-industry stakeholders in their assigned markets.
3. **Multiple promotional channels:** Activities can combine public relations, digital marketing, advertising, trade engagement and media familiarization.
4. **Commercial connections:** Agency work can link destination awareness with travel sellers, tour operators and promotional partners.
5. **Event-based procurement:** The corporation also seeks PR services for particular roadshows, tourism exhibitions and destination-promotion events.
6. **Defined service requirements:** Procurement documents specify activities such as media outreach, event coordination, stakeholder engagement and reporting.

The Maldives' documented experience shows how a national tourism authority can use external specialist agencies to support destination promotion in international markets while retaining central responsibility for the national tourism brand and overall marketing strategy.

3.12. International PR representation and agency procurement

MMPRC uses market-specific representation and procurement arrangements to support its international marketing.

Rather than relying exclusively on a single global agency, the organization has used Requests for Proposals to recruit agencies for particular markets and services.

An example is the recruitment of an agency in Germany to support trade public relations, press outreach and consumer marketing across German-speaking Europe.

This model allows a destination authority to select an agency with knowledge of a particular market's media, language, travel industry and consumer behaviour.

For Sri Lanka, a market-specific PR model could be considered for priority markets where specialist knowledge is particularly valuable.

Possible responsibilities include:

- Media relations.
- Travel-journalist engagement.
- Press releases and destination features.
- Consumer communications.
- Trade public relations.
- Influencer coordination.
- Crisis communications.
- Campaign reporting.

The exact appointment, scope and duration of each contract should be verified through current procurement records.

3.13. International tourism exhibitions and trade representation

The Maldives participates in major international travel exhibitions and has sought prominent positions at important trade events.

One example is its planned host-country status for ITB Berlin 2027, subject to the event's official arrangements.

International exhibitions allow tourism authorities to present the destination, while resorts, travel operators and destination management companies can meet potential buyers.

Rules governing official national pavilions

The Maldives has used rules governing representation within official national tourism pavilions to prioritize eligible local tourism businesses.

The stated policy framework requires participating representatives to satisfy the applicable registration and licensing conditions, including those relevant to Maldivian tour operators, resort representatives and destination management companies.

This approach is intended to ensure that official national representation benefits legitimate domestic tourism businesses.

The precise eligibility requirements should be checked against the applicable event regulations and current national rules.

Application to Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka could consider transparent eligibility criteria for businesses receiving publicly supported space in official international tourism pavilions.

Possible criteria include:

- Valid tourism registration.
- Demonstrated ability to sell Sri Lankan tourism products.
- Compliance with relevant industry requirements.
- Commitment to participate in scheduled business meetings.
- Clear disclosure of the products and destinations represented.
- Post-event reporting on contacts and commercial opportunities.

Such criteria should be designed to support local tourism businesses while remaining consistent with applicable procurement and competition requirements.

3.14. Local-island tourism and economic diversification

Although the Maldives is widely associated with luxury private-island resorts, its destination-marketing approach also promotes local-island guesthouses and community-based experiences.

Examples of local islands associated with tourism include:

- Maafushi.
- Thulusdhoo.
- Dhiffushi.

These destinations provide a different experience from exclusive resort islands and can broaden the visitor market.

Local-island tourism can create opportunities for guesthouse owners, restaurants, transport operators, guides and small businesses.

For Sri Lanka, the equivalent lesson is to market a wider range of tourism products and communities rather than allowing the international image of the country to be dominated by a single product category.

3.15. Japanese media familiarization programme

A particularly specific example of the Maldives' media-hosting approach took place from 17 to 24 May 2024.

MMPRC hosted journalists from four Japanese publications:

- VOGUE Japan Online.
- CREA WEB.
- Numero Tokyo.
- Mynavi Woman.

The journalists visited three accommodation properties:

- Huvafen Fushi.
- Mövenpick Resort Kuredhivaru.
- LUX* South Ari.

The visit was intended to generate awareness of the Maldives in Japan through coverage of luxury retreats, wellness and distinctive island experiences.

The programme demonstrates the importance of matching hosted visits to the interests of the invited publications.

For Sri Lanka, a luxury travel publication could be offered a different itinerary from a wildlife magazine, a food publication or a Buddhist heritage journal.

3.16. Cruise tourism and marine experiences

The Maldives' island geography makes marine experiences and sea-based transfers integral to its tourism offering.

Its international positioning includes private-island resorts, diving, snorkelling, yacht experiences and other marine activities.

Cruise tourism and marine partnerships should be treated as a distinct area of destination marketing rather than assumed to be covered automatically by airline agreements.

For Sri Lanka, the relevant opportunities include:

- Cruise-ship shore excursions.
- Port-city tourism products.
- Cultural and culinary excursions for cruise passengers.
- Pre- and post-cruise accommodation packages.
- Cooperation with cruise operators and international travel sellers.
- Promotion of Colombo, Galle, Trincomalee and other suitable destinations according to itinerary and port capacity.

Any proposed partnership should be evaluated against actual vessel schedules, port facilities, passenger profiles and the capacity of local tourism providers.

3.17. Key lessons from the Maldives

The Maldives demonstrates how a destination can coordinate international visibility, commercial distribution and specialist tourism promotion.

Its most relevant practices for Sri Lanka are:

1. Build partnerships with globally recognized sports and entertainment properties where the target audience justifies the investment.
2. Combine outdoor advertising with trade engagement.
3. Negotiate joint marketing agreements with international airlines.
4. Work with online travel agencies and travel sellers that can convert interest into bookings.
5. Recruit market-specific PR representatives where appropriate.
6. Organize familiarization visits for publications with clearly defined audiences.
7. Promote both premium and community-based tourism products.
8. Establish transparent rules for participation in official international tourism pavilions.
9. Measure campaign effectiveness through commercial outcomes, not visibility alone.

4. VIETNAM: INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING, CULINARY DIPLOMACY AND HOSTED-BUYER PROGRAMMES



4.1. Institutional structure and national tourism brand

Vietnam's national tourism promotion is led by the Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism (VNAT), operating under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism.

Its principal international destination-marketing platform is Vietnam.travel, supported by official tourism information and promotional channels.

Vietnam's approach combines:

- International destination advertising.
- Digital storytelling.
- Cultural and culinary promotion.
- Heritage and nature tourism.
- Sustainable tourism.
- International tourism exhibitions.
- Familiarization tours.
- Airline and travel-industry cooperation.

Rather than relying entirely on one global campaign, Vietnam promotes different experiences through specific content and market-development initiatives.

4.2. Major International Tourist Source Markets

Vietnam receives international visitors primarily from Asian markets, alongside established demand from North America, Australia and Europe. The country's international tourism performance strengthened in 2025, with approximately 21.2 million foreign visitors recorded during the year.

The ten leading international source markets in 2025 were:

Rank	Country or Market	Approximate Visitor Arrivals
1	China	5.28 million
2	South Korea	4.33 million
3	Taiwan	1.23 million
4	United States	849,000
5	Japan	814,000
6	India	746,000
7	Russia	690,000
8	Cambodia	687,000
9	Malaysia	574,000
10	Australia	548,000

Source: Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism, reporting National Statistics Office data for 2025.

China and South Korea were Vietnam's two largest source markets, together accounting for a substantial proportion of international arrivals. Taiwan ranked third, while the United States

and Japan were the leading markets outside the first three positions. India also featured prominently among the ten largest markets.

The distribution demonstrates the importance of Northeast Asian markets to Vietnam's international tourism sector, while demand from India, Australia, the United States and other markets provides additional opportunities for geographical diversification.

These source markets form an important context for assessing Vietnam's use of international broadcasting, digital storytelling, culinary promotion, tourism exhibitions and hosted familiarization programmes.

4.3. Tourism Infrastructure, Destination Appeal and Signature Experiences - Vietnam

Vietnam offers a broad range of travel experiences within a relatively long, geographically varied country. Visitors can combine mountain journeys in the north, limestone landscapes and cave systems, historic towns, coastal stays, major cities, and river-based experiences in the Mekong Delta. Its tourism product is particularly suited to travelers who want to combine several types of experience in one itinerary.

4.3.1. Mountain routes and community-based accommodation

The Ha Giang Loop: Located in northern Vietnam, the Ha Giang Loop is known for mountain passes, limestone peaks, river valleys, and the cultural traditions of ethnic communities. Specific locations include the Ma Pi Leng Pass, the Nho Que River, Quan Ba Twin Mountains, the Lung Cu Flagpole, and the Vuong Family's Residence.

The route is attractive to visitors seeking a multi-day journey rather than a single sightseeing stop. The experience can include mountain viewpoints, local markets, regional food, and overnight stays in hotels, motels, or homestays. Homestays allow visitors to stay in local communities and experience regional life more directly than they would through a standard city-hotel itinerary.

The route also requires practical care. The official Vietnam tourism site notes the risks associated with riding motorbikes on winding mountain roads and recommends using a local driver rather than riding independently. This is an important example of how a destination's adventure appeal must be supported by appropriate safety decisions.

4.3.2. Cave systems and nature-based adventure

Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park: The Phong Nha area is known for extensive cave systems, underground rivers, and forest landscapes. Visitors can choose among different types of cave experiences, including shorter visits to accessible caves and more demanding guided expeditions.

Named experiences include **Paradise Cave**, **Dark Cave**, and guided expeditions associated with **Hang En** and **Hang Pygmy**. The area's appeal lies in the opportunity to explore underground landscapes and combine cave visits with jungle activities, river experiences, and camping where permitted by the operator and route.

This is a more specialized product than a conventional sightseeing tour. It can appeal to adventure travelers who are prepared to follow safety instructions, use trained guides, and select activities appropriate to their physical ability and experience. Vietnam's official tourism site identifies Phong Nha as a major destination for cave exploration and outdoor activities.

4.3.3. River life and homestays in the Mekong Delta

The Mekong Delta provides a different experience from Vietnam's mountain and cave destinations. Its waterways, orchards, river settlements, and markets create opportunities for visitors to explore the relationship between daily life and the river environment.

- **Cai Be:** Visitors can explore riverside settlements, orchards, and agricultural areas, including through cycling and local stays.
- **Sa Dec:** The town offers riverfront markets and colonial-era architecture, with opportunities to explore local food and the surrounding agricultural landscape.
- **Chau Doc:** Visitors can explore markets, temples, pagodas, and communities shaped by the region's cultural diversity.

A stay in a local homestay can connect accommodation with activities such as cycling through orchards, eating locally prepared meals, and visiting river markets. The attraction is not simply a scenic boat ride; it is the opportunity to understand how people live and work within a river-based landscape. Vietnam's official tourism material specifically identifies river homestays, orchard islands, floating markets, and local cultural sites as features of the Mekong Delta.

4.3.4. Historic towns and food experiences tied to location

Hoi An: Hoi An combines historic streets, riverside settings, markets, and lantern-lit evenings. Visitors can explore the town on foot, visit local markets, participate in cooking experiences, and combine town visits with nearby beach stays, including An Bang.

Hue: As a former imperial capital, Hue offers a distinctive culinary experience associated with its historic court culture. Visitors can explore local dishes and more elaborate preparations that differ from the everyday street-food experiences found elsewhere in the country.

Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City: The two cities offer contrasting urban experiences, including local cafés, street food, markets, museums, and city neighborhoods. Food exploration can form part of a walking itinerary rather than being limited to formal restaurants.

Specific foods such as **pho** and **banh mi** provide familiar entry points for international visitors, while regional specialties allow travelers to discover differences between cities and regions. The destination value lies in the close relationship between food, local neighborhoods, markets, and cultural history. Vietnam's official tourism site highlights regional cuisine and cooking experiences as part of its wider destination offering.

4.3.5. Coastal stays and accommodation choice

Vietnam's coastal destinations provide a range of experiences, from urban beach holidays to island stays and higher-end resorts.

- **Da Nang:** A coastal city where beach access can be combined with urban accommodation, restaurants, and excursions to nearby attractions.
- **An Bang:** A beach area close to Hoi An, allowing visitors to combine a historic-town stay with time by the sea.
- **Phu Quoc:** An island destination suited to beach holidays and resort stays.
- **Nha Trang:** A coastal destination with beach accommodation and marine-oriented visitor activities.

Accommodation options across Vietnam include hotels, homestays, boutique properties, and luxury resorts. This range enables travelers to combine simpler community-based stays with higher-standard accommodation during the same journey. However, prices vary by location, season, property standard, and the activities included; the country should not be characterized as uniformly inexpensive.

4.3.6. Participatory Agricultural, Culinary and Community-Based Experiences

Agricultural tourism, fruit harvesting and village-based experiences

Experiences offered to visitors:

- **Fruit picking in the Mekong Delta:** At Thoi Son Islet, visitors can travel through river channels to fruit orchards and pick tropical fruits such as longan, rambutan and mango directly from the trees.
- **Coconut candy production:** In Ben Tre, visitors can visit family-run workshops to observe and learn about the traditional preparation and packaging of coconut candy.
- **Traditional food preparation:** Some rural tourism programmes allow visitors to participate in preparing local dishes using ingredients harvested from nearby gardens.
- Traditional handicrafts: Visitors can learn about coconut-leaf weaving, mat-making and other village-based craft activities.

- River-based experiences: Sampan rides, cycling through coconut plantations, visits to floating markets and homestays with local families allow tourists to experience everyday life in the Mekong Delta.

Relevance and potential applications for Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has excellent potential to develop comparable agricultural and village-based tourism experiences:

- **Fruit orchard experiences:** Visitors could participate in fruit picking in areas such as Dambulla, Matale and other agricultural regions, followed by demonstrations of preparing fruit juices, preserves, dried fruit and traditional sweets.
- **Coconut-based experiences:** Tourists could learn about coconut harvesting, traditional coconut scraping, coconut milk extraction, coconut-based food preparation and the production of coir products.
- **Tea-to-cup experiences:** Visitors could participate in tea plucking, observe tea processing and prepare their own cup of Ceylon tea.
- **Spice village experiences:** Tourists could visit spice gardens, identify spices, participate in selected harvesting activities and learn how spices are processed and used in traditional Sri Lankan cooking.
- **Traditional village experiences:** Rural homestays could include cooking, farming, handicrafts, local markets and guided exploration of village life.

Vietnam demonstrates how agriculture, local industries and traditional food production can be transformed into structured tourism experiences that directly involve visitors and local communities.

4.3.7. Costs, safety, and itinerary planning

Vietnam's variety of accommodation and food options gives visitors flexibility in how they allocate their travel budgets. Local eateries and homestays can offer a different expenditure profile from luxury resorts and guided adventure expeditions. Costs should therefore be assessed by itinerary and accommodation type rather than through a blanket claim that Vietnam is cheap.

Practical planning is especially important for long-distance travel, mountain routes, cave expeditions, and activities dependent on weather conditions. Visitors should use qualified guides where required, confirm what is included in adventure packages, and consider road conditions when planning routes such as the Ha Giang Loop.

Why Vietnam is worth visiting from a destination-product perspective: Vietnam offers a strong combination of mountain journeys, cave exploration, river-based community experiences, historic towns, regional food, and coastal accommodation. Its value lies in the ability to combine physically and culturally different experiences within one trip, rather than relying on one signature attraction alone.

4.4. Major Tourism Promotion Fairs and Events

Vietnam's major tourism fairs serve two connected purposes: enabling tourism businesses to establish commercial relationships and allowing visitors to explore travel products, compare offers, and obtain information about destinations. Two major events are the Vietnam International Travel Mart and the International Travel Expo Ho Chi Minh City.

4.4.1. Vietnam International Travel Mart (VITM Hanoi)

Organizer: Vietnam Tourism Association
Location: Hanoi International Centre for Exhibition, Hanoi
2026 dates: April 9 - 12, 2026
Theme: *Digital Transformation & Green Growth – Elevating Vietnam Tourism*

VITM is a major travel fair that brings together tourism promotion agencies, travel businesses, airlines, accommodation providers, transport companies, and other tourism-related organizations.

The 2026 edition was designed to showcase destinations, introduce tourism products, and encourage business cooperation. The official event information projected approximately 450 booths, participation from 20 countries and territories, around 4,000 tourism professionals, and more than 100,000 public visitors. These were event projections, not confirmed attendance figures.

For visitors, the fair offers an opportunity to explore travel products and learn about destinations and tourism services. Depending on participating suppliers and offers, attendees may be able to compare holiday packages, discover travel itineraries, and access promotional deals.

For tourism businesses, the fair provides opportunities to meet travel sellers, promote products, establish partnerships, and learn about market developments. The 2026 event also emphasized digital transformation and green growth, connecting tourism promotion with the industry's use of technology and sustainable business practices.

Tourism-marketing significance: VITM connects public interest in travel with the tourism businesses that can turn that interest into bookings. Its combination of industry participation and public attendance makes it relevant to both destination promotion and the commercial development of tourism products.

4.4.2. International Travel Expo Ho Chi Minh City (ITE HCMC)

Organizers: Vietnam National Authority of Tourism and Ho Chi Minh City Department of Tourism
Location: Saigon Exhibition and Convention Centre, Ho Chi Minh City
2026 dates: August 27–29, 2026
Theme: *Vibrant Connections – Global Destinations*

ITE HCMC is an international tourism exhibition that connects Vietnamese tourism businesses and destinations with overseas travel buyers and tourism-industry representatives.

The 2026 edition brought together more than 520 exhibitors and 260 international buyers from over 40 countries and territories, according to VietnamPlus reporting. Participating destinations and businesses used the event to showcase products, establish connections, and develop international tourism partnerships.

The event differs from a public cultural festival because its principal emphasis is on international tourism cooperation and business development. It allows tourism promotion agencies, hotels, travel companies, and other providers to introduce their products to potential commercial partners and exchange information about international markets.

For visitors and the wider tourism sector, the exhibition can increase awareness of available destinations and travel products. Its direct business function, however, is to connect suppliers with international buyers and travel-industry partners who can help distribute and sell those products.

Tourism-marketing significance: ITE HCMC provides Vietnam with an international platform for tourism-business development and destination exposure. Its emphasis on international buyers and cross-border connections complements VITM's wider combination of industry and public participation.

4.5. International broadcast partnerships: CNN International

Vietnam's international tourism promotion has included collaboration with CNN International Commercial (CNNIC) to develop and distribute destination-promotional content.

The campaign model involves promotional films and destination storytelling distributed through international broadcast and digital media.

The intended international audiences include travellers in North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific.

Promoted destinations and experiences have included:

- Hoi An.
- Ha Long Bay.
- Cat Ba Archipelago.
- Hue.
- Phu Quoc Island.

These locations allow Vietnam to showcase different tourism products, including cultural heritage, coastal scenery, islands, historic cities and nature-based experiences.

Why broadcast partnerships matter

An international broadcaster can provide access to audiences across several markets. However, the existence of a broadcaster partnership does not mean that every advertisement runs on every channel in the network.

A campaign's actual delivery depends on the contract, target countries, media placements, broadcast schedule and digital distribution arrangements.

For Sri Lanka, an international broadcaster partnership could involve:

- Short destination advertisements.
- Longer documentary-style content.
- Digital destination features.
- Market-specific campaign pages.
- Sponsored travel programmes.
- Cultural and culinary storytelling.

Any procurement should identify the actual distribution channels, countries, dates, audience commitments and performance-reporting requirements.

4.6. Responsible tourism: Ogilvy Group Vietnam and WWF-Vietnam

Vietnam has also used partnerships involving advertising and environmental organizations to promote responsible tourism and biodiversity-related messages.

One example is the collaboration involving Ogilvy Group Vietnam and WWF-Vietnam, associated with campaigns such as Say No to Ivory.

The initiative connected environmental awareness with destination positioning and the protection of wildlife.

The broader significance is that tourism promotion can incorporate conservation and responsible-travel messaging instead of focusing exclusively on accommodation, scenery and leisure.

For Sri Lanka, a similar approach could highlight:

- Responsible wildlife observation.
- Marine conservation.
- Forest and biodiversity protection.
- Community-based tourism.
- Responsible visits to national parks.
- Environmental standards for accommodation and tourism businesses.

Such messages should be supported by credible conservation practices rather than used only as advertising themes.

4.7. Live Fully in Vietnam: digital storytelling

Vietnam has used Live Fully in Vietnam! as a digital destination-promotion initiative developed through cooperation involving Google's YouTube platform and the Tourism Information Technology Center.

The content presents different aspects of the country, including:

- Coastal and island tourism.
- Cultural heritage.
- Nature and outdoor experiences.
- Culinary tourism.
- Golf.
- Wellness.
- Rural tourism.
- Railway journeys.

The thematic approach allows the country to produce content for different audiences without requiring every video to communicate every aspect of the destination.

For Sri Lanka, a similar content architecture could include dedicated international video series on:

1. The Cultural Triangle.
2. Buddhist heritage.
3. Wildlife and national parks.
4. Tea country and scenic rail journeys.
5. Coastal tourism and surfing.
6. Sri Lankan cuisine.
7. Ayurveda and wellness.
8. Rural and community-based tourism.

Each series could be developed with a specific audience, distribution strategy and call to action.

4.8. Vietnam's 2025 tourism stimulus programme

In February 2025, Vietnam announced a tourism stimulus programme under the theme Vietnam - Timeless Journey, Endless Love!

The initiative combined destination promotion with measures intended to encourage travel and tourism-industry participation.

Its activities included:

- Destination roadshows.
- International tourism promotion.
- Cultural events.
- Tourism exhibitions.
- Press trips.
- Familiarization tours.
- Participation by tourism businesses.
- Promotional packages and service incentives.
- Cooperation between airlines, accommodation providers, attractions and tour operators.

The programme also promoted thematic tourism products such as cultural heritage, gastronomy, golf, wellness, ecotourism, agricultural tourism and rural experiences.

International roadshows

Vietnam's 2025 international promotional programme included activities in European markets.

In May 2025, destination-promotion programmes were announced for France, Italy and Switzerland, with additional activities planned for Poland, the Czech Republic and Germany.

The country also promoted tourism and cinema at the Cannes Film Festival in France.

The programme demonstrates how international tourism promotion can be aligned with cultural events and diplomatic relationships.

For Sri Lanka, overseas promotional programmes could be organized around major cultural events, bilateral anniversaries, international travel exhibitions or the launch of a new tourism product.

4.9. Heritage railway tourism: Vietnam Railways

Vietnam's tourism information and promotional activities have included cooperation with Vietnam Railways to showcase scenic railway experiences.

One example associated with heritage railway promotion is the luxury Revolution Express steam-train concept linking destinations in central Vietnam, including Phong Nha, Hue and Da Nang.

Railway-based tourism can turn transport infrastructure into a tourism product in its own right.

The value lies in the experience of travelling through landscapes, historic towns and culturally significant areas rather than treating the train solely as a means of getting from one place to another.

Application to Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka could develop destination-specific railway itineraries linking:

- Colombo and Kandy.
- Kandy and the central highlands.
- Nanu Oya and Ella.
- Ella and Badulla.
- Cultural heritage locations and regional tourism centres, where practical connections are available.

Any proposed luxury or heritage service would require an assessment of rolling stock, railway capacity, timetables, infrastructure, passenger safety, operational costs and the availability of suitable tourism services.

4.10. Culinary diplomacy: Luke Nguyen

Vietnam provides an example of culinary promotion through an internationally recognized chef.

Luke Nguyen, a Vietnamese-Australian chef and television personality, has been associated with culinary promotion for Vietnam Airlines.

His work includes the development of signature inflight menus and the presentation of Vietnamese cuisine through international culinary television programmes.

Programmes associated with his work include:

- Luke Nguyen's Vietnam.
- Luke Nguyen's Greater Mekong.

He has also been associated with luxury Mekong River cruise experiences through tour-operator partnerships, including APT.

His wider work has included menu development associated with Etihad Airways.

The strategic value of culinary diplomacy is that food can communicate a country's cultural identity in a way that is accessible to international audiences.

An inflight meal, a television programme or a culinary travel itinerary can introduce travellers to regional ingredients, cooking traditions and local experiences before they arrive.

Application to Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka could consider a culinary ambassador programme involving internationally recognized Sri Lankan chefs and culinary personalities.

Possible activities include:

- Signature Sri Lankan menus with international airlines.
- Destination-focused cooking programmes.
- Culinary travel documentaries.
- International food-media familiarization tours.
- Regional food itineraries.
- Promotion of tea, spices, seafood and traditional cuisine.
- Cooperation with hotels and restaurants to develop bookable culinary experiences.

The programme should connect food promotion with actual restaurants, destinations, producers and tourism businesses.

4.11. International Travel Expo Ho Chi Minh City

Vietnam's major tourism trade event is the International Travel Expo Ho Chi Minh City (ITE HCMC).

The event provides a platform for tourism businesses, international travel buyers, destination representatives and industry stakeholders to meet and develop commercial relationships.

A central component is its Hosted Buyer Programme.

Under the programme, eligible international travel buyers can receive support for travel, accommodation and organized itineraries under the applicable event arrangements.

Target markets have included:

- Australia.
- United States.
- Germany.
- United Kingdom.
- France.
- India.

The programme has also sought participation from emerging markets, including Brazil and the Czech Republic.

The objective is to attract buyers who have a commercial reason to attend, rather than simply maximizing the number of international delegates.

Why hosted buyers matter

A hosted buyer is generally a qualified tourism-industry representative invited to participate because they may purchase tourism products, develop itineraries or establish business relationships with local suppliers.

The programme can connect international travel sellers with:

- Hotels.
- Tour operators.
- Destination management companies.
- Attractions.
- Transport providers.
- Tourism authorities.
- Specialist experience providers.

For Sri Lanka, a hosted-buyer programme could be attached to the Sri Lanka Travel Mart or another established tourism trade event.

Participation should be based on relevant market access, purchasing potential, scheduled business meetings and a credible plan to promote or sell Sri Lankan tourism products.

4.12. Familiarization tours for journalists and tourism professionals

Vietnam's tourism-promotion model includes familiarization visits for international media and tourism-industry representatives.

Relevant participants can include:

- Travel journalists.
- Television crews.
- Digital content creators.
- Overseas travel agents.
- Tour operators.
- Hotel-industry representatives.
- Tourism buyers.

These programmes allow participants to inspect destinations, experience tourism products and develop material or commercial relationships.

A hotel representative, for example, may be interested in accommodation standards and destination logistics, while a travel journalist may focus on cultural experiences and story potential.

The itineraries should reflect these differences.

For Sri Lanka, separate programmes could be developed for editorial media, travel buyers, hotel-industry professionals and airline representatives rather than combining every participant into one generic tour.

4.13. Leading Tourism Promotion PR Agencies, International Media Partners and Private-Sector Collaborations

Vietnam's international tourism promotion involves cooperation between the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism (VNAT), the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, international media organizations, specialist travel-marketing consultancies, digital platforms, and major Vietnamese tourism businesses.

These partnerships serve different functions, including international public relations, media coverage, advertising, digital destination marketing, tourism trade representation, airline cooperation, and participation in international travel exhibitions. Vietnam's 2026 tourism promotion plan identifies promotional activities led by VNAT, local authorities, and private-sector tourism enterprises, demonstrating the coordination between public-sector tourism promotion and commercial tourism organizations (Vietnam National Authority of Tourism [VNAT], 2026).

4.13.1. The PC Agency - International Tourism PR and Trade Representation

Company profile

- The PC Agency is an international travel public relations, trade marketing, and digital marketing consultancy.
- The company works with tourism boards, airlines, hotels, tour operators, cruise companies, and other travel brands.
- Its services include media relations, influencer engagement, destination marketing, travel-trade representation, roadshows, corporate communications, and digital campaigns.

Documented relationship with Vietnam's tourism authorities

- In November 2019, Vietnam announced the opening of its first overseas tourism representation office in London, known as the Visit Vietnam Office.
- The office was established through cooperation between the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT) and the Vietnam Tourism Advisory Board (TAB), a private-sector tourism consortium.
- The PC Agency was appointed to manage media and travel-trade relations in the United Kingdom and Ireland markets.
- The appointment was therefore connected to an official tourism-promotion initiative involving Vietnam's national tourism administration and the private-sector advisory

board. The documented appointment should be understood in its historical context rather than automatically treated as a current, permanent global contract.

Activities undertaken

- Developed travel-trade marketing activities to raise Vietnam's profile in the UK market.
- Organized an Indochina roadshow and destination showcase.
- Arranged a business-to-business (B2B) travel-trade event.
- Delivered destination-training and sales presentations for travel-industry professionals, including representatives associated with Kuoni and Emirates.
- Secured media interviews and coverage to publicize Vietnam as an international travel destination.
- Organized a launch event following Vietnam's reopening to international travel in March 2022.
- Worked with sponsors, including Vietnam Airlines and New World Phu Quoc, to support promotional activities.
- Reported meeting more than 300 sales agents during the trade-marketing campaign and securing travel-trade media coverage with a reported circulation exceeding 150,000.

Significance for tourism promotion

The PC Agency case demonstrates how a country can use a specialist international consultancy to maintain relationships with overseas travel agents, generate media coverage, organize destination showcases, and introduce tourism products to travel sellers. Its documented work connected destination awareness with the commercial networks through which overseas visitors discover and purchase holidays (The PC Agency, n.d.; Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2019).

4.13.2. CNN International Commercial - International Media and Destination Advertising

Company profile

- CNN International Commercial (CNNIC) is the commercial division of CNN International.
- It provides international advertising, branded-content production, strategic media partnerships, and commercial communication services.
- Its international media network enables tourism organizations to reach audiences across multiple countries and regions.

Documented relationship with Vietnam's tourism authorities

- Vietnam's national tourism authorities have collaborated with CNN on international destination-promotion activities.
- In October 2020, VNAT partnered with CNN International to launch the *Why Not Vietnam?* television commercial. The 30-second advertisement was scheduled to run on CNN Asia for six weeks, beginning October 15, 2020, and was also distributed through Vietnam's official tourism website and social media channels.
- In December 2024, VNAT announced another 30-second promotional video introducing Vietnam's landscapes, cultural heritage, and tourism experiences to international audiences through CNN and digital platforms.
- On May 25, 2026, VNAT leadership met representatives of CNNIC to discuss the next phase of cooperation in international tourism promotion.
- The 2026 discussions covered opportunities for joint campaigns, improved promotional content and video production, international audience insights, cultural and culinary storytelling, and cooperation with local destinations.

Activities and services

- International destination advertising through broadcast and digital media.
- Production and distribution of tourism-promotion videos.
- Promotion of Vietnamese culture, cuisine, heritage, landscapes, and distinctive travel experiences.
- Development of destination-focused branded content for international audiences.
- Exploration of campaigns tailored to priority international tourism markets.
- Potential support for culinary tourism, cultural heritage promotion, and film-induced tourism.
- Discussion of performance indicators and audience data to help evaluate future campaigns.

Examples of destinations and experiences promoted

Vietnam's CNN-related tourism campaigns have featured or highlighted destinations and experiences including:

- Hue and its cultural heritage.
- Hoi An and its historic townscape.
- Ha Long Bay and its natural scenery.
- Vietnamese cuisine and culinary traditions.
- Coastal destinations and distinctive local tourism experiences.

Significance for tourism promotion

CNNIC represents an international media and advertising partner rather than a conventional public relations consultancy. Its role is to help tourism authorities present destination-focused content to international audiences through media platforms and commercial communication products. The May 2026 meeting confirms that VNAT and CNNIC were discussing continued cooperation; individual future campaign placements and deliverables depend on the arrangements agreed between the parties (VNAT, 2020, 2026; Vietnam News Agency, 2024).

4.13.3. Ogilvy and WWF-Vietnam - Environmental Communication and Responsible Tourism

Organization profiles

- **Ogilvy:** An international advertising, marketing, and communications agency that develops creative campaigns and communication strategies for organizations and brands.
- **WWF-Vietnam:** The Vietnamese country office of the World Wide Fund for Nature, an international conservation organization working on environmental protection and biodiversity-related issues.

Documented collaboration

- In 2025, WWF worked with the creative agency Ogilvy on a campaign in Vietnam designed to reduce demand for elephant ivory.
- The campaign focused on communicating the illegality and consequences of buying, selling, storing, and transporting ivory.
- The campaign used communication materials and public-awareness messaging to discourage the consumption of illegal wildlife products.
- The initiative involved engagement with relevant Vietnamese government bodies, including the CITES Management Authority of Vietnam and the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism.
- Campaign activities included a launch event and the display of promotional materials at international airports and tourist destinations.

Relevance to tourism communication

- Incorporates conservation messages into communication reaching travelers and tourism-related audiences.
- Uses creative advertising and public-awareness materials to communicate responsible behavior.
- Connects tourism environments with wildlife protection and the prevention of illegal wildlife trade.

- Demonstrates how creative agencies and conservation organizations can collaborate on issues affecting the environmental reputation and sustainability of a destination.

Important distinction

The documented Ogilvy - WWF collaboration concerned wildlife conservation and demand reduction. It provides an example of creative-agency involvement in environmental communication connected to tourism audiences; it does not, by itself, establish that Ogilvy holds a general or permanent tourism public relations contract with the Vietnamese government.

For tourism promotion, this type of collaboration can support messages concerning responsible wildlife observation, biodiversity protection, marine conservation, and environmentally responsible travel, provided the promotional claims are supported by credible conservation activities (World Wide Fund for Nature, n.d.; Vietnam Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2025).

4.13.4. Google, YouTube and the Tourism Information Technology Center — Digital Destination Promotion

Organizations involved

- **Google and YouTube:** Digital technology and video-distribution platforms that allow tourism content to reach online audiences.
- **Tourism Information Technology Center:** An organization associated with Vietnam's tourism information and digital-promotion activities.

Documented initiative: Live Fully in Vietnam

Vietnam has used the *Live Fully in Vietnam!* initiative as a digital destination-promotion platform developed through cooperation involving YouTube and the Tourism Information Technology Center.

Promotional Focus

The initiative presents Vietnam through different tourism themes, including:

- Coastal and island tourism.
- Cultural heritage.
- Nature and outdoor experiences.
- Culinary tourism.
- Golf tourism.
- Wellness.
- Rural tourism.
- Railway journeys.

Functions of the partnership

- Distributes destination-related video content through digital platforms.
- Presents different tourism products to online audiences.
- Allows content to focus on specific travel interests instead of promoting every tourism product through one general advertisement.
- Provides opportunities to introduce destinations and experiences through visual storytelling.

Significance for tourism promotion

The initiative illustrates the use of digital platforms to distribute destination content and reach prospective visitors online. Google and YouTube should be classified as technology and distribution partners in this context, rather than assumed to be Vietnam's appointed public relations agency.

4.13.5. Vietnam Tourism Advisory Board – Public-Private Tourism Promotion Cooperation

Organization profile

The Vietnam Tourism Advisory Board (TAB) is a private-sector tourism consortium that has supported the development and international promotion of Vietnam's tourism industry through cooperation with the country's national tourism administration.

Documented role

- TAB participated in the establishment of Vietnam's first overseas tourism representation office in London in 2019.
- The London initiative was developed in cooperation with the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism.
- TAB's tourism-promotion activities have included cooperation with private-sector tourism businesses and international market-development initiatives.

Private-sector organizations associated with TAB

The organizations identified as sponsors of the privately managed tourism-promotion fund for the London initiative included:

- Asia DMC.
- Muong Thanh Group.
- Saigontourist Holding Company.
- Sun Group.
- Thien Minh Group.
- BIM Land.
- Vietnam Airlines.
- Vingroup.

Functions of the public - private model

- Combines public-sector tourism promotion with private-sector funding and industry participation.
- Supports international destination marketing and overseas representation.
- Connects tourism authorities with airlines, hospitality businesses, tour operators, and other tourism stakeholders.
- Creates opportunities for coordinated destination promotion and travel-trade engagement.

Significance

The TAB model demonstrates how tourism promotion can involve both government institutions and private businesses. The London tourism office is a documented example of this cooperation, although the involvement of individual sponsors should not be interpreted as proof that every company holds a direct government contract for public relations services (Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2019).

4.13.6. Vietnam Airlines - Aviation-Led Tourism Promotion

Company profile

Vietnam Airlines is Vietnam's national flag carrier. In addition to providing international and domestic air services, it participates in destination-promotion activities and tourism-industry partnerships.

Documented promotional activities

- Participation in international tourism fairs and promotional events.
- Cooperation with Saigontourist Group on destination-marketing activities.
- Joint participation in international tourism trade exhibitions.
- Promotion of Vietnam and its tourism products to international travel-industry representatives.
- Participation in tourism roadshows and market-development activities.

Example: ITB Berlin 2026

In March 2026, Vietnam Airlines and Saigontourist Group announced their continued cooperation at ITB Berlin, a major international travel trade exhibition.

Their joint booth presented tourism products and services while promoting Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh City to international partners and visitors. The companies also used the exhibition for business meetings, networking, and engagement with international travel-industry representatives.

The two organizations have also participated in tourism-promotion activities in markets including China, Japan, Cambodia, Europe, and Southeast Asia.

Additional promotional functions

- Airline-led destination marketing.
- Joint promotional booths at international travel exhibitions.
- Cooperation with tourism operators to develop travel products and itineraries.
- Familiarization and product-development opportunities involving travel-industry representatives.
- Promotion of Vietnamese cuisine and destination experiences through aviation-related services.

Significance

Vietnam Airlines links destination promotion with international air connectivity. Its participation in tourism fairs and joint campaigns enables Vietnam to promote its destinations while connecting with the travel businesses that develop, distribute, and sell tourism products. Its involvement in official tourism-promotion activities does not mean that all of its marketing activities are government-funded (Saigontourist Group, 2026; VNAT, 2026).

4.13.7. Sun Group - Destination Development and International Tourism Marketing

Company profile

Sun Group is a Vietnamese private-sector conglomerate with businesses in tourism, hospitality, entertainment, and aviation. Its tourism portfolio includes resorts, hotels, attractions, and integrated destination developments.

Documented tourism-promotion activities

- Participation in international tourism exhibitions and destination-promotion programs.
- Promotion of Vietnamese destinations and tourism products to international markets.
- Cooperation with airlines and international commercial partners on tourism marketing.
- Development of tourism experiences and destination products that can be promoted to international visitors.

Cooperation with Emirates

In April 2025, Sun Group signed a memorandum of understanding with Emirates to cooperate on tourism promotion.

The announced cooperation included:

- Joint marketing and promotional campaigns intended to promote Vietnam as an international travel destination.
- Exploration of familiarization trips for media representatives and travel agents.

- Support for tour operators in relevant markets through promotional incentives and related activities.

Government-supported digital tourism: Visit Vietnam

Sun Group is also associated with the development and operation of *Visit Vietnam*, a digital tourism platform described as part of Vietnam's national digital tourism ecosystem.

In September 2026, Sun Group and Visa announced a strategic partnership to support digital tourism, international marketing, and visitor-experience development. The platform is being developed with government support and in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and the National Data Association.

The platform's stated functions include:

- Providing destination information.
- Connecting visitors with tourism products and services.
- Supporting travel planning and destination discovery.
- Creating opportunities for tourism businesses to reach international visitors.
- Supporting digital tourism services and destination-marketing activities.

Participation in Vietnam's 2026 tourism-promotion plan

VNAT's 2026 global tourism-promotion plan lists Sun Group as a lead organization for selected international promotional activities, including business-promotion programs in Taiwan and China and tourism-promotion activities targeting India.

Significance

Sun Group's contribution combines tourism-product development, commercial partnerships, digital tourism infrastructure, and participation in international promotion. It is a tourism enterprise involved in destination marketing, not a specialist PR agency (VNAT, 2026; Sun Group, 2025, 2026).

4.13.8. Saigontourist Group - Hospitality, Travel Services and International Trade Promotion

Company profile

Saigontourist Group is a Vietnamese tourism and hospitality group with activities across hotels and resorts, travel services, gastronomy, entertainment, and tourism-related services.

Documented promotional activities

- Participation in international tourism trade fairs.
- Promotion of Vietnamese tourism products to overseas travel buyers.
- Development of relationships with international tourism businesses.
- Promotion of Ho Chi Minh City and Vietnam as travel destinations.
- Presentation of hospitality, travel, culinary, and other tourism-related products.

Example: ITB Berlin 2026

Saigontourist Group and Vietnam Airlines continued their cooperation by co-organizing a joint promotional booth at ITB Berlin in March 2026.

The booth presented their tourism products and services to international partners and visitors. The companies also held meetings, conducted business networking, and promoted tourism products and packages tailored to the European market.

Participation in government-coordinated tourism promotion

VNAT's 2026 tourism-promotion plan identifies Saigontourist Group among the organizations participating in selected international tourism exhibitions, including ITB China and ITB Singapore.

Significance

Saigontourist Group contributes to destination promotion by presenting actual tourism products to international buyers and developing commercial relationships with overseas partners. Its activities complement national destination advertising by connecting Vietnam's tourism image with accommodation, travel services, and bookable experiences (Saigontourist Group, 2026; VNAT, 2026).

4.13.9. Vingroup - Private-Sector Participation in International Tourism Promotion

Company profile

Vingroup is a Vietnamese conglomerate with businesses across several sectors, including real estate, services, and other commercial activities. Its tourism-related participation includes hospitality and destination-linked businesses within its wider corporate ecosystem.

Documented tourism-promotion role

- Vingroup is identified among the private-sector organizations associated with Vietnam's Tourism Advisory Board and its tourism-promotion funding arrangements.
- VNAT's 2026 tourism-promotion plan lists Vingroup among the organizations participating in selected international tourism exhibitions and promotional activities.
- Its listed participation includes selected events in China and other Asian markets, as well as international tourism exhibitions and promotional programs.

Nature of its contribution

- Participation in international tourism trade exhibitions.
- Promotion of tourism-related products and services.
- Engagement with international tourism partners and buyers.
- Contribution to private-sector participation in coordinated destination-promotion activities.

Significance

Vingroup provides an example of a large Vietnamese private-sector group participating in the wider tourism-promotion ecosystem. Its documented participation in selected events supports the coordination of tourism businesses with national and local promotional efforts. However, its role should not be equated with that of a specialist international PR consultancy (VNAT, 2019, 2026).

4.13.10. Vietravel - Tour Operations, Travel Distribution and Destination Marketing

Company profile

Vietravel is a Vietnamese travel company and tour operator. It develops and distributes travel packages and works with tourism suppliers and destination-related businesses.

Documented promotional activities

- Participation in international tourism fairs and travel-industry events.
- Promotion of Vietnamese tourism products to overseas markets.
- Development of tour packages and travel products.
- Cooperation with tourism attractions and other tourism businesses.
- Engagement with international travel buyers and commercial partners.

Cooperation with Sun World

In March 2025, Vietravel and Sun World, the entertainment brand of Sun Group, signed a memorandum of understanding for strategic cooperation.

Under the agreement:

- Vietravel became Sun World's primary distribution partner in domestic and international markets.
- Vietravel undertook to distribute admission tickets and develop tour packages featuring Sun World's entertainment complexes.
- Sun World offered incentives for relevant Vietravel tour products.
- The cooperation targeted individual travelers and corporate groups.

Participation in Vietnam's 2026 tourism-promotion plan

VNAT's 2026 plan lists Vietravel as a lead organization or participant for selected international tourism-promotion activities, including participation in tourism exhibitions in China and other international markets.

Significance

Vietravel's contribution connects destination promotion with the commercial distribution of tourism products. Through tour packages, ticket distribution, and international travel-industry

engagement, the company can help turn destination awareness into travel arrangements that visitors can purchase (VNAT, 2026; Vietnam News Agency, 2025).

4.13.11. Government-Private-Sector Coordination in Vietnam's International Tourism Promotion

Vietnam's tourism-promotion model includes both direct cooperation with specialist agencies and the coordinated participation of private-sector tourism businesses.

The government-linked structure

- The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism provides the national policy and institutional framework for tourism.
- The Vietnam National Authority of Tourism coordinates national tourism-promotion activities and international destination marketing.
- Local tourism authorities participate in market-specific promotional programs.
- The Vietnam Tourism Advisory Board has served as a private-sector partner in tourism promotion and overseas representation.
- International media and specialist agencies provide particular services, such as advertising, public relations, media relations, and trade marketing.
- Tourism companies and airlines participate in international travel fairs, roadshows, commercial partnerships, and destination-promotion initiatives.

Examples of cooperation

1. **International PR and trade representation:** The PC Agency's documented appointment for the UK and Ireland markets under the Visit Vietnam Office initiative.
2. **International media promotion:** VNAT's cooperation with CNN International and discussions with CNNIC on further tourism-promotion activities in 2026.
3. **Responsible tourism communication:** The Ogilvy-WWF collaboration on reducing demand for illegal elephant ivory.
4. **Digital tourism promotion:** The *Live Fully in Vietnam!* initiative involving YouTube and the Tourism Information Technology Center.
5. **Airline and tourism-company cooperation:** Joint destination-promotion activities involving Vietnam Airlines and Saigontourist Group.
6. **International commercial marketing:** Sun Group's cooperation with Emirates and its digital tourism partnership with Visa.
7. **Tourism-product distribution:** Vietravel's strategic partnership with Sun World to distribute tickets and develop tour packages.

8. **International trade events:** Participation by companies such as Sun Group, Vietnam Airlines, Saigontourist Group, Vingroup, and Vietravel in selected events identified in VNAT's 2026 tourism-promotion plan.

Overall finding

Vietnam's international tourism promotion is supported by a combination of public-sector coordination, specialist international communication partners, digital platforms, airlines, hospitality groups, and tour operators. The documented examples show that the companies do not all perform the same function: PR consultancies manage media and travel-trade relations; international broadcasters distribute destination advertising and branded content; digital platforms provide content-distribution channels; and tourism businesses promote destinations while presenting products that can be sold to international travelers.

The 2026 tourism-promotion plan provides evidence of the participation of major tourism enterprises in selected international promotional activities. Their inclusion in that plan establishes a role in coordinated tourism promotion, but it does not automatically mean that each company is a government-appointed PR agency or that every activity is funded by the government (VNAT, 2026).

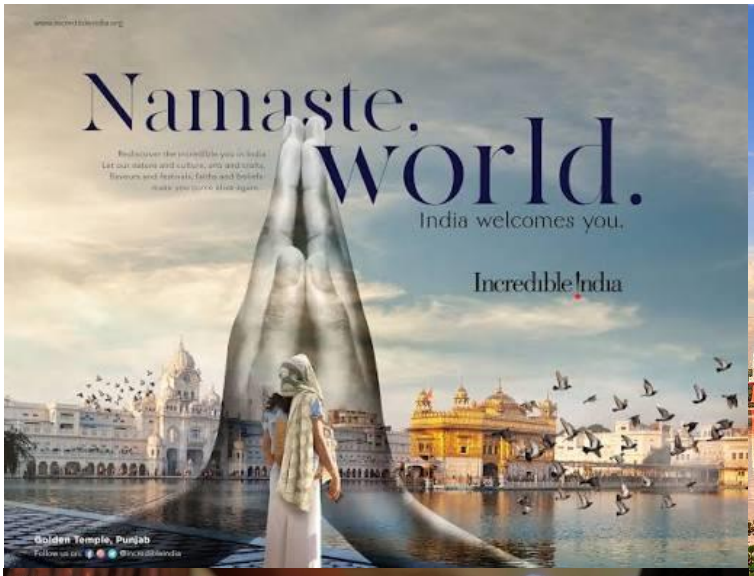
4.14. Key lessons from Vietnam

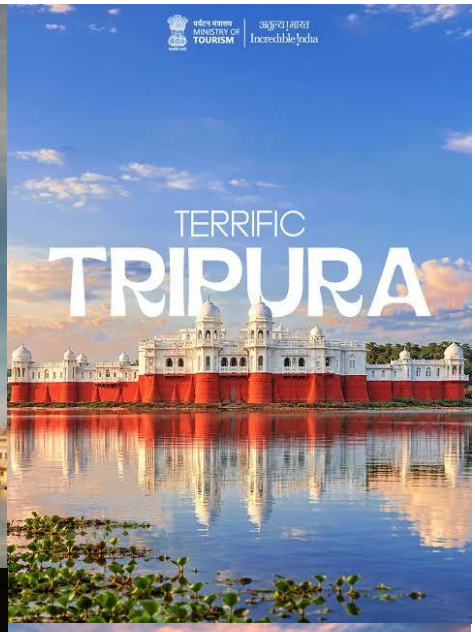
Vietnam demonstrates the value of integrating tourism promotion with culture, transport, sustainability and commercial events.

The principal lessons for Sri Lanka are:

1. Develop long-term international media relationships where commercially justified.
2. Produce themed digital content for specific tourism products.
3. Connect responsible tourism with credible environmental initiatives.
4. Use culinary personalities to promote food and destination experiences.
5. Treat scenic railway travel as a potential tourism product.
6. Establish hosted-buyer programmes at major tourism exhibitions.
7. Invite journalists, broadcasters, travel agents and hotel professionals through structured familiarization programmes.
8. Align international roadshows with relevant cultural and commercial events.

5. INDIA: INCREDIBLE INDIA, PILGRIMAGE TOURISM AND TARGETED SOUTH ASIAN MARKETING

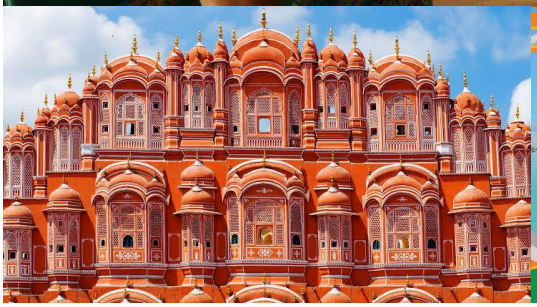














5.1. Institutional structure and destination brand

India's national tourism promotion is managed by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, through the international destination brand Incredible India.

The updated Incredible India 2.0 approach places greater emphasis on thematic tourism products and market-specific promotion.

India's strategy is particularly relevant to Sri Lanka because it combines a large domestic tourism sector with international promotion, specialist tourism circuits, cultural and spiritual experiences, overseas diplomatic engagement and travel-trade programmes.

Its tourism products include:

- Buddhist pilgrimage.
- Hindu spiritual tourism.
- Heritage and architecture.
- Yoga and Ayurveda.
- Wildlife and nature.
- Culinary experiences.
- Weddings.
- Medical and wellness tourism.
- Meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions.

The diversity of these products allows India to promote different experiences to different international audiences.

5.2. Major International Tourist Source Markets

India receives international visitors from North America, Europe, neighboring South Asian countries and other Asian markets. Its inbound tourism sector includes visitors traveling for leisure, business, cultural and religious purposes, among other reasons.

According to India's Ministry of Tourism, the country recorded 9,951,722 foreign tourist arrivals in 2024. The ten leading source countries by foreign tourist arrivals were:

Rank	Country	Foreign Tourist Arrivals in 2024	Share of Total Arrivals
1	United States	1,804,586	18.13%
2	Bangladesh	1,750,165	17.59%
3	United Kingdom	1,022,587	10.28%
4	Australia	518,205	5.21%
5	Canada	476,273	4.79%
6	Malaysia	307,526	3.09%
7	Sri Lanka	281,827	2.83%
8	Germany	256,348	2.58%
9	France	206,855	2.08%
10	Singapore	205,383	2.06%

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, India Tourism Data Compendium 2025. Original data source: Bureau of Immigration, Government of India.

The United States and Bangladesh were India's two largest source countries in 2024, followed by the United Kingdom. Together, these three markets accounted for approximately 46% of total foreign tourist arrivals.

The source-market distribution demonstrates the importance of neighboring South Asian countries alongside established long-haul markets in North America, Europe and Australia. Sri Lanka ranked seventh among India's source countries, with 281,827 foreign tourist arrivals recorded in 2024.

These markets provide a basis for examining India's international tourism promotion, including its thematic destination campaigns, Buddhist pilgrimage tourism, overseas tourism trade engagement and specialized cultural tourism products.

5.3. Tourism Infrastructure, Destination Appeal and Signature Experiences — India

India's tourism infrastructure supports an exceptionally wide range of travel styles, from high-altitude journeys and desert landscapes to backwater accommodation, wildlife observation, and regional cultural experiences. For this report, the most useful approach is to examine how specific landscapes and accommodation models create distinct tourism products, rather than repeating the existing discussion of pilgrimage tourism, tourism circuits, or destination-marketing campaigns.

5.3.1. High-altitude landscapes and adventure travel in Ladakh

- **Ladakh** offers a high-altitude landscape of mountains, valleys, lakes, and desert terrain that differs sharply from India's tropical and coastal destinations.
- **Pangong Lake:** Located at approximately 4,350 meters above sea level, Pangong Lake is a major attraction for visitors interested in high-altitude landscapes and photography.
- **Tso Moriri:** Another high-altitude lake, Tso Moriri offers a different setting for visitors seeking remote scenery and nature-oriented travel.
- **Leh Palace:** The palace provides a cultural and architectural attraction within the wider Ladakh itinerary.

Ladakh's appeal lies in the combination of dramatic scenery, high-altitude environments, and cultural heritage. However, altitude is also a practical consideration. Visitors need to plan acclimatization, check local conditions, and ensure that accommodation and transport arrangements are appropriate for the altitude and remoteness of the route. The destination should not be marketed solely through images of spectacular scenery without recognizing these requirements.

5.3.2. The seasonal salt desert of the Rann of Kutch

The Rann of Kutch, Gujarat, offers a landscape that differs from India's mountain and forest destinations. The salt marsh transforms with the seasons, and the white landscape can create a striking visual experience, particularly under moonlight during suitable conditions.

The surrounding area also offers cultural and nature-based experiences:

- **Rann Utsav:** A festival associated with regional culture, crafts, and music.
- **Dholavira:** An archaeological site associated with the Indus Valley Civilization.
- **Bhuj:** A base for exploring local history, markets, and the surrounding region.
- **Kutch's wildlife areas:** The wider region offers opportunities for wildlife observation, including birdwatching in suitable areas and seasons.

The Rann's value is seasonal and place-specific. Visitors need to plan around the appropriate travel period and local access arrangements. The experience is not interchangeable with a conventional desert safari: the salt landscape, its seasonal appearance, and the region's cultural activities together form the destination product.

5.3.3. Kerala's backwaters and accommodation on the water

Alappuzha's backwaters, Kerala, provide a distinctive accommodation and travel experience through traditional-style houseboats known as *kettuvallams*. Originally used for transporting rice and spices, these boats have been adapted for tourism and can provide a floating base from which visitors experience waterways, settlements, and the surrounding landscape.

A houseboat stay differs from a conventional hotel because the journey itself is part of the experience. Visitors can observe life along the waterways and experience the changing scenery while spending time aboard the vessel.

Periyar: The Periyar area provides a different nature-based product, with forest environments and opportunities for wildlife observation. Boat excursions organized through relevant local authorities and tourism bodies offer an alternative to viewing wildlife only from land.

Kovalam: This coastal destination combines beach access with nearby accommodation and dining facilities.

Together, these examples demonstrate how Kerala can combine water-based accommodation, coastal stays, and nature excursions within a single regional itinerary. Its distinctive advantage is the relationship between the accommodation experience and the surrounding landscape, not simply the availability of hotels.

5.3.4. Accommodation diversity and regional stays

India's accommodation offering is varied, reflecting its geographical scale and the different types of travel it supports. Depending on the location, visitors may choose conventional city hotels, heritage properties, houseboats, mountain accommodation, desert stays, or locally operated guesthouses.

The examples above illustrate three particularly distinctive accommodation models:

- **Houseboats in Kerala:** Accommodation and movement through the backwaters form part of the same experience.
- **High-altitude stays in Ladakh:** Accommodation supports journeys into remote mountain and lake environments, where altitude and access require advance planning.
- **Seasonal stays around the Rann of Kutch:** Accommodation can form part of a visit organized around the salt landscape and regional cultural activities.

These models demonstrate that accommodation can itself be a reason to select a destination. They also show why accommodation should be considered alongside local access, climate, seasonality, and the type of visitor experience being offered.

5.3.5. Regional food and the visitor experience

India's food offering varies considerably by region, and a destination itinerary can introduce visitors to local specialties alongside sightseeing.

In Kerala, visitors can explore coastal and backwater food traditions, including fish-based dishes and meals associated with the state's regional cuisine. In Ladakh, the food experience differs from the coastal south and reflects the region's high-altitude environment and cultural influences. In Gujarat, visitors can encounter regional dishes and local food associated with the wider Kutch area.

For destination planning, the important point is not simply that India has a large variety of food. It is that **regional food can help distinguish one itinerary from another**, encouraging visitors to explore local markets, restaurants, and food traditions associated with the places they visit. Food should be linked to named regions and visitor experiences rather than presented as a single national cuisine.

5.3.6. Participatory Traditional Craftsmanship and Heritage Experiences

Traditional craftsmanship, textiles and heritage-based learning

Experiences offered to visitors:

Jaipur and the wider state of Rajasthan provide particularly useful examples.

- **Hand block printing:** Visitors can learn traditional textile-printing techniques by using carved wooden blocks and natural or traditional dyes to print designs onto fabric. Jaipur's Anokhi Museum of Hand Printing introduces visitors to the history and techniques of this craft.

- **Blue pottery:** Jaipur is well known for its distinctive blue pottery tradition. Visitors can explore the craft, observe artisans at work and encounter its production techniques.

- **Traditional jewellery and handicrafts:** Visitors can explore the production of lac bangles, traditional jewellery, handmade paper, carpets and other regional crafts.

- **Artisan-led learning:** Craft areas and workshops provide opportunities to understand traditional production methods and engage with artisans.

Relevance and potential applications for Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka could develop structured craft-based tourism experiences around:

- **Batik workshops:** Visitors design and create their own batik pieces using traditional wax-resist techniques.
- **Dumbara weaving:** Visitors learn about traditional weaving patterns and participate in producing a small textile item.
- **Mask-making:** Tourists participate in carving, painting and decorating traditional Sri Lankan masks.
- **Pottery workshops:** Visitors learn traditional clay preparation, shaping and decorating techniques.
- **Gem and jewellery experiences:** Visitors learn about Sri Lanka's gem industry, gemstone cutting, polishing and traditional jewellery-making, through appropriately supervised demonstrations.
- **Handloom experiences:** Tourists participate in weaving demonstrations and create small textile products with local artisans.

The Indian example demonstrates how traditional crafts can be transformed into participatory experiences while supporting artisans, preserving heritage skills and creating opportunities to sell locally produced goods.

5.3.7. Costs, safety, and practical travel planning

India's large range of accommodation and transport options allows visitors to plan trips at different expenditure levels. However, total costs depend on distance, transport choice, accommodation standard, season, and the need for local guides or specialized transfers. Remote journeys such as Ladakh require different planning from stays in major cities or established coastal destinations.

Safety and visitor confidence also depend on the specific destination and activity. In Ladakh, altitude and weather are important considerations. Around the Rann of Kutch, seasonal access and local conditions matter. For houseboat and wildlife experiences, visitors should use appropriate operators and follow relevant safety instructions. It would be inaccurate to describe the whole country as uniformly safe or to assume that every destination is equally accessible.

Why India is worth visiting from a destination-product perspective: India can offer highly distinctive travel experiences that differ by region: high-altitude lakes and mountain landscapes in Ladakh, the seasonal salt desert of Kutch, and houseboat accommodation in Kerala's backwaters. The range of landscapes and accommodation models allows the country to serve visitors with different interests and budgets, provided that itineraries are designed around local conditions and travel distances.

5.4. International Tourism Promotion Agencies, Government Partnerships and Public Relations Companies in India

5.4.1. Government Framework for International Tourism Promotion

India's national tourism promotion is managed by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, through the *Incredible India* destination brand. The Ministry coordinates tourism development and promotion with central government agencies, state governments, union territories and private-sector stakeholders.

The *Incredible India* campaign was launched in 2002. In 2017–2018, the Ministry introduced *Incredible India 2.0*, adopting a more market-specific and thematic approach to international tourism promotion.

The campaign promotes India's tourism products through:

- International advertising campaigns.
- Digital marketing and social-media platforms.
- Television, print and online media.
- International travel fairs and exhibitions.
- Overseas roadshows and tourism workshops.
- Cultural festivals and tourism events.
- Familiarization programmes for journalists, tour operators and other relevant stakeholders.

- Promotional activities conducted through India's overseas tourism offices and diplomatic networks.

The thematic approach covers Buddhist pilgrimage, Hindu spiritual tourism, heritage and architecture, yoga and Ayurveda, wildlife, culinary tourism, medical and wellness tourism, wedding tourism, and meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE).

5.4.2. Government-Appointed Advertising and Creative Agencies

The Indian government has used private advertising and creative agencies to develop and implement tourism-promotion campaigns. The responsibilities assigned to these agencies have varied according to the campaign, procurement exercise and contract period.

A. Ogilvy & Mather India

Nature of involvement: Creative strategy and advertising for the Incredible India campaign.

Ogilvy & Mather Delhi announced on 27 January 2012 that it had won the Ministry of Tourism's Incredible India account following an open and competitive multi-agency pitch.

The company announced a three-year mandate to provide strategy and creative direction for the campaign in both domestic and international markets. The agency had also been associated with the campaign's earlier development.

Its tourism-related work in India has included assignments for state tourism organizations, including Madhya Pradesh Tourism, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation and Gujarat Tourism, as identified in the company's 2012 announcement.

Principal functions associated with the assignment:

- Developing the creative direction of the national tourism brand.
- Preparing advertising concepts and campaign materials.
- Promoting India's tourism attractions and experiences.
- Developing campaign messages for domestic and international audiences.
- Supporting the positioning of India as an international tourist destination.

Evidence status: The 2012 Ministry of Tourism appointment is documented. This historical appointment does not establish that Ogilvy currently holds the national Incredible India advertising contract.

Official website: www.ogilvy.com

B. McCann Worldgroup India

Nature of involvement: Advertising and public-awareness communications.

McCann Worldgroup has been associated with India's *Atithi Devo Bhava* tourism-awareness campaign. The initiative sought to encourage responsible hospitality and improve public awareness of the importance of welcoming visitors and preserving India's cultural heritage.

The campaign communicated the principle that guests should be treated with respect and hospitality. It linked tourism development with public conduct and the visitor experience.

Relevant functions associated with tourism-awareness campaigns:

- Developing public-awareness messages.
- Producing advertising and promotional material.
- Communicating hospitality-related themes.
- Supporting campaigns designed to improve visitors' experiences.

Evidence status: McCann's involvement in the historical campaign has been publicly reported. The specific contract referred to in reporting from 2016 had ended. This does not establish a current appointment to India's international tourism-promotion programme.

Official website: www.mccannworldgroup.com

C. Crayons Advertising

Nature of involvement: Advertising and tourism-film production procurement.

Crayons Advertising has participated in the Indian Ministry of Tourism's procurement process for tourism promotional material.

A Ministry of Tourism record dated January 2021 identifies a representative of Crayons Advertising at a pre-bid meeting concerning a tender for promotional films covering adventure tourism, MICE tourism, heritage tourism, arts and crafts, and wellness tourism.

The tender concerned the production of a 90-second film, with shorter 60-second and 30-second versions.

Relevant capabilities associated with the procurement category:

- Tourism advertising.
- Promotional film production.
- Creative development for tourism products.
- Preparation of campaign materials for different media formats.

Evidence status: Participation in the pre-bid meeting is documented. Attendance at a pre-bid meeting does not establish that Crayons Advertising won the contract or produced the films.

Official website: www.crayonsadvertising.com

D. BAG Films

BAG Films has been identified in tourism-marketing research as a company associated with the Indian advertising and media-production sector.

Its possible relevance to tourism promotion concerns the production and communication of advertising and audiovisual content.

E. Opal Advertising

Opal Advertising has also been identified in preliminary tourism-agency research as a company to investigate in connection with Indian advertising and tourism promotion.

5.4.3. Integrated Tourism Promotion Agency Procurement, 2026

The Ministry of Tourism initiated a procurement exercise for the appointment of an **Integrated Tourism Promotion Agency** in 2026.

The government e-procurement record identifies the following details:

Item	Details
Procuring authority	Ministry of Tourism, Government of India
Tender title	Appointment of Integrated Tourism Promotion Agency for Ministry of Tourism, Government of India
Tender reference	TP-5/14/2025-DP
Tender ID	2026_Mtou_910617_1
Procurement method	Open tender using Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)
Publication date	27 May 2026
Bid submission deadline, following extensions	24 August 2026
Scheduled bid-opening date	25 August 2026
Location	New Delhi

The tender concerns the appointment of an agency to support the Ministry's integrated tourism-promotion activities.

The procurement records available for review on 29 October 2026 continued to display the technical bid-opening process as in progress.

This procurement is relevant because it demonstrates the Indian government's use of formal competitive procurement to engage an external agency for tourism promotion.

5.4.4. Specialist Tourism Marketing and Public Relations Companies Operating in India

In addition to agencies involved in India's own tourism campaigns, India has specialist tourism-marketing firms that represent international tourism boards, destinations, hotels, airlines and travel brands in the Indian outbound travel market.

These companies are relevant to understanding how a destination can establish a presence in India through public relations, trade engagement, consumer marketing, media outreach and destination representation.

Their work for international tourism authorities should be distinguished from appointments by India's Ministry of Tourism.

A. Sartha Global Marketing

Business focus: Destination marketing, public relations, tourism representation and branding.

Sartha Global Marketing is an India-based tourism-marketing company offering services to international destinations and tourism organizations seeking to reach Indian travellers.

Its published portfolio identifies work and promotional activities involving international destination brands, including Brand USA, Visit California and Louisiana.

Relevant services:

- Destination branding and marketing.
- Public relations and media engagement.
- Tourism-board representation.
- Consumer-facing destination campaigns.
- Travel-trade partnerships.
- Experiential marketing and promotional events.
- Destination storytelling and content promotion.

Documented example: Brand USA and Visit California

Sartha reports that Brand USA and Visit California partnered with NBA India for the BUDX NBA House event in New Delhi on 9 -10 May. The activation combined sports, entertainment, music and lifestyle experiences with destination promotion.

This illustrates how tourism organizations can use entertainment-related events to introduce destinations to potential travellers.

Sartha's published portfolio also identifies Louisiana's recognition at the GlobalSpa Awards 2025 for its outdoor tourism offering.

Relevance to international tourism promotion: Sartha's stated services and portfolio demonstrate experience in promoting foreign destinations to Indian audiences.

Government-contract status: Its published portfolio does not establish that it currently holds a contract with India's Ministry of Tourism to promote India nationally.

Official website: www.sarthaglobal.com

B. TRAC Representations

Business focus: International destination representation, tourism marketing, public relations and travel-trade engagement.

TRAC Representations is an India-based destination-marketing company that reports operating in the Indian outbound travel market since 1992.

It works with international destinations, tourism authorities, hotels, cruise lines, airlines and other travel brands seeking to build their presence in India.

Relevant services:

- Destination representation.
- Travel-trade marketing and sales promotion.
- Public relations and media communications.
- Digital and social-media campaigns.
- Market research and strategic planning.
- Destination roadshows and trade events.
- Travel-agent engagement and training.
- Content development and promotional campaigns.

Documented examples of destination representation:

TRAC's published company information identifies work involving:

- Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority, for which it reports providing public relations and representation services in India from 2013 to 2021.
- Jamaica Tourist Board, for which it reports serving as an official marketing representative in India since 2006.
- Monaco Government Tourist and Convention Authority, for which its published portfolio identifies representation in India.
- Kenya-related tourism and travel-market engagement.

TRAC also reports that it represented Cheval Collection in India from 2020 to 2025. This assignment concerned hospitality representation rather than a national tourism-board campaign.

Relevance to international tourism promotion: TRAC's experience illustrates how foreign destinations can establish an on-the-ground presence in India through tourism representation, media relations and travel-trade engagement.

Government-contract status: Its documented work for foreign tourism authorities demonstrates destination-representation experience. It does not establish a current national tourism-promotion appointment from India's Ministry of Tourism.

Official website: www.tracrep.com

C. CWW Tourism India

Business focus: Tourism public relations, destination promotion, strategic partnerships and events.

CWW Tourism India provides marketing and communications services for destinations and tourism organizations.

Its published service descriptions identify public relations, social media, travel-trade engagement and promotional events as principal areas of activity.

Relevant services:

- Destination public relations.
- Press conferences and media engagement.
- Sales missions and travel-trade missions.
- Destination promotional events.
- Journalist and influencer engagement.
- Familiarization trips for media and content creators.
- Social-media strategy and content promotion.
- Strategic partnerships with tourism stakeholders.

Familiarization programmes

CWW describes facilitating firsthand destination experiences for journalists, bloggers and influencers. Such programmes can enable participants to develop travel stories, destination features, social-media content and other publicity based on their experiences.

A destination authority can use this approach to introduce international media to particular attractions, cultural experiences and tourism products.

Relevance to international tourism promotion: The company's published services are relevant to tourism authorities seeking to generate destination publicity, engage travel media and strengthen their relationships with the travel trade.

Government-contract status: The services described above establish its tourism-marketing capabilities but do not, by themselves, establish a specific current contract with India's Ministry of Tourism.

Official website: www.cwwtourism.in

D. THRS

Business focus: Travel and hospitality representation, destination marketing, public relations and trade marketing.

THRS provides marketing and representation services for travel and hospitality brands seeking to develop their presence in source markets, including India.

Its published portfolio identifies destination-marketing work as well as representation and public relations for hospitality businesses.

Documented examples:

Department of Tourism, Bhutan: THRS identifies a destination-marketing assignment intended to communicate Bhutan's distinctive tourism offerings, strengthen brand awareness and increase the destination's appeal to Indian travellers.

Resplendent Ceylon: THRS identifies work involving sales representation, trade marketing, consumer activations and public relations for the Sri Lankan luxury hospitality brand in the Indian market.

Other hospitality clients: Its published portfolio also identifies assignments involving Soneva and Palazzo Versace Dubai, including sales representation, trade marketing and consumer-facing promotional activities.

Relevant services:

- Destination marketing.
- Tourism representation.
- Public relations and media solutions.
- Sales and travel-trade marketing.
- Consumer activations.
- Digital marketing and performance campaigns.
- Market research and consultation.

Relevance to international tourism promotion: THRS provides examples of how a destination or hospitality brand can develop market visibility and commercial relationships in India.

Government-contract status: Its published portfolio identifies work for Bhutan's Department of Tourism. This establishes a destination-marketing assignment but does not establish a current appointment by India's Ministry of Tourism.

Official website: www.thrs.co

E. TRH India

Business focus: Travel representation, public relations, destination marketing and digital outreach.

TRH India describes itself as a travel-representation and marketing firm supporting international tourism brands in the Indian market.

The company reports a network spanning more than 30 Indian cities and identifies travel agents, destination-management companies, airlines, online travel agencies and media organizations among the networks relevant to its operations.

Relevant services:

- Destination and travel-brand representation.
- Sales promotion and travel-agent engagement.
- Digital and e-marketing.
- Public relations and media outreach.
- Brand and product development.
- Trade-show and exhibition support.
- Market-specific promotional campaigns.
- Business-to-business marketing.

Published destination-related activities

TRH India identifies work involving the Korea Tourism Organization and the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, alongside travel-related representation and marketing for other international destinations and travel businesses.

The company describes its work as helping international brands develop awareness, travel-trade relationships and market access in India.

Relevance to international tourism promotion: Its stated services are relevant to foreign tourism authorities and travel brands seeking regional representation and stronger engagement with Indian travel sellers.

Government-contract status: The company's published destination-related activities do not establish that it currently holds a national tourism-promotion contract with India's Ministry of Tourism.

Official website: trhindia.com

5.4.5. Broader International Communications Agencies

Two additional firms are relevant to the wider communications sector, although the evidence reviewed does not establish current national tourism-promotion appointments involving them.

A. Edelman India

Edelman is a global communications firm with operations in India.

Its broader communications capabilities include public relations, reputation management, strategic communications and integrated campaigns.

These capabilities are relevant to international tourism authorities seeking to develop destination narratives, engage media and communicate with audiences in different markets.

However, a specific Indian government tourism-board assignment, contract period and campaign outcome would need to be established from an official appointment or other reliable campaign record before being attributed to Edelman.

Official website: www.edelman.com/in

B. Genesis BCW

Genesis BCW is a communications agency in India associated with public relations and integrated communications.

Its broader service area is relevant to organizations seeking media engagement, corporate communications and coordinated communications campaigns.

For tourism-promotion purposes, the relevant activities to investigate include destination publicity, international media relations, travel-journalist engagement and tourism-related communications.

The evidence reviewed for this section does not establish a specific current contract with India's Ministry of Tourism for national or international tourism promotion.

Official website: www.genesisbcw.com

5.4.6. Government Partnerships with Airlines for International Tourism Promotion

India's tourism-promotion framework also includes partnerships with commercial companies outside the traditional advertising and PR sector. Airline partnerships provide a documented example of government collaboration with private businesses to promote the country as a destination.

A. IndiGo

Organization: InterGlobe Aviation Limited, operating as IndiGo.

Nature of government partnership: Joint destination promotion.

On 30 July 2026, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, announced that it had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with IndiGo under the initiative *Incredible India by IndiGo*.

The Ministry described the arrangement as a strategic, non-exclusive and non-financial collaboration intended to promote India as a global tourism destination.

The announced promotional activities include:

- Joint tourism campaigns.
- Digital and print promotions.
- Airport branding.
- In-flight promotional content.
- Social-media promotion.
- Participation in international travel exhibitions.

The initiative seeks to showcase India's tourism offerings to domestic and international audiences.

Significance: The partnership illustrates how a national tourism authority can work with an airline to extend the reach of its destination brand through travel-related communications and customer-facing promotional channels.

Agreement status: The Ministry announced the MoU on 30 July 2026, with an initial two-year period specified in the announcement.

Official website: www.goindigo.in

B. Air India

Organization: Air India.

Nature of government partnership: Joint destination marketing and international promotion.

On 27 July 2026, the Ministry of Tourism announced a Memorandum of Understanding with Air India to promote India under the *Incredible India* brand.

The announced cooperation includes:

- Global promotional campaigns.
- Destination storytelling.
- Digital and offline promotion.
- Tourism content through customer-facing channels, including in-flight entertainment.
- Cooperation with state tourism boards and other tourism stakeholders.

The partnership seeks to use the airline's international reach to increase awareness of Indian destinations and tourism experiences.

Significance: The initiative demonstrates a model in which tourism promotion is integrated with an airline's international network and communication channels.

Agreement status: The Ministry announced the MoU on 27 July 2026, with an initial two-year period and a possible one-year extension by mutual agreement.

Official website: www.airindia.com

5.5. Incredible India 2.0 and thematic tourism

India's thematic approach moves away from treating the country as a single undifferentiated tourism product.

It instead promotes particular experiences to travellers with relevant interests.

Examples include:

- Yoga and wellness.
- Spiritual and pilgrimage tourism.
- Heritage and architecture.
- Wildlife.
- Culinary experiences.
- Wedding tourism.
- Business events.

The approach helps the tourism authority develop messages that are relevant to the target visitor.

A person planning a Buddhist pilgrimage has different needs from a visitor interested in a luxury wedding or a wildlife holiday.

Sri Lanka could apply the same principle by developing dedicated campaigns for Buddhist heritage, wildlife, surfing, Ayurveda, culinary travel, luxury holidays and cultural experiences.

5.6. The Buddhist Circuit

India promotes a Buddhist tourism circuit linking locations associated with the life and teachings of the Buddha.

Important locations include:

- Bodh Gaya, associated with the Buddha's enlightenment.
- Sarnath, associated with his first sermon.
- Kushinagar, associated with his Mahaparinirvana.
- Rajgir, associated with important events in Buddhist history.
- Vaishali, another significant Buddhist heritage destination.

The circuit combines religious significance with a travel itinerary.

Instead of advertising each location separately, the tourism product can be marketed as a connected pilgrimage with accommodation, transport, guided visits and supporting services.

This is particularly relevant to the Sri Lankan market, where Buddhist heritage and pilgrimage have established cultural significance.

5.7. Dambadiva pilgrimage promotion in Sri Lanka

India's pilgrimage-tourism promotion provides a particularly relevant example of niche marketing.

The Dambadiva pilgrimage market includes Sri Lankan travellers interested in visiting sacred Buddhist sites in India.

Promotional activity associated with this market can involve government tourism bodies, state tourism organizations, pilgrimage operators and private travel companies.

Targeted broadcast advertising

Sri Lankan religious television channels relevant to this market include:

- Shraddha TV.
- The Buddhist TV.

These channels are relevant platforms to investigate for advertisements and sponsored programming promoting Dambadiva pilgrimage tours.

The distinction between government destination advertising and commercial tour-package advertising is essential. A particular advertisement may be purchased by a private pilgrimage operator rather than by India's central tourism authority.

A complete campaign assessment should establish:

1. The advertiser or sponsoring organization.
2. The television channel.
3. The programme or advertising format.

4. The campaign dates.
5. The pilgrimage locations promoted.
6. The tour operator and package details.
7. The booking contact or website.
8. Whether the campaign was paid for by a government body or a private company.

This level of detail would establish the actual promotional mechanism rather than simply noting that India markets pilgrimage tourism to Sri Lanka.

5.8. IRCTC Buddhist Circuit Tourist Train

India also promotes Buddhist pilgrimage through railway-based tourism products.

The IRCTC Buddhist Circuit Tourist Train, operated through Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation arrangements, is designed to connect important Buddhist sites within an organized itinerary.

The product integrates transport and associated tourism services, including accommodation, catering and other arrangements under the relevant tour package.

Its value lies in simplifying a multi-location pilgrimage for international visitors.

A traveller can purchase an organized product rather than independently coordinating transport, accommodation and transfers between several religious destinations.

Application to Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka could explore the development of coordinated heritage and railway itineraries linking major cultural destinations.

Potential routes and destination clusters include:

- Colombo and Kandy.
- Kandy and the central highlands.
- The Cultural Triangle.
- Anuradhapura and Mihintale.
- Polonnaruwa and nearby heritage locations.
- Colombo and Galle.

Such products would require cooperation between tourism authorities, transport providers, hotels, guides and local tourism businesses.

5.9. Hospitality programmes for journalists and industry representatives

India's Ministry of Tourism has described hospitality programmes that invite international tourism stakeholders to experience the country.

Potential participants include:

- Influencers.
- Tour operators.
- Journalists.
- Opinion leaders.
- Other relevant tourism professionals.

The wider promotional framework also includes international tourism exhibitions, overseas outreach and activities conducted through Indian missions.

For Sri Lanka, this demonstrates the value of a structured hospitality programme with clear objectives and participant categories.

Buddhist pilgrimage familiarization

A specialized programme targeting Buddhist pilgrimage could include:

- Senior Buddhist monks.
- Religious media personnel.
- Travel journalists.
- Pilgrimage tour operators.
- Hotel-industry representatives.
- Overseas travel agents.
- Tourism officials and relevant industry stakeholders.

Potential activities could include visits to important pilgrimage locations, inspection of accommodation, briefings on transport arrangements, meetings with incoming tour operators and discussions about the needs of international pilgrims.

A programme of this kind should be documented through an official invitation, defined itinerary, eligible expenses, participant selection criteria and post-visit reporting.

The exact funding and eligibility arrangements should be confirmed for each relevant programme.

5.10. Overseas missions and international tourism events

India uses its overseas missions as part of its wider international promotional framework.

Activities can include tourism presentations, participation in exhibitions, market outreach and engagement with international stakeholders.

India has also participated in international events such as Arabian Travel Market Dubai.

Specialist initiatives include:

- India Says I Do, associated with the promotion of India as a wedding destination.
- Meet in India, a sub-brand promoting business events.
- Tourism exhibitions and destination showcases.
- International tourism-trade engagement.

The Wed in India expo and Meet in India conclave have also been associated with events held in Jaipur in connection with the Great Indian Travel Bazaar in 2024 and 2025.

The important lesson is that specialist tourism products benefit from dedicated promotional programmes rather than being treated as minor components of a general tourism advertisement.

Public Cultural Festivals and International Tourism Trade Events

India uses different types of tourism events for different audiences. Public festivals such as Bharat Parv introduce visitors to the country's regional cultures and tourism products, while trade events such as the Great Indian Travel Bazaar connect international tour operators with Indian tourism suppliers.

1. Bharat Parv

Organizer: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India
Location: Lawns and Gyan Path in front of the Red Fort, New Delhi
2026 dates: January 26–31, 2026
Format: Public cultural and tourism festival

Bharat Parv is an annual festival organized as part of India's Republic Day celebrations. It showcases the country's regional diversity through cultural performances, state and union-territory displays, food, handicrafts, and tourism-related presentations.

The 2026 edition featured 41 Republic Day tableaux, cultural performances by state and regional groups, and performances by armed-forces and paramilitary bands. It also included a Pan-India Food Court, a handicrafts and handloom bazaar, and pavilions representing government bodies and regional tourism offerings.

What visitors can experience

Bharat Parv allows visitors to encounter cultural and tourism products from different parts of India in one location. Its activities include:

- **Regional cultural performances:** Folk and classical music, dance, and performances associated with different states and communities.
- **State and union-territory pavilions:** Displays introducing regional heritage, destinations, handicrafts, and tourism opportunities.
- **Food experiences:** Regional dishes and food stalls that introduce visitors to India's diverse culinary traditions.
- **Handicrafts and handlooms:** Displays and sales opportunities for traditional textiles, craft products, and locally made goods.
- **Cultural presentations and interactive activities:** Demonstrations and activities that provide an accessible introduction to regional traditions.

The event allows visitors to explore India's cultural diversity without traveling to every region represented at the festival. The tourism pavilions can also introduce potential travelers to destinations they may subsequently choose to visit.

Tourism-marketing significance: Bharat Parv converts regional culture into a public tourism showcase. It introduces visitors to different states and union territories through performances, food, crafts, and destination displays, helping build awareness of the country's varied tourism offerings.

2. Great Indian Travel Bazaar (GITB)

Organizers: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan; and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)
Location: Jaipur, Rajasthan
2025 dates: May 4-6, 2025
Primary audience: International tour operators and Indian tourism suppliers

The Great Indian Travel Bazaar is an inbound-tourism trade event designed to connect international tour operators with Indian tourism businesses. Unlike Bharat Parv, which is a public cultural festival, GITB concentrates on commercial relationships that can generate international bookings.

The event brings together Indian tourism suppliers, including state tourism boards, hotels, resorts, destination-management companies, tour operators, and other tourism businesses. International buyers can meet these suppliers and explore tourism products available across different parts of India.

A major feature is the hosted-buyer programme. Selected foreign tour operators are invited to participate in scheduled business meetings with Indian tourism suppliers. The event's organizers have described a structured process for selecting international buyers and arranging appointments.

The hosted-buyer model enables suppliers to present their products directly to travel companies that sell holidays in overseas markets. It can help international buyers discover new accommodation providers, regional tourism products, and itinerary options that may subsequently be incorporated into their offerings.

Tourism-marketing significance: GITB links India's tourism products with international distribution networks. Rather than primarily generating public awareness through entertainment or cultural performances, it seeks to strengthen the commercial relationships that help international travelers discover and book Indian tourism products.

5.11. Incredible India Content Hub

India's Incredible India Content Hub provides tourism-related material for use by relevant stakeholders.

The resource has been described as containing:

- Photographs.
- Films.
- Brochures.
- Newsletters.
- Other destination-marketing content.

Its intended users include tourism operators, journalists, researchers, filmmakers, content creators, officials and other relevant stakeholders.

A comparable Sri Lankan resource could provide a single source of approved promotional material.

Proposed Sri Lankan content library

The resource could include:

- High-resolution destination photographs.
- Broadcast-quality video footage.
- Drone footage with appropriate permissions.
- Maps and destination factsheets.
- Sample itineraries.
- Cultural and historical information.
- Wildlife and conservation material.
- Information on seasonal events.
- Tourism statistics.
- Contact details for relevant tourism businesses.
- Media kits in priority international languages.

The library should include clear terms of use, copyright information and a system for keeping content current.

This would help overseas missions, travel operators, journalists and international partners access accurate information without repeatedly requesting individual files.

5.12. International television, magazines and public relations

India's international tourism-promotion model includes advertising, digital content, overseas outreach and media engagement.

However, the precise international television channels, current global PR agency appointments and individual billboard campaigns must be established through specific campaign and procurement records.

For each channel, the research should distinguish between:

- Paid television advertising.
- Sponsored programmes.
- Travel documentaries.
- Editorial coverage.
- Public relations campaigns.
- Influencer partnerships.
- Travel-trade advertising.

The same distinction is required when examining travel magazines and specialist publications.

An article published after a journalist's hosted visit is not automatically a paid advertisement. Similarly, a private tour operator's advertisement should not automatically be attributed to a national tourism authority.

5.13. Key lessons from India

India provides a strong example of thematic tourism promotion and specialized market development.

The most relevant practices for Sri Lanka are:

1. Develop dedicated tourism circuits rather than promoting isolated attractions.
2. Create specialist campaigns for Buddhist heritage, wildlife, wellness and other products.
3. Investigate targeted advertising through media that reaches specific audiences.
4. Organize hospitality programmes for relevant journalists, religious representatives and travel-industry professionals.
5. Use overseas missions to support structured tourism outreach.
6. Develop a central library of approved destination content.
7. Link international promotion to organized itineraries and bookable tourism products.
8. Distinguish government-funded campaigns from private commercial advertising.

6. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FIVE DESTINATIONS

6.1. Comparative marketing matrix

Feature	Australia	Thailand	Maldives	Vietnam	India
Principal tourism organization	Tourism Australia	Tourism Authority of Thailand	Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation	Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism	Ministry of Tourism, Government of India
Main campaign platform	Come and Say G'day	Amazing Thailand	Visit Maldives / The Sunny Side of Life	Live Fully in Vietnam and other thematic campaigns	Incredible India 2.0
Creative agency examples	Accenture Song, The Monkeys, Droga5	Market-specific creative and campaign agencies	Market-specific PR and marketing contractors	Ogilvy Group Vietnam for selected campaigns	Ogilvy & Mather India, Crayons Advertising and other empanelled agencies
Media-buying examples	UM has been associated with media planning and buying; current appointments should be checked	Specialist media and campaign partnerships	Market-specific media and representation arrangements	CNN International Commercial partnership and digital campaigns	Empanelled advertising and media services
Public relations	Poem, opr, FORWARD and Weber Shandwick have been associated with relevant	International and regional promotional operations	Market-specific PR and representation contracts	Campaign-based international media partnerships	Overseas tourism offices and mission-supported outreach

	arrangements				
International broadcast example	Netflix-associated travel content and NBC entertainment exposure	BBC StoryWorks Songkran campaign	Campaign-specific broadcast inventory requires verification	CNN International Commercial partnership	Specific international channel placements require verification
Celebrity and ambassador strategy	Ruby, Sara Tendulkar and Friends of Australia	Lisa Manobal and BE MY GUEST participants	Liverpool FC partnership and specialist destination advocates	Luke Nguyen and culinary promotion	Cultural, spiritual and specialist tourism promotion
Airline partnerships	Qantas and seven named strategic airline partners	Airline Focus Partnership Meeting and other airline initiatives	Emirates, Qatar Airways and Maldivian	Vietnam Airlines and tourism-sector cooperation	IRCTC tourist-train products and wider aviation-related promotion
Digital distribution	Aussie Specialist and international travel-distribution partners	AirAsia MOVE and digital campaigns	Fliggy and Travelbag/DNATA UK	YouTube and Vietnam.travel	Incredible India Content Hub and digital promotion
Outdoor advertising	Seoul digital out-of-home example	Individual international placements require verification	London taxis, buses, Underground, airports and stadium visibility	Individual international placements require verification	Individual international placements require verification

Familiarization programmes	International Media Hosting Program	BE MY GUEST and airline familiarization	Japanese media visit and trade programmes	International media and hosted-buyer programmes	Hospitality Programme and specialist tourism visits
Travel-agent training	Aussie Specialist Program	Trade education and travel-industry engagement	2HUB Education partnership in India	ITE HCMC and hosted-buyer programmes	Tourism trade engagement and specialist circuits
Specialized products	Wildlife, food, working holidays, nature	Food, film, fashion, festivals, Muay Thai and wellness	Luxury resorts, wellness, diving and local islands	Heritage, cuisine, railways, nature and sustainable tourism	Buddhist pilgrimage, weddings, wellness, heritage and MICE
Main lesson for Sri Lanka	Integrated global marketing and trade training	Soft power and targeted storytelling	International partnerships and commercial distribution	Cultural storytelling and hosted buyers	Thematic marketing and pilgrimage tourism

6.2. Comparison of the five marketing models

Australia: a structured global marketing system

Australia connects its national brand with specialist creative agencies, international media, airlines, travel sellers and a formal media-hosting programme.

The emphasis is on consistency, market-specific execution and professional trade engagement.

Thailand: tourism as soft power

Thailand uses culture, food, entertainment, festivals, sport and personalities to create reasons to visit.

Its promotional approach is especially relevant when developing tourism products around specific cultural experiences.

Maldives: international visibility linked to commercial partnerships

The Maldives combines outdoor advertising, sports partnerships, airline agreements, travel platforms and targeted media visits.

Its approach demonstrates how international visibility can be reinforced through commercial networks capable of selling holidays.

Vietnam: destination content and trade development

Vietnam connects digital storytelling and international media promotion with tourism exhibitions, hosted buyers, culinary experiences, railway tourism and sustainability.

Its approach demonstrates how destination content can be linked to tourism products and commercial relationships.

India: thematic and circuit-based promotion

India promotes distinct tourism products and circuits, including Buddhist pilgrimage, wedding

s and business events.

Its approach is relevant to Sri Lanka's potential to develop specialized international campaigns around cultural heritage, religious tourism and other identifiable products.

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