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The 10 Big Tourism Issues That Need to be Addressed in the Greater Mekong Region

BANGKOK, 19 May 2011 Ahead of the Mekong Tourism Forum on 27-28 May 2011 in Laos, Khiri Travel asked its country managers in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam to identify the unnecessary obstacles to growth currently impacting tourism across the Greater Mekong Region.

They identified 10 issues ranging from practical operational matters to marketing, branding and political concerns.

Khiri Travel believes that for sustainable growth in tourism, the following ten issues need to be addressed:

1. **Political stability in Thailand and an end to the Thai-Khmer border conflict.** Because Indochina destinations depend so heavily on Thailand as a gateway, airport closures and city centre protests in Bangkok adversely impact the whole region. When Thailand is stable and working, the whole Greater Mekong Region benefits. Let's hope for stability before and after Thailand's general election on 3 July 2011.

2. **Easier visa arrangements.** Getting multiple visas is a big hassle. Automatic 30-day visas on arrival would drive growth immensely. Thailand figured this out a long time ago. If we must have visas, one visa for the whole ASEAN region would be a viable 2nd option. Currently, multi-destination holidays need multiple visas. With no visas, or one 'ASEAN Schengen' visa, demand for multi-destination travel would increase notably.

3. **Better airport management at Suvarnabhumi.** With a population of 10 million and a strategic geographic location, Bangkok's role as an aviation hub should be untouchable. However, arriving aircraft are often not assigned gates. Passengers have to climb on buses and go up and down stairs. Long immigration queues and assorted scams at Suvarnabhumi International Airport also need to be addressed. The Airports

Authority of Thailand says it wants Suvarnabhumi to make the top five in the Skytrax World Airport Awards. It's currently number 13.

4. **An end to aviation protectionism.** This is particularly noticeable in Koh Samui and Siem Reap where Bangkok Airways has excessive market share. In these destinations competition is marginalized, creating, in effect, a cartel that keeps ticket prices high and tourism growth slow.

5. **Greater respect for green issues in rural areas.** Don't build shoulder-to-shoulder hotels on every beach in Thailand. Respect national park status. The Mekong River region is under severe threat. The Xayaboury dam project is in the planning stage. There are also plans to mine the Bolaven Plateau in southern Laos for bauxite. Natural primary forests such as the Nam Ha National Protected Area in Laos (an eco-adventure site) are being earmarked for rubber tree plantations. Conversely, nature conservation is a boon for tourism. It would safeguard the Mekong region's rich biodiversity and help prevent disasters such as mudslides and flooding due to logging and encroachment on watersheds.

6. **Greater respect for green issues in urban areas.** How wonderful cities such as Bangkok and Ho Chi Minh City would be with dedicated pedestrian zones, reduced noise and particle pollution from vehicles. It's not just tourism that would benefit, the population would too. More green means less stress and a higher quality of life. The authorities should stop developing every square metre and leave some space for public enjoyment. San Francisco, New York and Singapore have population pressures, but respect green needs. Tourists and residents love green spaces in urban areas.

7. **Better infrastructure.** Urban tourism based on short breaks for shopping, dining, nightlife and heritage is growing rapidly. Bangkok made a quantum leap as a destination with the opening

of its BTS skytrain and MRT underground trains. Well thought-through infrastructure enhances the tourism experience and the quality of life of residents. Build it and they will come. But no white elephants please such as the BRT bus system in Bangkok

8. **Bold branding.** Destination campaigns need to be refreshed. Sadly and depending on who you ask "Amazing Thailand" is now associated with "amazing" political problems as much as "amazing" beaches, food or service. Desperately, Vietnam has opened the creation of its national identity slogan to public contest. The whole process needs to be thought through carefully. A successful brand such as South Africa's "It's Possible" or Egypt's "Where It All Begins," needs to capture the imagination of a wide range of people, not just tourists.

9. **Much less red tape.** Try investing in a hotel or tour operation in Indochina and you'll soon be embroiled in an intractable Gordian knot of business regulations, government approvals, licensing contradictions, kick-backs and delays. If national development through tourism is the goal, cut the tape, simplify and make transparent.

10. **More trust.** The governments of Greater Mekong Region need to start thinking regionally and not nationally. A commitment to regional tourism objectives will attract tourists and create wealth faster than any national agenda. The whole of ASEAN is heading towards a large degree of integration in 2015. It would be wonderful if the Greater Mekong Region got there first.

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ISPE Announces Partnership with USEnvironmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR Program



Sustainable Facilities Community of Practice to spearhead involvement

TAMPA, FLORIDA, USA, 13 June 2011 ISPE, a global not-for-profit association of 22,000 pharmaceutical science and manufacturing professionals, today announced that it has partnered with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on its successful ENERGY STAR Program. Through participation in the program, ISPE aims to improve pharmaceutical industry exposure to the program and help ISPE Members drive cost savings and green initiatives for their companies.

“Sustainability and environmental stewardship have long been a part of the ISPE culture and goals,” said Bob Best, ISPE President and CEO.

“And helping our Members to deliver cost effective GMP solutions has always been an integral part of ISPE's mission. Therefore, the ENERGY STAR Program is a perfect fit for us. By helping to disseminate the ideas behind the program, we hope that our Members around the globe will be more successful in improving energy efficiency throughout the industry.” The ENERGY STAR Challenge for Industry calls upon businesses to create a five-year plan to reduce energy intensity by 10% or more. Companies that publically join the Challenge and meet the goal are recognized by the US EPA for their efforts, and gain the right to capitalize on one of the most recognizable names in energy efficiency by communicating publically that they have completed the ENERGY

STAR Challenge.

In support of ISPE's efforts to bring awareness of the ENERGY STAR Challenge to its Members, the Society will be holding a free live webinar on Thursday, 16 June at 11.00 EDT. The webinar, titled, “Save Money and Improve Efficiency with ISPE/ENERGY STAR Challenge,” will explain how the partnership of ISPE and its Sustainable Facilities COP with the ENERGY STAR Challenge enables ISPE Members and their companies to demonstrate leadership in the field of environmental sustainability. Interested parties can register for the webinar, completely free of charge, by visiting <http://lms.ispe.org/topclass/topclass.dll?Expand-esdOfferingDetails-offeringId=7929-type=ilt-TCActiveChild=search>.

The driving force within ISPE for ENERGY STAR information and participation will be the Sustainable Facilities Community of Practice (COP). Interested parties may join the Sustainable Facilities COP to gain information, engage in conversation, share best practices, and report progress on the Challenge. More information on the Sustainable Facilities COP can be found at www.ispe.org/sustainablefacilities. More information on the ENERGY STAR Challenge can be found at www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=industry_challenge.industry_challenge



Gama Aviation endorsed with Wyvern safety approval across all of its regions

Gama Aviation, the international business aviation services company, headquartered at Farnborough Airport, UK, has achieved Wyvern approval across all of its affiliated operating bases in Europe, the Americas and the Middle East, thus demonstrating a continued commitment to aviation safety. Wyvern's globally recognised seal of aviation safety excellence, 'The Wyvern Standard' is the leading quality audit standard developed in conjunction with the most sophisticated and demanding corporate flight departments in the world.

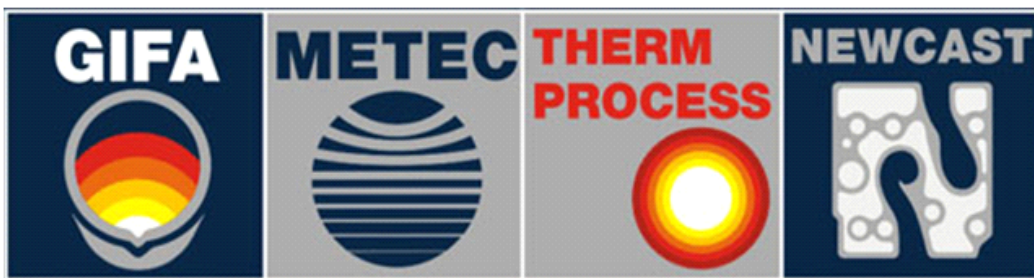
As a Wyvern approved operator, Gama maintains strict safety programmes which Wyvern audits annually and monitors throughout the year. The rigorous on-site safety audit evaluated Gama against a set of enhanced safety criterion that far exceeds the regulatory requirements for air charter, flight operations and maintenance.

Dave Edwards, Gama's Managing Director said, “Wyvern represents one of the most strict independent safety and quality standards in business aviation. That fact that Gama has now achieved that around the globe is an excellent reward for the hard work and effort that goes into our proactive safety culture. It's a pleasing recognition from one of the leading audit organizations.”

Photo caption:

The Gama team with Wyvern. Left to right

Thomas Miller - CEO Gama Charters USA
 Dave Edwards - MD Gama FZC Middle East
 Thomas Connolly - President, Gama Support Services USA
 Paul Cremer - Commercial Manager, Gama Aviation UK
 Brent Moldovan - Managing Director, Wyvern
 Fredrik Artursson - Sales Director, Wyvern
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New venue on Israel 's tourist scene: Ramada Hotel, Netanya 5-star exclusive suites hotel, the first of its kind offering the perfect vacation in Israel

This new hotel will open its doors in August 2011 on Netanya's southern Riviera , offering 180 exclusive suites for business travelers, tourists and families

Netanya, Israel , June 13 - This coming August will see the opening of a new Israeli "suite" hotel the Ramada Netanya, on the coastline of Netanya - centrally located seaside town and tourist center.

The new hotel offers quick access to the main business and commercial areas from Caesarea to Tel Aviv and to all the best Israeli tourist attractions.

The Ramada Netanya provides unique hospitality for all tourists, including business travelers, couples and families with children. The new hotel is offering 180 exclusive suites with quality amenities, all facing the Mediterranean Sea with a stunning sea view. All the suites have a large living room, kitchenette and open sun balcony. The presidential suites on the higher floors (16-18) contain two balconies, three bathrooms and two bedrooms. The Ramada Netanya offers its guests: a state of the art gym with a Pilates room, large swimming pool, sunbathing area, restaurants, bars and a spa complex.

The luxurious spa offers intimate treatment rooms, where you can enjoy a variety of massages and treatments from professional masseurs. The spa also has a Turkish bath, an exotic rain fountain, Jacuzzi, dry sauna and provides cosmetic and other treatments.

The Ramada Netanya offers its guests a memorable culinary experience and the very best of Israeli cuisine in its three restaurants. For business travelers, Ramada Netanya offers all the amenities that will make every stay as convenient and pleasurable as possible. Special executive suits designated for business travellers have a separate work area that provides a quiet work environment. Business travellers can enjoy Executive Lounge on the 15th floor overlooking the Mediterranean . Free access to wireless Internet is available throughout the hotel.

The new hotel also has two halls for events and conferences, and a synagogue, the first of its kind facing the Mediterranean Sea . Ramada Netanya is part of the Wyndham worldwide Hotel Group the largest hotel company in the world, managed by "Leshem Group Ltd." under the chairmanship of Moshe Sand & Avi Shvecky. Both of them have altogether around 50 years of experience , in Israel and all over the world.

Details and reservations:

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Steven Finn and Danielle Wyatt launch 2011 ASDA Kwik Cricket Competition



England's Steven Finn and England women's Danielle Wyatt paid a visit to Cassiobury Junior School in Watford today to launch the 2011

ASDA Kwik cricket competition. Finn, a former pupil at Cassiobury, joined children in an ASDA Kwik Cricket session as they prepared for both the mixed and girls' competition for primary school children. 2011 will see over 12,000 teams from 9,000 primary schools across the country play in regional and country rounds of the competition, with winners progressing to national finals at The County Ground, Derbyshire on 19th and 20th July.

ASDA Kwik Cricket is the largest primary schools competition for any sport in the UK and with fundamental sport skills as a key element, it is designed to suit the needs of the national curriculum. ASDA Kwik Cricket acts as a fantastic introduction to the game for and aims to inspire youngsters to participate and follow cricket later in life.

Steven Finn said: "It was good to come back to Cassiobury and meet the children who will be taking part in the Kwik Cricket competition this year. It's fantastic to see so many boys and girls excited about playing cricket, I hope they are inspired and this is the start of a life long involvement in cricket for them."

Danielle Wyatt said: "I remember playing Kwik cricket at school; it's great to see so many children are enjoying playing it too. The Kwik cricket competition is now bigger than ever and the fact that so many children can get involved and be introduced to the game is fantastic. "I wish all the schools involved in the competition the best of luck, and hope many of the children continue to participate in cricket as they move up to secondary school."

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328 Support Services GmbH announces selection of Rockwell Collins as IFE provider for the new SkyBird VIP 328DBJ™

328 Support Services has selected Rockwell Collins as the provider of the In Flight Entertainment (IFE) system that will be installed on the next two 328DBJ™ VVIP interiors. The two 12-seat executive jets, which are being converted for Nigerian-based SkyBird Air will have the system installed at 328 SSG's headquarters at Oberpfaffenhofen Airport, Munich. Delivery is planned for late summer.

The newly developed Rockwell Collins cabin management product called "Venue" offers a number of benefits for the 328DBJ™ VVIP cabin. The IFE product features the latest generation of high definition screens, intuitive interfaces for users, and provides a home cinema experience in the air. The unit offers an IP-based, network-enabled system which enables passengers to stay connected in flight with connectivity provided by Aircell. Passengers will also be able to connect portable media devices such as their iPod® or iPhone®. Importantly Venue is also lighter than its competitors, has a shorter hardware delivery time, and can be tailored to specific customer requirements. The units are competitively priced which fits with 328's strategy of providing "affordable luxury" in the air.

SkyBird Air is aiming to start airline operations in Africa this summer with a 32 seat D328 passenger regional airliner which was handed over to SkyBird Air in February following refurbishment by 328 SSG. The interior reflects the same design, materials and details that will be installed on the two SkyBird Air 328DBJ™ aircraft

Special features of note in the new VVIP 328DBJ™ interior include an innovative galley concept that maximises space in the forward cabin generating nearly half a metre more working space. The main cabin which has been stretched measures 10 m long, 2.15 m wide and 1.8 m high providing an overall feeling of a heavy jet cabin interior, and can accommodate both a lounge and conference area. With redesigned ceiling and side wall panels featuring electric window blinds and slim-line PSU's, the 328DBJ™ genuinely feels roomier than previous Envoy models.

328 Support Services has also approved a set of LED external lights from EmteQ Europe that allow operators to make savings on regular maintenance costs. Ray Mosses, Head of Sales for 328 Support Services, said, "we continue to try and offer our customers a cost effective luxury aircraft, which remains important in the current economic climate. Customers who choose to purchase a 328DBJ™ can save up to a third of the price of purchasing a new aircraft with the equivalent luxury interior."

328 Support Services also makes interiors or individual monuments for other aircraft types and will be showcasing a VIP exhibit at EBACE Stand 1851 (Hall 5). The company also produces non-328 monuments and interiors such as VVIP galleys for two Airbus A340s, B737 moisture protection bays and Do228 avionics' racks and has expanded its workforce at its German Oberpfaffenhofen facility to 180.



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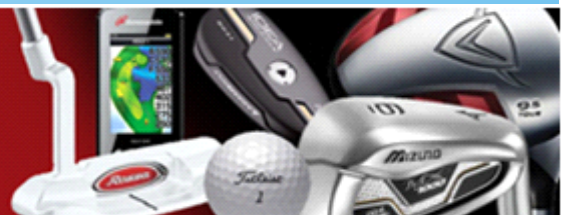
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