

**Call for Papers: Royal Geographical Society-IBG Annual Conference  
London, 31 August 3 September 2021**

**Regional Cooperation for Sustainable Tourism Development in Southeast Asia**

Session conveners: Dr. Jaeyeon Choe (Bournemouth University, UK), Prof. Jarkko Saarinen (University of Oulu, Finland) and Dr. Pham Hong Long (USSH Vietnam National University, Hanoi, Vietnam)

**Sponsored by the Geographies of Leisure and Tourism Research Group**

Southeast Asia has seen rapid growth in tourism development. According to the World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC), the tourism sector directly contributing 119.7 billion USD to the South East Asian economy in 2016, whilst Bangkok was the world's most-visited city in 2018, hosting more than 22 million international tourists. As tourism becomes an important economic asset in the region, projected to be worth 222.8 billion USD in 2027, local and national governments increasingly promote and invest in international tourism development. However, several countries and areas in the region suffer from extreme poverty and are disconnected from tourism development initiatives and tourists flows. Experts note that ASEAN's regional cooperation is key to boosting tourist arrivals and regional sustainability (World Bank, 2018), with geographical dispersion at a regional level seen as an urgent need to support revenue for education, health, infrastructure and social assistance. In the past, regional intergovernmental collaboration has faltered due to issues such as religious and political conflict, overt competition and sometimes antagonism among ASEAN countries and destinations. While the World Bank and others have noted the importance that ASEAN countries integrate tourism promotion, development and operations to achieve sustainable tourism development, and work towards United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), regional roadmaps and plans have either not been implemented or are overdue (Wong, Mistilis & Dwyer, 2011). This is despite the benefits of collaboration and coordinated policies, such as improved trust, confidence and mutual understanding (Choe & O' Regan, 2015). A successful partnership approach could be cost-effective as cross-border marketing and promotional programmes, tourism clusters spanning different countries, and cross border mobility of skilled tourism professionals could be developed (Choe & O' Regan, 2015).

This session seeks to reflect, share and discuss ASEAN's regional tourism cooperation, or lack of, and explore regional pathways for inclusive growth and sustainable development. For example, while Cambodia and Myanmar are currently developing a Northern Buddhism tourism route that links Bagan and Siem Reap, the previous Yangon - Phnom Phenh connection in 2017 failed due to low demand (Myanmar Times, 2019). There has been some air transport deregulation (Phnom Penh Post, 2020), and support for intra-ASEAN travel.

Papers might explore the following themes:

- Border management
- Regional infrastructure
- Innovative and sustainable regional tourism products and programmes
- Negative impacts such as social problems and environmental degradation created by lack of cooperation
- Case studies from the region
- International comparisons to other regional organisations and institutions in other parts of the world

We welcome papers and discussion pieces from critical tourism scholars, human geographers, cultural anthropologists and border study scholars and more. We encourage panellists to present in a creative method, not limited to a formal paper presentation. The session will be consisted with 4-5 papers (15

mins each). Guidelines will be provided for accepted panellists. As we would like to support participants who have difficulty attending the conference in London, we support to arrange online presentations.

If interested, please send an abstract (no more than 250 words) to Dr. Jaeyeon Choe at Bournemouth University, UK at [jaeyeon@jaeyeonchoe.com](mailto:jaeyeon@jaeyeonchoe.com) before March 10th, 2021.