Governance of seaside tourist resorts areas confronted with environmental challenges in Southeast Asia

Dr. Christine CABASSET
IRASEC – French Research Institute on Contemporary Southeast Asia (Bangkok)
(CNRS/MEAE - USR 3142/UMIFRE 22)
christine.cabasset@irasec.com ; www.irasec.com
Introduction
Talking about Tourism and environmental challenges in coastal areas in Southeast Asia

Content
1 – Tourism expansion and pressures on coastal areas
2 – Environmental risks and undersized urban services
3 – Governance: a key-factor for costal areas conservation and risks management
Introduction

Talking about Tourism and environmental challenges on coastal areas in Southeast Asia

• Not all SEA coastal areas urbanized; but majority of population, urban areas, fast growing of seaside tourism resort areas;

• Like other human/economic activities, tourism both contributes to environmental hazards/risks/Climate Change & is affected by them (WTO);

• New consensus about « Environment » and the « climate emergency »?
1 - Tourism expansion and pressures on coastal areas

• Southeast Asia: fast process of tourism expansion
  . Foreign tourists in SEA x 4 since 1997 (120.4 millions in 2017);
    ++ role of coastal areas
  . Tourism growth: Foreign + Regional + Domestic Tourists
  . Reconfiguration & resizing of Seaside tourism resort areas, from small villages to large urban areas + megaprojects (from tourism to multifunctional)

• International and national dynamics at play (promotion, economic growth, ASEAN/ASIAN dynamics, China, governance, competition, corruption, etc.)
Main coastal tourism destinations in Southeast Asia
2 – Environmental risks and undersized urban services

2.1 - Growing pollution: soil, air, water and sea, noise

- Pollution sources and effects, esp. marine’s, broadcasted through social media (tourists, medias, etc.);

- Coastal erosion, pollutions control and waste (liquid & solid) management = among the most critical points in urban management in SEA (Cabasset, Nitivattananon, Wiranatha, 2019);

- WHO: 85% of waste water worldwide are directly rejected into the sea; Problem of water supply (subsidence & ground water pollution); Deficit of clean transportation means & air pollution;

- Social challenges: opposition movements to some large-scale projects
2.2 - Effects of Climate Change & extreme weather events

• COP21 Agreement; 2016 - 2019 = the 4 warmest years for the planet;

• Alarming sea level rise from ice sheet & glacier loss: 1 meter by 2100 (IPCC, 2019); + 2 meters by 2100 if business-as-usual (Bamber and Al, 2019)

• SEA: Low land and coastal areas + small islands = especially vulnerable
  • Major part of big cities and plenty of secondary cities are coastal-based (incl. Singapore)
  • Most of seaside tourist resort areas are also affected / potentially affected (flooding, submersion, coastal erosion, etc.). Rebuild, maintain... = high cost
  • New roads, hotels, etc. still built too close of high tide line = safety problem
3 – Governance, a key-factor for costal areas conservation and risks management

3.1 – Regional SEA and international

- Major part of works on CC through UN (UNFCCC): National Communication, National & Municipal action plans, INDC, etc.;

- ASEAN Sec: Increasing attention since 2000 through working groups & reports (biodiversity, quality of sea water, haze, sustainable cities, CC, etc.);

- At Country or local scale: Mass transportations, Protected areas, Waste reduction policy (e.g. plastic), sustainable destinations, etc.
3.2 – Good local governance

• Quality of governance +++ for better governed/managed destinations;

• Social structure / social cohesion; participative democracy; environmentally sustainable project

• Adaptation to CC: coastal protection against sea erosion (ex. Bali); but Protection measures vs Tourism activities extension on the beach; DRM; GHG reduction (transportation, waste, etc.); « Resilience »: Central/Local Gvts, international cooperation (incl. between Uni-Research Centers), NGOs, e.g. integrated coastal management (ex. with IUCN, CI);

• Closure (definite or indefinite) of overfrequented Islands or beaches (Taichai + Maya Bay in TH, Boracay in PH, Komodo in IN) + quota of visitors;

• Innovation in Private sector (AC, energy, water, waste water, construction & architecture, etc.);
Conclusion: In SEA (like global), still a long way to go for combatting CC and pollution... but:

- SEA Potential strengths
  - New Elites; Better education & training in territory planning & environment
  - International / regional / transnational cooperation
  - Environmental NGOs
  - Civile society (esp. when environmental damages and land grabbing)
  - More specialized journalists / medias
• ASEAN Secretariat, 2016, *ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025*, ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta.


• CABASSET, Christine, NITIVATTANANON, Vilas, WIRANATHA, Agung S., Final Report on Coastal areas governance in a context of rapid tourism urbanization and climate change in Southeast Asia (project for the Regional Forum on Climate Change-RFCC, 2016-2019), 2019 (np).


