Awareness and Implementation of Green Practices:

A Case Study of MICE Operators in Phuket, Thailand

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Due acknowledgement has been made of any assistance received.

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I hereby certify that this work has not already been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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บทคัดย่อ

การท่องเที่ยวเชิงธุรกิจที่มักเป็นที่รู้จักในนามการท่องเที่ยวไมซ์ อันประกอบด้วยงานประชุม การท่องเที่ยวเชิงรางวัล สัมมนา และการนิทรรศการนั้นเป็นธุรกิจที่ได้รับความสำคัญและเติบโตอย่างรวดเร็ว แต่การจัดงานประชุม และกิจกรรมต่างๆ นั้นมักจะโดนวิพากษ์วิจารณ์ถึงผลกระทบต่อสิ่งแวดล้อม ดังนั้น หน่วยงานภาครัฐ ภาคเอกชนและหน่วยงานที่เกี่ยวข้องต่างให้ความสำคัญในการกำหนดแนวทางการจัดงานประชุมสีเขียวที่คำนึงต่อผลกระทบต่อสิ่งแวดล้อมอย่างเป็นรูปธรรม อาทิ สำนักงานส่งเสริมการประชุมและนิทรรศการ (สสปน.) ได้กำหนดคู่มือการจัดประชุมสีเขียวที่ผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียในอุตสาหกรรมไมซ์สามารถนำไปประยุกต์ใช้ได้

งานวิจัยนี้มุ่งเน้นศึกษาในพื้นที่จังหวัดภูเก็ตเป็นหลักเนื่องด้วยจังหวัดภูเก็ตเป็นแหล่งท่องเที่ยวที่สำคัญสำหรับอุตสาหกรรมไมซ์ของประเทศไทย โดยวัตถุประสงค์หลักประกอบด้วยประเมินการรับรู้ของผู้จัดงานและผู้ประกอบการด้านไมซ์ในจังหวัดภูเก็ตและการปฏิบัติตามหลักเกณฑ์การจัดประชุมสีเขียวทั้งนี้ ความเข้าใจและการประยุกต์ใช้หลักเกณฑ์การประชุมสีเขียวนั้นเป็นจุดเริ่มต้นที่สำคัญของการพัฒนาอย่างยั่งยืน

ผู้วิจัยได้ดำเนินการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพด้วยวิธีการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกระหว่างเดือนสิงหาคม –ตุลาคม 2560 ผู้ให้ข้อมูลรวมทั้งหมด 13 คน แบ่งเป็นกลุ่มผู้จัดงานและผู้จัดการแผนกที่เกี่ยวข้องการจัดการงานที่ทำงานภายในโรงแรม ซึ่งผลวิจัยชี้ให้เห็นเป็นประจักษ์ว่าผู้ประกอบการทั้งสองกลุ่มเข้าใจ ตระหนักและปฏิบัติตามแนวทางการจัดประชุมสีเขียวในหลากหลายด้าน แต่ประสบปัญหาในการดำเนินการอันเป็นสืบเนื่องจากหลายสาเหตุ เช่น ความต้องการของลูกค้า ค่าใช้จ่ายที่สูงขึ้น

ผลจากการวิจัยสามารถนำไปใช้เป็นแนวทางสำหรับผู้จัดงานและผู้ประกอบการในอุตสาหกรรมไมซ์ในการจัดประยุกต์แนวทางการพัฒนาอย่างยั่งยืนในการจัดงาน และเพิ่มความเข้าใจประเด็นด้านสิ่งแวดล้อม สังคม และเศรษฐกิจที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการจัดงานประชุมสีเขียว

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Abstract

This study aims at investigating the gap between green practices awareness and implementation among the Meetings-, Incentives-, Conferences- and Exhibitions (MICE) Operators in the case study of Phuket (Thailand) as a tourism destination. Globally, the Tourism and Events industries are both growing and recognized to have negative impacts on the environment. In this context, an increasing number of green practices guidelines are developed from public, private and public-private organizations to help the MICE Industry minimizing negative impacts on the environment. Phuket beingone of the most popular destinations in Thailand, the purpose of this research is to appraise green practices awareness and implementation among MICE Operators. Face-to-face interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data from August to October 2017 in Phuket. A sample of 15 informants from the Phuket MICE industry answered the interview questions. Two populations were identified between the 13 Phuket MICE Operators: (1) MICE Organizers and (2) Accommodations with MICE services. The results reveal that Phuket MICE Operators are rather aware of and do implement green practices, but a gap exists between awareness and implementation because of several obstacles, among which clients' request, external lack of awareness and costs. The result of this survey is intended as a tool to help both planners and suppliers integrate sustainable practices within an organization's operations and regular event plans. Through this research, a better understanding about environmental, social and economic sustainability issues and their implication on the events organized is gained.

Keywords : Green practices, Meetings-, Incentives-, Conventions and- Exhibitions- (MICE)

Operators, Phuket, Business tourism destination, Sustainability

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

Business events are a powerful motivational tool for both organizers and tourists andare an important factor for developing and marketing many destinations (Smagina, 2017). As a topic of study, planned tourism-related events have now become of interest for researchers because of the increasing importance of its role and impacts on attractiveness of the socioeconomic development of the destinations. 'Tourism event' started to be studied only around twenty years ago following the growth of this sector and the significant effects (Getz & Page, 2016). Business events, known as Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions [MICE]Industry, are fully recognized as part of the hospitality and tourism industry (Chon & Maier, 2010) because of their important economic stimulus to boost the destinations' visibility. The MICE sector growth is notably linked to the need of sharing information between actors of economic or research fields, as well as the recent transport development and cost reduction of travels by airplane.

The international tourism demand remained sound in 2016 regardless of the various challenges. The latest United Nations World Tourism Organization World Tourism Barometer (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2017) revealed that international visitor arrivals and influxes increased by 3.9 % to attain 1,235 million. An increase of about 46 million international overnight travelers was estimated in 2016 compared to 2015. Over the past sixty years, tourism experienced sustained growth and diversification and became one of the most important and fastest-rising economic sectors in the world. In 2016, international tourism represented 7 % of the world's trade of goods and services, gaining1 percentage point only in one year(6 % in 2015). About worldwide host destinations, new places opened up to tourism and developed to boost socioeconomic progress. Taleb Rifai, United Nations World Tourism Organization Secretary-General said: *'Tourism has shown extraordinary strength and resilience in recent years, despite many challenges, particularly those related to safety and security issues. Yet, international travel continues to grow strongly and contribute to job creation*

and the wellbeing of communities around the world' ("Sustained growth in international tourism despite challenges | World Tourism Organization UNWTO", 2018).

By region, Asia and the Pacific (+8 %) led the increase in international tourist arrivals in 2016, fueled by strong demand from both intra- and interregional source markets. Africa (+8 %) enjoyed a strong rebound after two weaker years. In the Americas (+4 %) the positive momentum continued. Europe (+2 %) showed rather mixed results, with double-digit growth in some destinations offset by decreases in others. Demand in the Middle East (-4 %) was also uneven, with positive results in some destinations, but declines in others.

Tourism in Thailand has known a regular growth from 2011 to 2015. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization 2016 report, the overnight visitors (inbound tourists) number has increased from 19,230 in 2011 to 29,923 in 2015 (Thailand: Country-specific: Basic indicators (Compendium) 2011-2015, 2017). This report also shows a domestic tourism boost: the total trips number has grown from 109,360 in 2011 to 126,059 in 2013. According to the last available statistics of the Ministry of Tourism and Sport ("International Visitor Arrivals", 2018), the international arrivals in Thailand total (2,555,689) in September 2017 increased by 5.75 %, compared to September 2016 (2,416,821).

From the Tourism Authority of Thailand's [TAT] ("TAT Governor Speech at ATF 2017 – TATNewsroom", 2018) perspective, the plans for 2017 to encourage tourism development aredescribed as: *'Our plans for 2017 are designed to shift the structure and direction of the national tourism industry towards a new value-based offer to position Thailand as a 'Preferred Destination'. In order to achieve this, we have developed the Tourism 4.0 in line with a national strategy 'Thailand 4.0'. The Tourism 4.0 incorporates two key concepts including 'Strength from Within' and 'Connect to the World', as a strategy to drive both domestic and international tourism.'*. The Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau [TCEB] Strategic and Business Development Vice-President, in charge of MICE development,during an event organized by the bureau on the 27[th]of September 2017, said about the marketing communication campaign for the year 2018 ("Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau Unveils 2018 Marketing Campaign", 2018): *'TCEB develops the operational strategy to be in parallel with the country's economic development scheme. The objective is to promote the MICE industry into a key mechanism for propelling the national economy, guided by the government's vision of*

Stability, Prosperity, and Sustainability.' The bureau expects the country to welcome 1,192,000 international MICE visitors by the end of 2018 which might generate 112‑billion‑baht revenue. Sustainability then became an important factor to take into consideration while developing Tourism and MICE for both the United Nations and Thailand.

1.2 Problem Statement

The year 2017 was designated the 'International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development' by the United Nations ("2017 is the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development | World Tourism Organization UNWTO", 2018). Sustainable tourism development aims to achieve economic efficiency, ensure long‑term environmental sustainability and social well‑being for tourism (Gabdrakhmanov et *al*, 2016). The United Nations World Tourism Organization Secretary‑General, Taleb Rifai, insisted on the necessity of working together in a coordinated trendto link the contribution of tourism to environmental and cultural preservation, economic growth, social inclusion, and common understanding. He adds that it is particularly important in these times of 'respect and tolerance deficit'. Sustainable tourism development is clearly pointed out as a major concern as the event tourism industry can have negative impacts, especially on the environment.Indeed, all kinds of tourism events, including MICE events, can generate much pollution as they attract travelers in a short period of time in one destination(Dickson & Arcodia, 2010).For example, the use of single‑use plastic water bottles during meetings is creating much wasteespecially if not recyclable or recycled(DeSilets & Dickerson, 2008).The sustainability mentioned by the Secretary‑General also urges the need to implement or reinforce 'good practices', not only on environmental aspects, but also on sociocultural and economic ones, in order to guarantee a better long‑term durability. Thus, the Tourism and MICE Industries should develop and implement sustainable practices.

The literature and studies on the impacts of events are often focused on the economic factor (Getz & Page, 2016). In a changing world where sustainability becomes a serious stakefor the world, including Thailand, it is then interesting to take into consideration other factors, while measuring the impacts of tourism and events such as sociocultural and environmental. That is why sustainability takes into account economic, sociocultural, and environmental issues. The events industry should face these issues by implementing a sustainable

policy in the pre-, live and post-event stages (Raj et al., 2013). If there is some literature on the topic 'Sustainability of events', it becomes sparse on sustainable events practices, and even inexistent concerning Thailand. Getz and Page (2016) proposed an interesting and complete review of the literature on event tourism. Their analysis shows that despite the high volume of research on event tourism in Western cultures, especially in the USA, little empirical research has been conducted on events in Thailand. The Thai event tourism has grown very quickly recently and needs to take into consideration these three impacting factors in order to be sustainable (Andersson and Lundberg, 2013):

- The economic perspective: the direct and indirect cost-benefit analysis;
- The sociocultural impact: how the local community and the attendees benefit from the event;
- The environmental impacts: evaluation of the "footprint" generated by the event.

Sustainable development has led to international standards definition, such as the ISO 14000 family – Environmental management ("ISO 14001 Environmental management", 2018). Sustainable events have a dedicated standard: ISO 20121 – Sustainable events ("ISO 20121 Sustainable events", 2018).

To help the MICE sector move towards sustainable practices, numerous stakeholders (associations, non-profit organizations or governments) develop and provide some tools. One of these instruments is online documentation available often in the form of guidelines for sustainable events to reach international standards such as ISO 20121: Event Sustainability Management System ("ISO 20121 Sustainable events", 2018). According to the latest International Congress and Convention Association [ICCA] Statistics Report Country and City Rankings (2017): Thailand is ranked 24th worldwide and 5th in Asia-Pacific & Middle East with 174 meetings in 2016. The country is then very attractive for business events. According to the same statistics, the main destinations are Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket and Pattaya. These destinations attractiveness is also demonstrated by the efforts made by the two Thai national organizations in charge of tourism and MICE(TAT and TCEB) to promote them. While looking on the most popular destinations suggested by the TCEB, Phuket and the othersarein the top 5 ("Thailand Meeting, Incentive, Convention, Exhibition (MICE) Cities & Destinations | TCEB",

2018).In Thailand, the TCEB, via its development department called MICE Capabilities, provides comprehensive information (and offers accompanying services) on how to organize sustainable events while minimizing negative environmental impacts and even carbon neutral events ("MICE", 2018). To become more sustainable, the stakeholders are encouraged to initiate environmental friendly practices, or 'green practices'. In this context, it is interesting to go further ahead by trying to make a diagnostic on the current practices by carrying out a field-research in Phuket on this issue.

1.3 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study is to evaluate whether the operators of the MICE industry are aware of and implement green practices in the case of Phuket in Thailand. The research objectives are:

1. Explore the level of awareness of green practices among Phuket MICE operators;

2. Identify the current green practices that Phuket MICE operators are implementing, and any obstacles encountered;

3. Compare differences between awareness of green practices and their implementation among Phuket MICE operators.

1.4 Scope of the Study

Face-to-face interviews were conducted from August to October 2017 in Phuket province (Thailand) in order to gather data to appraise MICE operators' perception and awareness on green practices, to assess if green practices are actually implemented in the MICE events management and to understand the obstacles faced by the operators to implement green practices. The primary data collection was done among two major groups of operators in Phuket including MICE Organizers and Accommodations with MICE services. Both MICE groups were composed of different types of organizations:

1. *MICE Organizers*: Destination Management Companies [DMCs] and Event Management Companies [EMCs];

2. *Accommodations with MICE services*: Hotels and Resorts.

When a saturation of the data was reached (which occurred after 13 face-to-face interviews), and after transcription of the verbatim, the data generated was analyzed using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo. Several categories and subcategories emerged, with enough significant quantitative information. Its analysis, showing clear trends, was then possible.

Hence, this report is organized as follows:

- Chapter 2 is a review of existing literature on this topic;

- Chapter 3 is devoted to the methodology chosen. It includes the overall population, the sampling method, the preparation of the interview questions and the way data was collected and analyzed;

- Chapter 4 presents the informants and their organizations profiles and summarizes the findings of the study; the latter are structured according to the three study variables, the data being organized by categories and subcategories generated from data analysis;

- Chapter 5 proposes a discussion of the findings and concludes the report; some recommendations are made, which could facilitate the implementation of more adequate green practices in the MICE industry in Phuket.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1. *Meeting*: event which brings several attendees together in the same location for conferring or carrying out one activity (Fenich, 2005);

2. *Incentive travel*: leisure trip as part of an agenda and given to its participants as a reward for a prior performance (Mair, 2015);

3. *Convention*: event where a group of members meets to exchange ideas, information of mutual interest and views, attend discussions, participate in educational sessions, and socialize (Chon & Maier, 2010);

4. *Exhibition*: event organized to develop public relationships, sales, marketing buy displaying products or promotional material (Fenich, 2005);

5. *Green practice*: act or procedure to reduce negative environmental impacts (Slocum & Lee, 2014).

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 Sustainable Development of Tourism

Today, globalization and the development of new technologies give more opportunities for people to travel all around the world. Harris et *al*. (2012) affirm that international mass tourism is growing very quickly since the second half of the 20[th]century. He insists by saying that this remarkable increase is linked to different parameters: the development of transport, the increase of widespread prosperity, the drop of geographic barriers and the globalization of media. The development of mass tourism has environmental, economic, social and cultural consequences. To respond to the increasing tourist demand, Sustainable Tourism (ST) development should take into consideration all these key factors. The first definition of sustainable development given is: 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' ("Our Common Future, Chapter 2: Towards Sustainable Development - A/42/427 Annex, Chapter 2 - UN Documents: Gathering a body of global agreements", 2018).

Environmental Issue

According to Gössling (2012), the most pertinent issue, if not the single most important for ST development, is climate change. They clarify that the high relevance of this issue is due to a double cause-effect: because tourism is directly altered by climate change and because the tourism industry is the most influent on climate change. Tourism is a significant contributor to emissions as it is revealed through many studies. The same authors give three sub-sectors of tourism which have been used to calculate impacts of the sector on climate change: transport, accommodation and leisure activities. Looking at the World Tourism Organization of the United Nations (UNWTO, 2017) statistics, there were 25 million international tourists in 1950 when the number of international tourists in 2016 was 1.133 million. The United Nations expect 1,8 billion international tourists in 2030. These numbers show the massive expansion and growth of the sector demand and question the tourism professionals on the consequences of this increase, especially on the transport issue. In the same UNWTO report of 2017, focusing on the transport issue, the first mode of transport used by tourists is air (54%). It is followed by road (39%), water

(5%) and rail (2%). Guiver (2013) shows that ST including flying is a perpetual debate for international experts on travel, tourism and sustainability. Gössling (2012) demonstrates that air transport is the first cause of CO_2 emissions in the tourism industry. On the other hand, the aviation industry assessment minimizes the effects of this mode of transport so as to develop the sector, as illustrate Gössling and Peeters (2007), giving four major arguments: air transport is energy-efficient and accounts just for marginal emissions of CO_2; air transport is economically and socially crucial to be restricted; environmental impacts exist, but technology will solve the problem; air transport is 'treated unfairly' in comparison to other means of transport. So, if evidence of pollution caused by air travel exists, the air travel industrial lobby is trying to give arguments to justify its expansion. The above information proves the relevance of the transport issue, especially air travel, in ST from an ecological point of view and its consequences on climate change.

Economic Issue

The second major issue in sustainable development is economic. The UNWTO report affirms that world tourism represents 9 % of gross domestic product around the world, and that one job upon eleven is part of the tourism sector. Pearce (1988) points out that sustainability means to be 'made durable' and insists on durable economy. As tourism is a fast-growing industry, the sector should take into consideration sustainable economy. Harris et *al.* (2012) show the interdependence of economic and ecologic patterns. They argue that the sectoral organization of economy, which influences economic policies, is a wrong model when considering sustainable development, as all sectors are interconnected. Economic issue in ST is then directly linked with all other development issues, globally and locally. McKercher (1993, p.14) argues: 'for ST to occur, it must be closely integrated with all other activities that occur in the host region'. In our view, the tourism industry should develop about regional issues first, in order to be sustainable. ForBramwell and Lane (2002), the tourism market is toughly pushed by price and trends dynamics, while the overall market and business remain conservative. They explain that this is one of the reasons of the late tendency of ST. To face this economic issue, the tourism sector should focus more on building a solid relationship between the tourism sector and all the other related sectors rather than centering only on price and fashion factors if tourism must remain durable. It is then relevant to opt for a new sustainable development system which takes into

account economy in an ecological way using human resources following human rights. ST development should be a part of this system in which sectors are not considered as individual industries but as interconnected in a global network.

Sociocultural Issue

The third relevant issue in ST development is sociocultural. Developing tourism has impacts on the local community. The community is here characterized, as explain Olson and Bernard (1973), by an aggregation of people in a particular place living in community. 'Community' is further defined by Stoddard (1993) as living with social interactions sharing same values and beliefs. The tourism industry, to be sustainable, should look carefully at the global-local processes which influenced its development to create a stronger outset of how different analysis scales and numerous stakeholders connect with each other (Taylor & Stanley, 1992). Brohman (1996) shows that there is often ignorance on the well-known tendency of local elites to include the community in the decision process in tourism development. Their strategies are self-centered only. These difficulties show the importance of local case studies on how tourism can be developed in some areas and how to define local stakeholders in charge of implementing projects that have been already planned. Tosun (1999) shows the limitations of community participation in the tourism expansion process in developing countries. The limitations are operational, structural and cultural depending upon the tourist destination. Tourism development in Guyana with the indigenous community for example, has positive and negative impacts (Funnell & Bynoe, 2007). Amerindian communities are in the process of developing ecotourism and this is offering them visibility, cultural recognition and they are now becoming active stakeholders in the tourism industry. On the other hand, the Amerindian culture has changed as a result of the increasing penetration of outside influences. The Amerindian community is the poorest one is the region, so it has implemented more ecotourism because it needs income to protect the area in which the community lives. If tourism development in developing countries can raise sociocultural issues, it can also be the case in developed countries. In Scotland for instance, the improvement of transport facilities for the different islands has raised responsibility issues for the locals according to Currie and Falconer (2014). They explain the difficulty of structural disparity between private and public stakeholders. Sociocultural issue is then pertinent in sustainable development of

tourism in developing as well as developed countries. The global-local issue is probably the most relevant problematic in tourism.

2.2 MICE Industry Overview

MICE: Definitions

The term '*MICE*' is the acronym for Meetings, Incentives, Conventions (or Conferences), and Exhibitions (or Expositions) (Marquer & Santos, 2016; Sandy Sou & McCartney, 2015; Vaid, Kesharwani & Kumar Dubey, 2017). Other terms refer to this sector of business tourism and business events such as MCE (Meetings, Conventions and Expositions) (Chon & Maier, 2010), MEEC (Meetings, Expositions, Events and Conventions) (Fenich, 2005), the meetings segment, or the convention industry (Marais et *al*., 2017). Despite the numerous designations related to this sector, 'MICE' is used all throughout this report.

The '*meeting*' is an event which brings several attendees together in the same location for conferring or carrying out one activity (Fenich, 2005). The participants attend educational sessions, socialize, participate in discussions, or attend other events. A meeting can be unplanned, and held for a specific purpose, orit can be organized on a set pattern (i.e. annual meeting).

'*Incentive*' refers to an event as part of an agenda and given to its attendees as a reward for a prior performance, scheduled by an organization for employees ("IAPCO: The International Association of Professional Congress Organisers", 2017). 'Incentive travel' (or trip) is the same concept, but involves traveling (Fenich, 2005). Little empirical research is done on incentive travel (Mair, 2015), despite the economic importance of the MICE Industry in many tourist destinations. The author tries to explain why travelling is an effective reward for employees and introduces a conceptual framework to link employee motivational factors with incentive travel (see figure 2.1 below). The incentive travel purpose is to create a favorable atmosphere that boosts staffs to achieve high-quality challenging goals or targets. The attractiveness of travel and the incentive destination are key factors of motivating employees. The destination choice then becomes crucial while organizing incentive trips. Thus, incentive travel, as a reward, is a strategic tool used by employers to enhance business performances.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework for incentive travel as an employee motivation tool
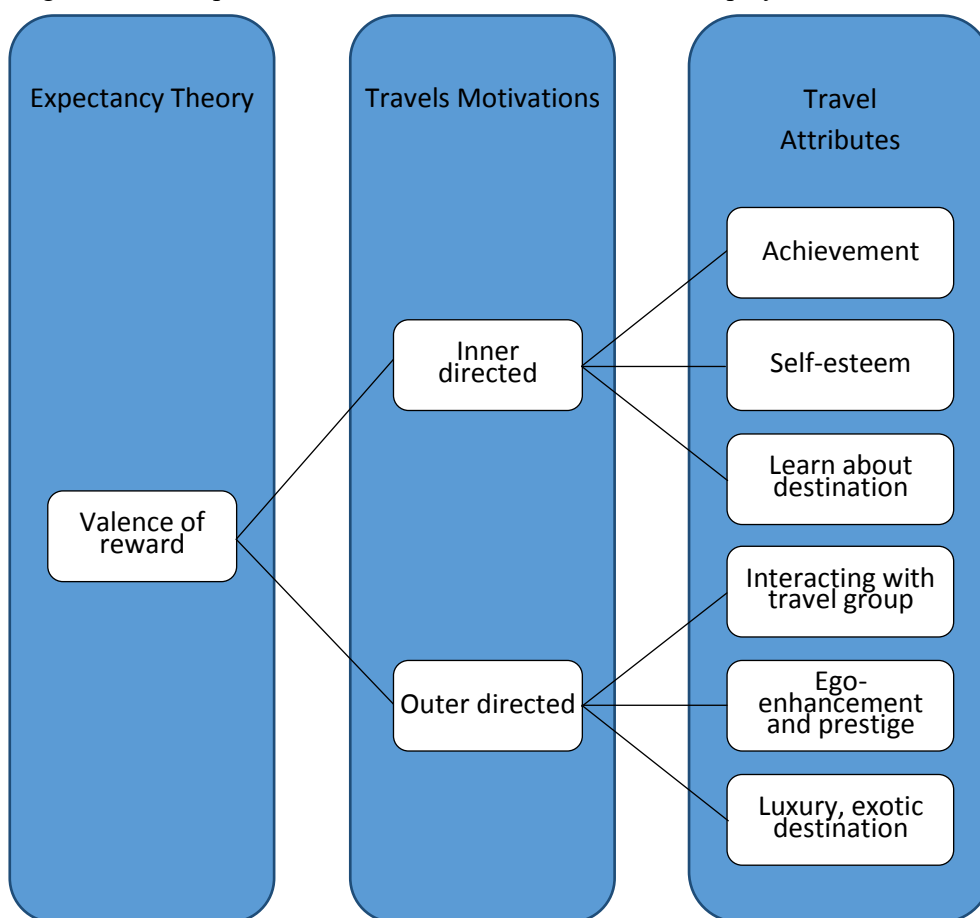
Source: Mair (2015)

A 'convention', or 'conference' is an event where a group of members meets to exchange ideas, information of mutual interest and views, which differs from a 'meeting' (Chon & Maier, 2010). The objective can be social, civil, economic, or political (i.e. the ASEAN Tourism Research Conference 2018 in Phuket).

'Exhibitions' are events which can have two purposes (Fenich, 2005): to build and maintain a network with other businesses (business-to-business) by visiting exhibits or to develop public relationships, enhance sales, do direct marketing by displaying products or promotional material. In the hospitality industry, international exhibitions are larger and called 'expositions' (Chon & Maier, 2010).

MICE: niche of Events and Tourism Industries

The MICE industry is part of two major industries. First, by definition, it is part of the Events industry. Berridge (2011) introduces the event genre of event management and explains that MICE events can be organized in conjunction with many events genres such as:

- Business and corporate events;

- Cause related and fund-raising events;

- Entertainment and leisure activities;

- Festivals; government and civic events;

- Marketing events; sports events.

The author adds that the MICE attendees can usually also experience a large range of activities planned around the initial event they participate. These are part of a program set up by the organizer and are usually related to leisure and social activities (gala dinners, team-building activities, trips or tours, parties).

MICE events can be held for domestic as well as international visitors, and both markets are growing (Marais et al., 2017). Thus, as the events involve traveling, the MICE industry is also linked to the Hospitality and Tourism industry. The MICE industry is part of Business Tourism (niche of Hospitality and Tourism) and Service-Oriented (Smagina, 2017). The MICE travelers are differentiated from other tourists for two main reasons (Chon & Maier, 2010). On the one hand, they are traveling in groups, so their size (number of participants, stay duration, number of events scheduled and needs) involves a booking of accommodation and other facilities such as venues. The organizer or suppliers must reserve space in advance and negotiate packages, which sometimes include other activities. On the other hand, the groups have a specific function. Indeed, the business tourists travel for defined purposes such as decision-making or networking and follow a defined schedule. The MICE industry, niche of two growing industries, is also linked with other sectors such as business, trade or finance. The organizations of such events and trips are good for the organizers but are also an important revenue for the host destination (Smagina, 2017).

MICE Suppliers

The stakeholders in the MICE Industry are various (Chon & Maier, 2010). In one destination the supplier side can be:

- *Corporate Travel Agencies*: travel agenciesspecialized in organizing domestic and international travels for business purpose(transport, accommodation, dining, venue, activities and tours). Their role is to offer services on demand with packaged price for the travel (Law, Leung, Lo, Leung & Fong, 2015).

- *Professional Congress Organizers (PCOs)*:companies specialized in the organization and management of conferences acting as consultants to the conference committee. They can deliver partial or full-serviceinsuring quality by their professionalism and knowledge in the organization of such events ("IAPCO: The International Association of Professional Congress Organisers", 2018)

- *Event Management Companies (EMCs)*: companies specialized in planning, organizing, producing and managing different types of events(Berridge, 2011)

- *Hotels and Resorts*: lodging facilities booked for business groupswho can also offer MICE services such as meeting rooms and material (Chon & Maier, 2010)

- *Destination Management Companies (DMCs)*:ground operators with good knowledge on the destination who offer a range of services including MICE events organizing and can arrange transportation, accommodation, venue selection, tours and activities (Rogers, 2013).

- *Incentive Houses*:companies specialized in organizing and delivering incentive activities such as tours, gala dinners or team building activities (Mair, 2015)

- *Transportation Businesses*: companies who arrange transport facilities for individual or group travel (Rendeiro Martín-Cejas & Pablo Ramírez Sánchez, 2010)

- *Convention and Visitor Bureaus (CVBs)*: non-profit organizations in charge of marketing MICE destinations and venues(Pearlman & Mollere, 2009)

- *Convention and Exhibition Centers*: venues where are organized business events (Strom, 2015)

2.3 Sustainability of MICE in Thailand as a tourist destination: challenges

In the Kingdom of Thailand, the King Bhumibol Adulyadej or Rama IX (1946-2016) was the longest-reigning monarch and had a strong influence on the population with his'Sufficiency Economy Philosophy' (SEP)in response to the fast development of Thailand

(Janmaimool & Denpaiboon, 2016).This philosophy focuses on an economic development based on self-reliance and aims to improve sustainably the Thai citizens' quality of life and local environments.In association with the United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform ("Home: Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform", 2018), the SEP is also seen as a path towards Sustainable Development Goals according to the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2016).The shared objectives also consider Sustainable Tourism Development.

Thailand: an attractive tourist and MICE destination

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization[UNWTO], the Tourism Industry is growing fast worldwide and has become one of the major sources of revenue and development (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2017). For example, the UNWTO counted 1,235 million of international tourists in 2016; the Tourism Industry represents 7 % of the world's exports of goods and services generating US$ 1.4 trillion and 10 % of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).Tourism concerns 1 in 10 jobs. By 2030, the number of international tourist arrivals should attain 1.8 billion.

Thailand follows this global growth trend according to the UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2017). Tourism is also a major part of the Kingdom economy as it represents around a quarter of its gross domestic product [GDP] (Thanvisitthpon, 2016). Thailand is one of the top 10 destinations in the world regarding international tourist arrivals and tourism receipts according to the UNWTO (see table 2.1 and table 2.2). Indeed, Thailand was the 9th country for tourist arrivals in 2016 with 32.6 million, and the 3rd country after the USA and Spain, in terms of receipts, corresponding to 49.9 US$ billion. According to the same tables, in Thailand, a growth is observed in 2016 compared to 2015: +8.9% change for international tourist arrivals and +14.7% change for international tourism receipts.Thailand has also known a growth among the ASEAN countries from 1996 to 2015 (Liu, Li & Parkpian, 2018). When looking at the Ministry of Tourism and Sports in Thailand (2018) statistics (see

Table and Table), the international arrivals and tourism revenue keep growing from 2016 to 2017. For example, Thailand received 2,555,689 international tourists and 133,491.24 Million Baht in September 2017 (respectively +5.75 %and +12.01 % compared to September 2016).

Table 2.1 International tourist arrivals: top 10 ranking worldwide

		(million)		Change (%)	
Rank	Country	2015	2016	15/14	16/15
1	France	84.5	82.6	0.9	-2.2
2	United States	77.5	75.6	3.3	-2.4
3	Spain	68.5	75.6	5.5	10.3
4	China	56.9	59.3	2.3	4.2
5	Italy	50.7	52.4	4.4	3.2
6	United Kingdom	34.4	35.8	5.6	4.0
7	Germany	35.0	35.6	6.0	1.7
8	Mexico	32.1	35.0	9.4	8.9
9	**Thailand**	**29.9**	**32.6**	**20.6**	**8.9**
10	Turkey	39.5	…	-0.8	…

Source: United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO] (2017)

Table 2.2 International tourism receipts: top 10 ranking worldwide (2016)

		US$				Local currencies	
		(billion)		Change (%)		Change (%)	
Rank		2015	2016	15/14	16/15	15/14	16/15
1	United States	205.4	205.9	7.0	0.3	7.0	0.3
2	Spain	56.5	60.3	-13.3	6.9	3.8	7.1
3	**Thailand**	**44.9**	**49.9**	**16.9**	**11.0**	**23.0**	**14.7**
4	China	45.0	44.4	2.1	-1.2	3.6	5.3
5	France	44.9	42.5	-22.9	-5.3	-7.6	-5.1
6	Italy	39.4	40.2	-13.3	2.0	3.8	2.3
7	United Kingdom	45.5	39.6	-2.3	-12.9	5.2	-1.4
8	Germany	36.9	37.4	-14.8	1.4	2.0	1.7
9	Hong Kong (China)	36.2	32.9	-5.8	-9.1	-5.8	-9.0
10	Australia	28.9	32.4	-8.2	12.3	10.2	13.5

Source: United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO] (2017)

Table 2.3 International Arrivals in Thailand (September 2017)

Country of	Number		% Change
Nationality	2017P	2016R	2017/16
East Asia	1,841,506	1,726,991	+6.63
Europe	309,663	313,242	-1.14
The Americas	88,458	83,150	+6.38
South Asia	148,645	125,051	+18.87
Oceania	83,431	79,978	+4.32
Middle East	68,954	75,621	-8.82
Africa	15,032	12,788	+17.55
Grand Total	**2,555,689**	**2,416,821**	**+5.75**

Source: Thailand Ministry of Tourism and Sports [MOTS] (2018)

Table 2.4 International Tourism Revenue in Thailand (September 2017)

Country of	Receipts (MillionBaht)		% Change
Nationality	2017P	2016R	2017/16
East Asia	84,245.87	72,677.06	+15.92
Europe	22,517.29	22,069.25	+2.03
The Americas	6,696.78	6,085.80	+10.04
South Asia	6,542.16	5,326.95	+22.81
Oceania	6,711.85	6,218.08	+7.94
Middle East	5,650.52	5,887.92	-4.03
Africa	1,126.77	917.41	+22.82
Grand Total	**133,491.24**	**119,182.47**	**+12.01**

Source: Thailand Ministry of Tourism and Sports [MOTS] (2018)

Regarding MICE in Thailand, the country is also very attractive internationally according to the latest International Congress and Convention Association [ICCA] Statistics

Report Country and City Rankings (2017): ranked 24th worldwide and 5th in Asia-Pacific & Middle East with 174 meetings in 2016 (see Table and

Table). About participation, Thailand is ranked 19[th]worldwide with 74,390 participants in 2016 (Table).According to the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau("Statistics for Meeting, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE) | TCEB", 2018), Thailand has known a remarkable growth of MICE events number from 2007 to 2015: the country organized 5,452 events in 2007 and 7,622 in 2015, with a peak of 7,866 events in 2013 (figure2.2).

Table 2.5 Worldwide ranking: number of meetings per country (2016)

Rank	Country	Meetings	Rank	Country	Meetings
1	U.S.A.	934	21	Mexico	182
2	Germany	689	22	Denmark	180
3	United Kingdom	582	23	Finland	178
4	France	545	**24**	**Thailand**	**174**
5	Spain	533	25	Greece	168
6	Italy	468	26	Ireland	157
7	China-P.R.	410	27	Czech Republic	156
8	Japan	410	28	Singapore	151
9	Netherlands	368	29	Colombia	147
10	Canada	287	30	Norway	144
11	Portugal	287	31	India	143
12	Austria	268	32	Chinese Taipei	141
13	Republic of Korea	267	33	Hungary	129
14	Sweden	260	34	South Africa	125
15	Brazil	244	35	Malaysia	115

Rank	Country	Meetings	Rank	Country	Meetings
16	Australia	211	36	Chile	104
17	Poland	195	37	Turkey	103
18	Belgium	194	38	Hong Kong, China-P.R.	99
19	Argentina	188	39	Peru	98
20	Switzerland	184	40	Indonesia	94

Source: ICCA (2017)

Table 2.6 Asia Pacific & Middle East rankings:number of meetings per country (2016)

Rank	Country	Meetings	Rank	Country	Meetings
1	China-P.R.	410	21	Myanmar	11
2	Japan	410	22	Jordan	10
3	Republic of Korea	267	23	Fiji	9
4	Australia	211	24	Lebanon	9
5	**Thailand**	**174**	25	Nepal	9
6	Singapore	151	26	Armenia	8
7	India	143	27	Bahrain	8
8	Chinese Taipei	141	28	Iran	8
9	Malaysia	115	29	Kuwait	8
10	Hong Kong, China-P.R.	99	30	Azerbaijan	7
11	Indonesia	94	31	Bangladesh	7
12	United Arab Emirates	92	32	Mongolia	7
13	New Zealand	67	33	Oman	7
14	Philippines	66	34	Saudi Arabia	6
15	Vietnam	48	35	Pakistan	5

Rank	Country	Meetings		Rank	Country	Meetings
16	Macao, China-P.R.	37		*Others*		*19*
17	Israel	34		**Total**		**2,749**
18	Sri Lanka	25				
19	Qatar	15				
20	Cambodia	12				

Source: ICCA (2017)

Table 2.7 Worldwide ranking: number of participants per country (2016)

Rank	Country	Participants		Rank	Country	Participants
1	U.S.A.	401,332		21	Portugal	72,622
2	Germany	280,108		22	Argentina	72,265
3	United Kingdom	228,642		23	South Africa	70,738
4	Italy	219,041		24	India	70,231
5	Spain	217,724		25	Ireland	70,180
6	Japan	205,537		26	Poland	66,452
7	France	176,660		27	Singapore	61,294
8	China-P.R.	167,114		28	Hong Kong, China-P.R.	61,057
9	Republic of Korea	160,681		29	Chinese Taipei	57,199
10	Netherlands	156,039		30	Czech Republic	54,936
11	Austria	142,842		31	Greece	54,224
12	Canada	139,379		32	Finland	48,360
13	Brazil	118,765		33	Philippines	45,729
14	Denmark	116,401		34	Malaysia	45,721
15	Australia	98,917		35	Belgium	44,622

Rank	Country	Participants	Rank	Country	Participants
16	Mexico	97,559	36	Chile	43,159
17	Sweden	90,395	37	Indonesia	41,350
18	Switzerland	75,478	38	United Arab Emirates	40,566
19	**Thailand**	**74,390**	39	Turkey	39,349
20	Colombia	73,320	40	Peru	38,250

Source: ICCA (2017)

Figure 0.1: Number of MICE Events in Thailand (2006-2015)
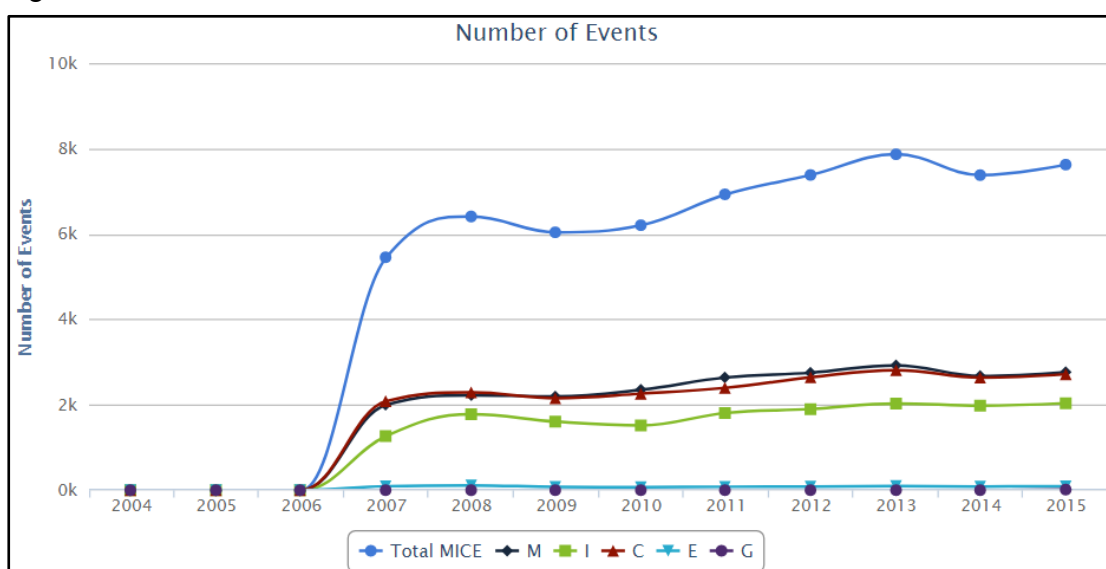
"Statistics for Meeting, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE) | TCEB", 2018

As regards the worldwide ranking by number of meetings per city, the Thai capital Bangkokis positioned 11[th]with 121 meetings in 2016 (

). In Asia-Pacific & Middle-East ranking, 4 Thai cities are in the top-40 for the number of meetings in 2016: Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket and Pattaya, respectively 3rd, 25th,

32nd and 40th with 121, 20, 13 and 5 meetings (Table 0.2). About the number of participants, Bangkok was ranked 14th worldwide in 2016, with 55,330 (Table 0.5). The attractiveness of these Thai cities for MICE is also mentioned on the TCEB website ("Thailand Meeting, Incentive, Convention, Exhibition (MICE) Cities & Destinations | TCEB", 2018). Indeed, the most popular destinations are Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Pattaya, Phuket and Khon Kaen. Thus, Thailand has become an attractive country regarding international tourism, and is also positioned as a leader for MICE.The next section presents the sociocultural and environmental aspects and challenges faced by Thailand with its attractive tourism destinations.

Table 0.1 Worldwide ranking: number of meetings per city (2016)

Rank	City	Meetings	Rank	City	Meetings
1	Paris	196	21	Helsinki	92
2	Vienna	186	22	Brussels	91
3	Barcelona	181	23	Taipei	83
4	Berlin	176	24	Athens,Shanghai	79
5	London	153	25	Edinburgh	76
6	Singapore	151	26	Lima, Montreal	76
7	Amsterdam,Madrid	144	27	Warsaw	71
8	Lisbon	138	28	Porto	70
9	Seoul	137	29	Kuala Lumpur	68
10	Prague	126	30	Oslo	67
11	Bangkok	121	31	Mexico City, Santiago de Chile	64
12	Dublin	118	32	Munich, Sao Paulo, Toronto	63
13	Copenhagen	115	33	Cape Town, Istanbul	62
14	Beijing	113	34	New York,	61

Rank	City	Meetings		Rank	City	Meetings
					Sydney	
15	Budapest	108		35	Milan	59
16	Buenos Aires	103		36	Kyoto,	
					Melbourne	58
17	Stockholm	101		37	Washington	57
18	Hong Kong	99		38	Hamburg,	
					Ljubljana	54
19	Rome	96		39	Dubai	52
20	Tokyo	95		40	Glasgow	51

Source: ICCA (2017)

Table 0.2 Asia Pacific & Middle East rankings: number of meetings per city (2016)

Rank	City	Meetings		Rank	City	Meetings
1	Singapore	151		21	Jeju	30
2	Seoul	137		22	Osaka	25
3	**Bangkok**	121		23	Colombo,	
					Fukuoka	23
4	Beijing	113		24	Kobe,	
					Yokohama	21
5	Hong Kong	99		**25**	Chengdu,	
					Chiang Mai, Kaohsiung,	
					Xi'an (Sian)	20
6	Tokyo	95		26	Hanoi	19
7	Taipei	83		27	Mumbai,	
					Nanjing	18
8	Shanghai	79		28	Sapporo,	
					Tel Aviv	17
9	Kuala Lumpur	68		29	Guangzhou,	
					Incheon,	
					Nagoya	16
10	Sydney	61		30	Doha,	15

Rank	City	Meetings	Rank	City	Meetings
				Jakarta,	
				Nara,	
				Perth,	
				Wellington,	
				Wuhan	
11	Kyoto,	58	31	Jerusalem,	
	Melbourne			Yogyakarta	14
12	Dubai	52	**32**	Bangalore,	
				Phuket,	
				Sendai	13
13	Manila	46	33	Hangzhou,	
				Shenzhen,	
				Suzhou	12

Table 0.3 Continued

Rank	City	Meetings	Rank	City	Meetings
14	Bali	43	34	Daejeon,	
				Hyderabad,	
				Penang,	
				Tianjin	11
15	New Delhi	39	35	Adelaide,	
				Amman,	
				Cebu City,	
				Ho Chi Minh City	10
16	Macao	37	36	Da Nang,	
				Gold Coast,	
				Gyeongju,	
				Hiroshima,	
				Kathmandu,	
				Kuching,	
				Qingdao	9
17	Abu Dhabi	36	37	Bandung,	
				Beirut,	
				Canberra,	8

Rank	City	Meetings		Rank	City	Meetings
					Chennai,	
					Hsinchu,	
					Kanazawa,	
					Manama,	
					Taichung,	
					Tainan,	
					Yangon	

Table 0.4 Continued

Rank	City	Meetings		Rank	City	Meetings
18	Brisbane	34		38	Baku,	
					Cairns,	
					Dhaka,	
					Kita-Kyushu,	
					Kuwait City,	
					Pune,	
					Ulan Bator,	
					Yerevan	7
19	Auckland	33		39	Daegu,	
					Jaipur,	
					Muscat,	
					Siem Reap,	
					Tsukuba	6
20	Busan	31		**40**	Changchun,	
					Chiba,	
					Christchurch,	
					Dalian,	5

Rank	City	Meetings	Rank	City	Meetings
				Goa,	
				Matsue,	
				Niigata,	
				Pattaya,	
				Phnom-Penh,	
				Putrajaya,	
				Queenstown,	
				Toyama,	
				Xiamen	
				Others	358
				Total	**2,763**

Source: ICCA (2017)

Table 0.5 Worldwide ranking: estimated total number of participants per city (2016)

Rank	City	Participants	Rank	City	Participants
1	Vienna	119,887	21	Toronto	40,491
2	Seoul	104,780	22	Melbourne, VIC	39,182
3	Barcelona	99,468	23	Lisbon	38,753
4	Copenhagen	99,359	24	Orlando	38,700
5	London	91,756	25	Madrid	37,694
6	Amsterdam	77,644	26	Taipei	37,612
7	Paris	75,710	27	Mexico City	37,186
8	Rome	68,612	28	Montreal, QC	36,828
9	Beijing	65,947	29	Sao Paulo	35,912
10	**Singapore**	**61,294**	30	Stockholm	35,528
11	Hong Kong	61,057	31	Shanghai	34,690
12	Berlin	61,008	32	Cape Town	33,425
13	Dublin	59,568	33	Santiago de Chile	33,054
14	**Bangkok**	**55,330**	34	Athens	32,341
15	Munich	53,282	35	Lima	32,188
16	Prague	50,416	36	Hamburg	32,091
17	Milan	48,639	37	Rio de Janeiro	31,376

Rank	City	Participants		Rank	City	Participants
18	Fukuoka	45,877		38	Washington, DC	31,224
19	Buenos Aires	45,687		39	Helsinki	30,383
20	Tokyo	45,218		40	Kuala Lumpur	29,743

Source: ICCA (2017)

Environmental Impacts of Tourism in Thailand

According to the Tourism Authority of Thailand ("National Parks in Thailand", 2018), Thailand has a rich and remarkable biodiversity. Indeed, 10 % of the marine species can be found in Thailand. To protect these resources and attract tourists, the country has undertaken national parks projects:127 parks across Thailand, in which 22 marine parks.Across Thailand, the Wild Animal Rescue Foundation acts to preserve the natural resources (Cheablam & Shrestha, 2014). This foundation undertook several projects such as the 'Gibbon Rehabilitation Project' in Chiang Mai or Phuket to rehabilitate the wild monkeys ("Wild animals rescue foundation of Thailand – wildlife project organizations by WARF", 2018). Natural conservation is also a factor attracting new tourists to take part in this mission ('voluntourists'). The success of these projects is linked to the collaboration between all stakeholders involved such as the private and public organizations, as well as the tourists themselves (Cheablam & Shrestha, 2014). Another research was undertaken in Thailand among tourism experts and international tourists about their attitude and behavior regarding nature-based tourism (Chubchuwong et al, 2014). The results are that, as for the students, international visitors' nature-based experience leads to a positive change of behavior towards environment. Thus, to protect the biodiversity of Thailand for its tourism competitiveness, all stakeholders, including the tourists and locals, must get involved.

Climate change and tourism are also sources of negative environmental impacts in Thailand, especially in coastal destinations.For instance, in Phang Nga province, the climate change has already impacted the tourism resources and activities of the island of Mu Ko Surin Marine National Park in 2010: the temperature and precipitation have increased, and the extreme strong storms occur more frequently (Sujarittanonta, 2014). In Koh Tao, a tourism island rich of marine biodiversity, some dive industry professionals, despite their misconception of climate change, observed negative changes regarding the nature such as coral bleaching (Tapsuwan and Rongrongmuang, 2015). This study also highlighted a need for political implication in

collaboration with all stakeholders involved in education and communication.On the same island, other researchers assessed the governance of marine and coastal resources, driven by the risk of environmental degradation resulted by marine-tourism in other sea destinations (Satumanatpan et al., 2017). Locals declared that they felt more concerned about the lack of infrastructure about water, waste collection and electricity than the degradation of the coral reefs. The study demonstrates that there is a misunderstanding between public governance and its awareness, especially in this environmental protected area (EPA), which should beclarified for a better sustainable future towards tourism. A research in Phuket has been done to measure the conservation aptitude of surf beaches, by using the Surf Resource Sustainability Index (Martin & Assenov, 2013). As a result, about the environmental issue, Phuket surf beaches are fairly good with an aptitude of 3.26 (the worst indicator being biodiversity, with only 2.33). Nevertheless, the governance awareness shows a low result (1.90). This study highlighted the importance of the destination beaches conservation in Phuket by better local government management and community awareness.A relevant example of natural degradation linked to tourism activities is the case of Maya Bay in Krabi province. The officials will close the beach and water access during 3 months in 2018 because locals complained about the damages of tourism on the bay floor and remaining corals ("Maya Bay to be closed for three months next year – The Nation", 2018). This example illustrates the late reaction of the local authority to preserve the natural environment.

Good tourism initiatives are then undertaken in Thailand to protect and sustain the environmentwhen all stakeholders get involved. Nevertheless, it seems that the government is not enough aware of, or do not manage well enough the tourism destinations environment, especially in protected areas. Recent studies on different destinations across Thailand were undertaken about the environmental issue (Martin & Assenov, 2013; Cheablam & Shrestha, 2014; Chubchuwong et al., 2014; Sujarittanonta, 2014; Tapsuwan & Rongrongmuang, 2015; Satumanatpan et al., 2017). This new interest is linked with the recent development of tourism in Thailand and the concern about its future: protect the natural environment and preserve the country as an attractive recreational and business tourismdestination.*The risks and negative impacts of tourism are then real in Thailand*. Hence, all tourism stakeholders must organize, manage and participate while protecting the environment sustainably.

Sociocultural Aspects of Tourism in Thailand

Tourism, other than its commercial aspect, impacts on the destination local environment, including the local community.According to Soontayatron (2013), Theravada Buddhism is the first religion of Thailand and has a strong influence on the entire Thai society. In Koh Samui, sociocultural changes were influenced by tourism. The Buddhist culture involves living in harmony, meaning welcome new entrants such as tourists. Nevertheless, the tourism development drove the Thai locals to cope with this change by compromising their habits and also accepting the negative impacts of tourism as this sector is seen as a development opportunity.

Since the 2004 tsunami destroying the tourism west coast of Thailand and killing more than 270,000 people, the hotels corporate social responsibility [CSR] was questioned (Henderson, 2007). In Phuket, directly affected by the tsunami, small hotels and large accommodation companies intended implementing CSR to help local communities by promoting recovery and restoration of the island, as well as protecting the environment. Another example after the tsunami is in Khao Lak (Phang Nga province), where the tourism sector and private entrepreneurs are still not prepared for an eventual future tsunamiwhile programs have been developed for the government and locals (Virapart, 2011). The proposed project aims helping the private sector plan and act for security and safety measures, even if the early warning messages must be communicated by the government.These examples show the responsibility of the hotels and resorts, and the tourism sector in general, on locals and tourists in one tourism destination.

Regarding responsibility, new challenges are born with the emergence of 'community-based tourism'. In the north of Thailand, under the concept of voluntourism, different geographical representations of responsibility are shown: the tourists aiming 'acting responsibly' while traveling and thus meet the locals'in need of help' (Sin & Minca, 2014). The case of the Elephant Camp close by Chiang Mai raises the concept of 'local' in tourism and its danger: locals are considered as 'passive subjects of the tourist organized gaze' (Sin & Minca, 2014, p.105). In this case, community-based tourism is changing the locals'cultural mores and habits, sometimes positively or negatively.

In Ayutthaya, the ancient capital of the Siam, the recent tourism development considerably changed the urban environment and the socioeconomic wellbeing of residents (Thanvisitthpon, 2016).Despite the governmental development of the city for tourism, Ayutthaya

Historical Park community compete with space and population density in this limited area. Nevertheless, infrastructures are satisfying to this population aware of good sanitation and nature conservation. The most challenging impact of tourism is the increase of living costs involving the population to work more:the incomes resulted from the activity were apparently not equally shared. The development of tourism here had negative environmental and sociocultural consequences on the host population, due to mishandling of the authorities (top-down policy formulation).

The fast development of tourism in Thailand, and the increasing number of tourists, both domestic and foreigners, are impacting the host destination. Since the last decade, an increasing number of academic papers cited abovestated the positive and negative impacts of tourism as well as its development across Thailand. It shows the interest of researchers on this specific topic and their willingness on developing theory to push the Tourism stakeholders to develop sustainably the industry considering the challenges: a fast-economic growth (recreational and MICE tourism) and positive and negative environmental and sociocultural impacts.

2.4 Sustainable Tourism Policies and Implementation

Link between policy making and implementation

Besides the challenges mentioned above, the tourists' demand for sustainable and '*green*' tourism practices from the travelers is increasing for positive economic and environmental growth (Edgell, 2015). In order to develop sustainable tourism, policies have to be settled (Dodds & Butler, 2010). According to Goeldner et *al*. (2000, p.1), the definition of policy regarding a tourism destination is: '*a set of regulations, rules, guidelines, directives and development/promotion objectives and strategies that provide a framework within which the collective and individual decisions directly affecting tourism development and the daily activities within a destination are taken*'. Nevertheless, policies are efficient only under the condition of being implemented at all levels of management and execution (Elliot, 1999). Thus, to implement sustainable tourism, the different stakeholders of one destination need to develop policies and implement in their whole organizations.

Importance of the coordination between the public and private spheres at the different regional levels

At the international level, two main organizations aspire to propose better solutions about the three sustainability issues to all worldwide tourism stakeholders: the World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTC] and the United Nations agency called the World Tourism Organization [UNWTO] (Edgell, 2015). The author adds: '*Critical decisions about sustainable tourism development must be made today – at the local, national, regional, and international levels – if tomorrow is to present a bright future for the tourism industry*' (Edgell, 2015, p.32). So, the leadership of the two international organizations is not sufficient: the local, regional as well as national stakeholders (in both public and private spheres) involved in tourism policy-making and management have to implement sustainable policies. The governments, private businesses and tourism organizations must work side by side to let the ability of future generations to be able to travel and enjoy tourism in the best conditions. Regarding Thailand, a qualitative and quantitative research was undertaken by Lopez and Bhaktikul (2018) about the sustainable environment and tourism institutional policy analysis in the northeast region (Khon Kaen province). In this province, the tourism public policy-making is done by the Thai Ministry of Tourism and Sports and the Tourism Authority of Thailand. The experimental approach was to determine whether the policies were implemented by asking the private major tourism sectors (i.e. hotels and restaurants). The results show that the development of tourism in Thailand economy is a positive policy and has positive impacts. Yet there is also a need for coordination between the public and private sectors to achieve sustainable tourism goals.

Obstacles of sustainable tourism policy implementation

Unfortunately, the sustainable tourism policy implementation is not always easy and can have some obstacles. Dodds and Butler (2010) have identified several barriers of sustainable policy in mass tourism destinations. The authors note that if most governments and bodies accept the agreements and declarations, little empirical has been done regarding the actual implementation of the policies. Their Malta and Calvia case study research results, supported by literature, show that the curbs of sustainable tourism policy implementation are linked with both private and publicsectors issues. The most frequent one is that the economic concern is put before the social and environment issues, and from this result many other barriers. This is explained by

the difference between the actual short term political governance (i.e. five years) and the concept of sustainability itself (long-term vision and thus policy). Indeed, the short-term objectives for the successive governments are job creation and economic growth development rather than sociocultural and ecological measures.This subsection shows that the sustainable tourism policy-making is positive at different levels, but there is a need for one actual implementation of the policies and further research is needed.

2.5 Sustainability of MICE and Green Practices

Sustainable Events Guidelines

To help the Events Industry, especially the MICE Industry, to tend towards becoming more sustainable, some online resources were designed covering the three sustainability pillars: economic, environmental, and sociocultural. These resources are usually in the form of guidelines which can be used as a tool by all stakeholders involved in MICE. They concern the whole process of the MICE planning and management: venue, accommodation, catering, information and communication, event material, transportation. These guidelines are elaborated from different organizations of various sizes: non-governmental organizations, associations or governments ("ISO 20121 Sustainable events", 2018; United Nations Environment Program [UNEP], 2012). Here is a list of 3 guidelines samples.

1. Sustainable Events Guide (United Nations Environment Program [UNEP], 2012)

The United Nations Environment Program is a United Nations agency which determines global environmental agendas, promotes environmental-friendly practices and defends the global environment (UN Environment, 2018). Its main mission is to act as a leader in the world and encourage partnership for sustainability development. Thus, it provides a large amount of online resources to help diverse sectors going sustainable. For events, it developed the Sustainable Events Guide(United Nations Environment Program [UNEP], 2012) in partnership with the IAMLADP (International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications), ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives), and UNON (United Nations Office at Nairobi). This long document of 104 pages, addressed to events planners, is a '*tool to help maximizing the positive impacts and minimize the potential negative ones while planning and delivering meetings*'(United Nations Environment Program [UNEP],

2012, p. IV). It is divided into 6 sections. The last one gives detailed sustainable events checklists of good practices to implement for the following subsections: venue, accommodation, catering, communication and event material, local transport, exhibitions, and stakeholder engagement and communication. The benefits of using this guide are '*environmental improvements, financial advantages, creating a positive image for the event planners, and social benefits for the local community*'(United Nations Environment Program [UNEP], 2012, p. IV).

2. GRI Event Organizers Sector Supplement Summary guide (Global Reporting Initiative, 2012)

The Global Reporting Initiative is an independent international Standards organization funded in 1997 ("About GRI", 2018). Its main goal is to empower stakeholders to take the right decisions to create sustainable impacts worldwide by providing tools and standards for sustainability reporting. The GRI offers online documents for diverse sectors including events (meetings, conventions, and business events, for instance). These files aim helping the Events Organizers to improve performance by editing sustainability organizational reports about economic, environmental, social and governance issues. Three major documents are available for Events: G4 Sector Disclosures (Event Organizers), Technical Protocol Applying the Report Content Principles (Event Organizers Sector Supplement EOSS) and Events Event Organizers Sector Supplement (Summary guide). The first one is a complete publication of how to prepare and interpret the information to be disclosed. The section 4 '*full text for the event organizers sector disclosures*' presents recommended practices (one per indicator) classified by categories such as economic and environmental. Each practice is introduced by relevance, compilation, definitions, documentation and references. The second document is a technical protocol explaining how to apply the report content principles, or how to implement practices. The last one is a summary of the standard disclosures. The benefits of the disclosures reporting, and implementation are to improve the sustainability of organizations operations, activities and to establish a process to measure performance, set goals, and manage changes.

3. Sustainability Guidelines for the Singapore MICE Industry (Singapore Tourism Board, 2013)

As Singapore is ranked 6[th]city worldwide and 1[st]in Asia Pacific and Middle East for the number of meetings organized in 2016 (

and Table 0.2), it acts as a leader *de facto* in MICE industry. It is thus interesting to include in the current research framework views as developed in this city-state. The Singapore Tourism Board is a public board in charge of developing tourism in Singapore in partnership with the community and the industry ('About STB', 2018). The STB, under the Ministry of Trade and Industry, proposes also Sustainability Guidelines for the Singapore MICE Industry '*as a tool to help both planners and suppliers integrate sustainable practices within an organization's operations and regular event plans*' (Singapore Tourism Board, 2013, p.2). The document presents first the challenges of sustainability in MICE events and, regarding the environmental issue, stipulates that the organizers can benefit from the use of this tool: reduce negative environmental impact leads to costs effectiveness and brand reputation. In the Singapore Sustainability Guidelines, some basic and intermediate guidelines in the form of checklists are shown. The guidelines cover the three sustainability issues cited above about the following aspects: audio visual; event and activity organizer; exhibition, conference and convention organizer; food and beverage; hotel; transport; venue.

Tourism and Events industries, comprising the MICE industry, are some of the most polluting industries. Thus, among the three pillars of sustainability, the environmental issue is the most urgent to be addressed. Thailand has known a recent and remarkable growth of MICE events and revenues but is already polluted despite the initiatives launched regarding the environment preservation such as ecotourism. Thus, the following section focuses only on green practices for MICE.

Environmental issue: Green Practices for MICE

For minimizing MICE negative impacts on the environment, a growing number of resources are developed to accompany the organizers planning and managing 'green' events

and related activities (DeSilets & Dickerson, 2008). The previous examples presented guidelines covering all sustainability pillars, including the environmental issue. In Thailand, the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau [TCEB]also provides online guidelines for green meetings, thus only for environmental-friendly practices: Green Meeting Guideline (Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau [TCEB], 2013). Thus, the MICE stakeholders in Thailand are encouraged to follow these guidelines to '*promote environmental responsibility and attract overseas MICE businesses, as well as reduce negative impacts on the environment*' (Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau [TCEB], 2013).

In the present study, 4 guidelines have been used to appraise the most important green practices to implement while organizing and managing MICE:

- **Guideline 1**: Sustainable Events Guide **(United Nations Environment Program [UNEP], 2012)**;

- **Guideline 2**: GRI Event Organizers Sector Supplement Summary guide **(Global Reporting Initiative, 2012)**;

- **Guideline 3**: Sustainability Guidelines for the Singapore MICE Industry (Singapore Tourism Board, 2013);

- **Guideline 4**: Green Meeting Guideline (Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau [TCEB], 2013).

The following table summarizes the green practices taken from these 4 documents. Indeed, only the practices which are environmental-friendly, or 'green' were retained from the first 3 documents. All practices from the last file were studied. A comparison was done between all practices suggested by the 4 guidelines. Only crucial green practices are presented in the Table 0.6, meaning they were mentioned at least in 2 separate sources. Categories were deduced from the green practices: Training, Communication, Policy and Certification, Products and Services, Transportation, Water and Energy, and Waste Reduction. The 5 columns are presented as follows: Green practices, Guidelines 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Table 0.6 Implementation of practices according to the 4 guidelines

Green practices	Guidelines			
Training	1	2	3	4
• Train staff to change their behavior to be more environmental friendly (waste	✓		✓	✓

| Green practices	Guidelines
reduction, energy saving, transportation…)	
Communication	
• Put labels to inform guests about food and beverage sources	✔ ✔ ✔ ✔
• Provide information to staff, clients, guests and suppliers about green aspects and encourage them participating	✔ ✔ ✔
Policy and certification	
• Apply a sustainable purchasing policy favoring ethical, local and environmental-friendly products and services	✔ ✔ ✔
• Define a green policy and action plan as the organization mission with annually reviewed objectives and targets covering: sustainable procurement, energy saving, catering, transportation and waste	✔ ✔ ✔
• Be certified, or actively pursue a green certification	✔ ✔
Products and services	
• Use certified local, organic, seasonal and non-frozen food and beverage	✔ ✔ ✔ ✔
• Select local, ethical and environmental-friendly products	✔ ✔ ✔
• Select local and ethical service providers with environmental-friendly practices	✔ ✔ ✔
• Use environmental friendly cleaning products	✔ ✔ ✔
• Provide menus respecting any cultural and religious preferences	✔ ✔
Transportation	
• Coordinate the use of green transportation	✔ ✔ ✔ ✔
• Select venues close by public transportation	✔ ✔ ✔
Water and Energy	
• Give an option to guests for towel and sheet reuse	✔ ✔ ✔ ✔
• Use energy-efficient electronic devices	✔ ✔ ✔ ✔
• Equip facilities with water saving technology	✔ ✔ ✔

Table 0.7 continued

Green practices	Guidelines
• Control and regulate efficiently temperature in the buildings and rooms (heating or cooling)	✔ ✔ ✔
• Link hotel rooms key cards to electric appliances	✔ ✔ ✔
• Equip motion-detector lighting	✔ ✔ ✔
• Use energy-efficient kitchen appliances	✔ ✔ ✔

Green practices	Guidelines
Waste reduction	
• Separate waste for recycling and provide labeled bins for staff and guests	✔ ✔ ✔ ✔
• Use reusable tableware	✔ ✔ ✔ ✔
• Reduce use of one-time and single-serve utensils and containers	✔ ✔ ✔ ✔
• Use durable packaging	✔ ✔ ✔ ✔
• Provide liquid products in refillable dispensers	✔ ✔ ✔
• If forced using disposable items, select recycled or natural material	✔ ✔ ✔
• Buy material and products in bulk	✔ ✔ ✔
• Use recycled paper (office and sanitary)	✔ ✔ ✔
• Use digital communication instead of paper	✔ ✔ ✔
• Reuse or donate unused material	✔ ✔
• Use compost or compost service	✔ ✔
• Evaluate quantities for food and minimize portions	✔ ✔
• Offer tap water in jugs and set up points with water dispensers	✔ ✔
• Fill beverage glasses only on request	✔ ✔
• Donate leftover food	✔ ✔

2.6 Conceptual Framework

As a little empirical was found about green practices in the MICE Industry, this research is inductive. A conceptual framework was designed from the green practices guidelines (Table 0.6) to achieve the research objectives. Figure 0.2on next page summarizes the conceptual framework used to elaborate the interview questions.

Figure 0.2 Conceptual Framework of the Study
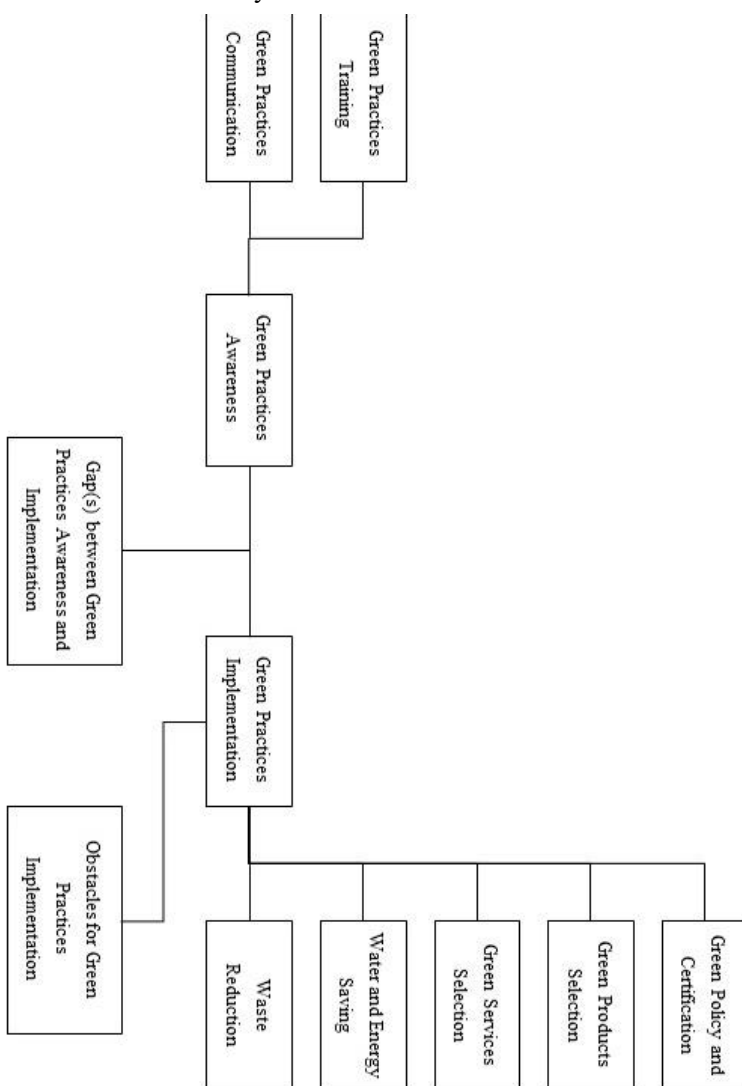
CHAPTER 3

Methodology

In relation with the announced research objectives and based on prior research on similar topics (academic studies and sustainable events guidelines), this chapter aims at presenting the methodology followed in this case study of MICE in Phuket, Thailand. As little empirical research was done up to now on green practices' awareness and implementation, the primary goal was to elaborate a new approach, therefore the qualitative methodwas eventually selected for this study (Taylor et *al*., 2015). The objectives were:

1. To explore the level of awareness of green practices among Phuket MICE operators;

2. To gather the actual green practices that the Phuket MICE operators are implementing, and to identify any obstacles encountered;

3. To compare differences between awareness of green practices and their implementation among Phuket MICE operators.

3.1 Method, Population and Sampling

Qualitative Method

To evaluate the awareness and implementation of green practices for Phuket as a business tourism destination, a qualitative survey of face-to-face structured interviews was conducted. The reason of using the qualitative method was to look for detailed answers in the form of words to build new theory: reasons, impressions, perceptions, and ideas relevant to individuals about green practices in MICE. Qualitative research differs from quantitative research as it is about talking thoroughly with only few individuals to get complete data about one subject, while quantitative research is about testing a theory by getting information from many sources but limited in size(Taylor et *al*., 2015). To obtain the most detailed answers, semi-structured face-to-face interviews with open-ended questions were selected to let the informants answer as they wanted to (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Case study Approach

As little empirical was done on this topic, this research usesthe case study approach: the investigation is done into a real-life phenomenon deeply within a particular environmental context (Ridder, 2017). According to Gog (2015), case study research can have advantages as well and disadvantages. It is used for explaining a phenomenon and accommodated for in-depth explanations and descriptions (i.e.qualitative method).This method is applied for real world and holistic perspective.The disadvantage of using this method regards reliability. Generalization can be criticized in the single case study approach (Yin, 2014). Thus, limitations of the research are given in the fifth section of this paper.

Population: MICE Operators

The MICE Operators was the population targeted in this study addressing as many areas as possible in the organization and operation of MICE. Face-to-faceinterviews were conducted in Phuket with one population: the MICE Operators. This population can be divided into two groups of stakeholders as they offer different types of services: (1) MICE Organizers and (2) Accommodations with MICE services. The first group in charge of the MICE planning, organization, management and activities included two kinds of companies: Destination Management Companies (DMCs) and Event Management Companies (EMCs). The second group offering lodging facilities, venue and material consisted of Hotels and Resorts with MICE services.

Group 1: MICE Organizers

Most end-clients of MICE events use the services of professional specialized companies. Two main types of MICE Organizers companies are usually solicited (Marais et *al.*, 2017): the Destination Management Companies (DMCs) and Event Management Companies (EMCs). The DMCs specialize in logistic services with the distinctive featureof having a great knowledge of the destination. They can thus adapt and find the most appropriate venue or accommodation for example according to the client's request. The EMCs services mainly focus onlogistical organization of events. Thus, both kinds of companies are adequate for the preparation and the organization of MICE events. According to the TCEB, the Event Organizers are 4 in Phuket ('Find Thailand Event Management Companies, Event Organizers, PCOs and DMCs | TCEB', 2018). They are actually more numerous.

Group 2: Accommodations with MICE Services

MICE events,in their large majority,are organized in Hotels and Resorts as it is convenient for travelers, both domestic or international who attend meetings or conventions at the same place as their accommodation (Chon & Maier, 2010). For the latter, it is an important source of income as the events' attendees book in general their rooms far in advance, which generates a comfortable medium-long term visibility as well as significant number of bookings for the hosts. Thus, many Hotels and Resorts offer MICE services, including facilities and operation; it is thus mandatory to study here their needs, implementations and difficulties.

Sampling Method

Potential interlocutors of both groups (MICE Organizers and Accommodations with MICE services) were identifiedon different online sources referencing MICE suppliers in Phuket. For the first group, MICE organizers were found via the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau ("Find Thailand Event Management Companies, Event Organizers, PCOs and DMCs | TCEB", 2018) website. For the second group, Accommodations with MICE services were selected using Cvent.com ("Phuket Province Venues", 2018), a global company for events' suppliers network which refersto MICE venues by meeting size including all types of venues. A table referencing Phuket venues including Accommodations with MICE services was found classifying the organizations from the largest to the smallest (meeting size). For both groups, other organizations were found thanks to some informants who shared their contacts during the data collection process (snowball method).

The sampling method was chosen to find the key informants most suitable to answer the interview questions. Thus, four criteria were set:

1. **Industry**: The informants were working for organizations who organize or operate for MICE events and activities during the data collection;

2. **Location**: The organizations have a physical address in Phuket; they organize and operate MICE events and activities in Phuket;

3. **Position**: The informants had sufficient experience and knowledge on organizing and operating MICE events and activities to answer the interview questions, meaning that they had upper managerial positions during the data collection;

4. **Cross-cultural limitation**: The informants should understand and speak English as the researcher cannot speak and understand Thai.

3.2 Research Instrument

Elaboration of the interview questions

The content of the interview questions was prepared in advance. It was designed adapted from the conceptual framework to focus on specific topics found from secondary data: the guidelines for green practices in MICE events and activities (United Nations Environment Program [UNEP], 2012; International Standardization Organization [ISO], 2012-17; Singapore Tourism Board, 2013; Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau [TCEB], 2013). The questions were divided into four main parts in a logical order. Hence the questions were grouped under one introductive part and three main sections to reach the research goals:

- Awareness of green practices;

- Implementation of green practices;

- Obstacles to implement green practices.

Based on the responses, follow-up questions were formulated when necessary.

Topics

The contents of the interview questions were organized as follows. For a detailed description, please refer toAppendix

Interview Questions, p.113.

Introduction: 'Warm-Up' Questions

The introductive part consisted of general 'warm-up' questions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016) about (1) the respondents' information: position, gender, nationality, age, professional and educational backgrounds and (2) the organizations' positioning: date of creation, type of MICE events, facilities, and organizational process for MICE.

Section 1: Awareness of Green Practices

The first set of open-ended questions concerned awareness of green practices: from the personal observation of the informant of MICE green practices to the

organization's vision about internal communication (general training to all staff) and external communication (clients and attendees).

Section 2: Implementation of Green Practices

The second set (open-ended questions) was about the actual implementation of green practices among Phuket MICE operators. The questions were connected to both policies and knowledge of applied green practices. They involved the organization's certification, material and products provided to the attendees, origin of material and products, suppliers' selection, water and energy efficiency, as well as waste management.

Section 3: Challenges

The last variable of the current study being the obstacles faced by the organizations to implement green practices, this ultimate section was then focused on the challenges met by the operators. The third and final set of questions (open-ended also) was set to learn about the problems, but also to find out whether the informants had some solutions to offer; hence the section was divided into two categories: problems and solutions.

3.3 Data Collection

The DMCs and EMCs were contacted by direct telephonic communication as the list of these organizations with a MICE service in Phuket is limited (around fifteen) according to the TCEB and Thailand Incentive and Convention Association [TICA] ("TICA – ThailandIncentive and Convention Association showcasing- Thailand-categories", 2018). For the hotels and resorts with MICE services and facilities, which are much more numerous, and a total of 50 emails were sent initially asking for interviews.

For both groups, the first contact consisted of a self-introduction followed by the interview request: the researcher's name; student's identity (Prince of Songkla University doing an MBA in Hospitality and Tourism Management); research context and name; organization's interview request addressed to the Manager; a note informing that the University would provide a courtesy letter. Then, the managers who accepted to be interviewed chose the date, time, and place of the meeting according to their availability. Once the appointment was made, the

University prepared the courtesy letters signed by the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism's Dean to support the interviews by presenting the academic program, the student and the research title.

In total, thirteen face-to-face interviews were conducted: seven DMCs and EMCs and six hotels and resorts with MICE service. For the majority, one person answered the questions (eleven) but for two interviews, two persons were present and responded. So, a total of fifteen informants were considered in this investigation. The data collection process stopped when the data saturation point was met, (thirteen interviews), i.e. when no additional information could be found to develop new properties of categories, and the relationships between the categories were extricated (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

The interviews were conducted from August to October 2017 on the main island (Phuket) of Phuket Province (Thailand). They took place for the most at the informant's workplace (ten) and some were done in cafes (three) during the normal working hours. All interviewees accepted at the beginning of the discussion an audio recording. Then, the research topic and details were given to the informants and the question-and-answer sessions began. The informants were not aware of the questions in advance. The interviews lasted between thirty minutes to one hour. Notes were also taken. A few weeks after the data collection process, a thank-you email was sent to all informants. No additional information was requested as all the informants answered all the questions during the face-to-face interview. To verify the results, the triangulation method (Wilson, 2016) was used: emails were sent to all informants presenting the results and asking for feedback and comments. Upon 15 informants, a total of 6 answered,agreeing with the research results.

3.4 Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the interviews were first transcribed to obtain large amounts of words. Then, a three-step method was followed consisting of data reduction, data display and conclusions' drawing(Sekaran & Bougie, 2016):

- Data reduction involves coding and categorizing the data to select only the information related to the research objectives (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Coding is the criticalprocedure through which the qualitative data is reduced; rearranged and integrated to form

new theory. Categorizing is the process of organizing, arranging and classifying coding units. Codes and categories were here generated both inductively and deductively.

- Data display allows the researcher as well as the reader to get a more comprehensive picture of the resultsby presentingthe reduced data in a more organized and condensed manner (matrix, table, graph, selected quotes)(Miles & Huberman, 1994).

- The last step of the data analysis is to draw conclusions from the reduced and displayed data in order to meet the research objectives by interpreting what the themes stand for, making parallels or trying to explain patterns and relationships (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

To reduce the amount of data, selected passages of the whole transcriptions were broken into codes. In this study, the themes were chosen as unit of analysisa single assertion about a subject (Kassarjian, 1977). The codes were assigned to text units of all sizes which represented particular themes (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016), here green practices.

The inductive coding of themes was done from the data obtained with inter-judge reliability (two judges, researcher and advisor). The coding was carried out in two steps: an initial list, which was refined during the research creating a new list of codes and categories that emerged inductively (Miles & Huberman, 1984). To encode and analyze all the transcripts, NVivo 11 ("What is NVivo? | QSR International", 2018) was used. First the transcripts were imported, and then the text was analyzed. Nodes were defined for each code (theme). Coding was then highlighted and reviewed. Finally, the items were exported (codes and text quotes). The next Chapter (Results) summarizes the outcome of this analysis.

Patterns and relationships between the data began to emerge at this point: new categories and subcategories were identified, new definitions of those categories and subcategories stated. The codes were divided into three sections according to the variables. In the first section, 5 categories and 2 subcategories were defined; in the second one, 6 categories and 13 subcategories; in the final one, 7 categories and 2 subcategories.Table 0.1on the next page presents the variables, the categories and, when they exist, their subcategories.

Table 0.1 Variables, Categories and Subcategories

Variable	Awareness	Implementation	Obstacles
Category	*Perception*	*Green Certification*	*Client Request*
Subcategories	*Organization Commitment*	*Green Selection of Material and Products*	*External Lack of Awareness*
	Internal Communication	Local Material and Products	Attendees (Guests)
	Informal	Certified Green or 'Greener' Material and Products	Clients
	Training	*Green Selection of Service Providers*	Service Providers
	Clients Awareness	'Local'Service Providers	*Difficulties to sensitize other Stakeholders*
	Attendees(Guests) Awareness	Service Providers with Green Practices	*Need for Products Import*
	Solutions	*Green Transportation*	*Costs*
		Water and Energy Saving	*Difficulties to reach Green Standards*
		Lighting	*Lack of Information*
		Air-Conditioner	
		Other Electricity Reduction	
		Water	
		Waste Reduction	
		Recycling System	
		Reuse of Products	
		Digital Technology Use replacing Paper	
		Reduction of Items provided to the Attendees (Guests)	
		Material and Products Donation	

3.5 Data Display according to Variables

This introductory chapter explains the pattern chosen to present the results and the way the calculations were made (for both groups and the Sample).

In this case study, matrices (tables) were considered appropriate to display the findings in word form and numbers. The 3 tables – Results of Green Practices Awareness, Results of Green Practice Implementation and Results of the Obstacles faced for Green Practices Implementation (Table 0.7, Table 0.8 and Table 0.9) – one for each variable, are displayed along the same presentation pattern in the next 3 sections. The tables are supported by direct quotes from the interviews and comments to present and analyze the data.

The tables are organized into 6 columns as follows: (Sub)category; (Sub)category definition; Typical example (paraphrased from the quotes); Sample (%); Group 1 (%); Group 2 (%). All numbers of the tables are expressed in percentages. The rows are organized into categories and subcategories which resulted from the coding. For the first 2 variables (Awareness and Implementation), the categories follow the order of the interview questions. The subcategories are arranged horizontally from the highest sample percentage to the lowest (column 3). For the last variable (obstacles for green practices implementation), the rows are organized into categories and subcategories from the highest sample percentage to the lowest (column 3). The following excerpt (

Table 0.2) illustrates the pattern of the 3 table sets:

Table 0.2 Excerpt of table 'Results of Green Practices Awareness'

(Sub)category	(Sub)category definition	Typical example	Group 1 (%)	Group 2 (%)	Sample (%)
Organization Commitment	Importance given to green aspects by the organization	Green practices are considered important in the hotels group	57	67	62

As shown in the excerpt, the typical example cited in the tables was given by the informants. Only one per category or subcategory was selected to support the coding labels. Other relevant examples appear within quotes in the 3 following sections. A third column left blank

implies that the corresponding category is subdivided further, hence typical examples must be found in the corresponding subcategories.

Regarding the numbers in the 3 tables for the Group 1, Group 2 and Sample, they refer to the percentage of the organizations who mentioned the (sub)category in their answers *at least once*. For example (see excerpt above), in the table 4.7 *Results of Green Practices Awareness*, for the category 2 (Organization Commitment), 57 % of the Group 1 mentioned that green practices are highly important in their organization (4 organizations upon 7). The method to calculate was:

$$x_{Result} = (x_{Group} \times 100) / n_{Group} \tag{1}$$

x_{Result} being expressed in percentage, x_{Group} being the occurrence number in the corresponding group and n_{Group} being the number of organizations in the group (7 for Group 1 and 6 for Group 2).

To compare numbers between the 2 groups, results are considered similar for both groups when the difference of percentage is less than 17 %, as it means that there is only one organization difference (100 / 6, 6 being the number of the smallest group). Inversely, a difference between groups beyond 17 % is considered as significant[1].

The sample data have been calculated by merging both groups data without ponderation and divided by the total number of Organizations (13). The corresponding formula is thus:

$$x_{Sample} = ((x_{Group\ 1} + x_{Group\ 2}) \times 100) / 13 \tag{2}$$

$x_{Group\ 1}$ and $x_{Group\ 2}$ being respectively the number of occurrences from Group 1 and from Group 2 and the Sample data x_{Sample} being expressed in percentage.

3.6 Research Ethics

A field research involves finding data by talking to some people and asking them questions. Guillemin and Gillam (2004, p.261) show very clearly that '*ethical tensions are part of the everyday practice of doing research*'. It is then important for the researcher to plan a set of

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[1] As explained in Chapter 0, all percentages are rounded up to the nearest whole number, considering the limited number of interviews.

guiding principles to be followed in order to avoid negative impact on the study. Various principles of research ethics are applied:

- Intellectual property is honestly discussed: all the sources are properly cited in this paper and the complete sources are further indicated in the bibliography section;

- Honesty: all the informants are awareof the research project (University, topic and purpose);

- Objectivity while conducting the research;

- Integrity: promises are kept, and agreements are honored;

- Carefulness: avoidance of careless errors and negligence, critical and careful examination of the work and the one of peers;

- Openness: sharing of the collected data;

- Confidentiality: the audio and transcriptions of the data remain confidential;

- Non-Discrimination: avoidance of discrimination based on all discriminatory profiling;

- Legality: awarenessand respect of the local legislation and governmental policies.

CHAPTER 4

Results

This chapter summarizes the findings of the qualitative research obtained from the data collection and proposes a critical analysis according to the research objectives. The results are displayed in the form of tables or matrices, and a selection of quotes from the audio data was transcribed and coded with inter-judge reliability. In spite of the sparse data gathered during the interviews, some quantification is justified as at the end of the 13 meetings a saturation of the data was reached. This quantification provides a fairly good idea of the relative importance of the categories and subcategories. This data presentation crosses qualitative and quantitative information, in order to illustrate patterns in the reduced data to help understanding and drawing conclusions. The two groups studied are here called Group 1 (MICE Organizers) and Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services).

This chapter follows the thread of the interview questions defined in the previous chapter, with the presentation of the informants and organizations first, then the 3 variables according to the 3 study objectives:

1. Explore the level of awareness of green practices among Phuket MICE operators;

2. Identify the actual green practices that the Phuket MICE operators are implementing, and any obstacles encountered;

3. Compare differences between awareness of green practices and their implementation among Phuket MICE operators.

4.1 Informants Profile

The Table 0.1 Informants Profile (Group 1) and Table 0.2 Informants Profile (Group 2)show the 15 informants' characteristics of the 2 groups (MICE Organizers and Accommodations with MICE services) and data is displayed similarly in both tables. The columns are organized in the following manner: informant ID; organization type; position;

gender; nationality; age; education level and subject. The rows are presented horizontally by organization type in the alphabetical order.

Group 1: MICE Organizers

Table 0.1 Informants Profile (Group 1)

ID	Org.	Position	Gender	Nat.	Age	Ed. Level	Ed. Subject
1	DMC	Director of MICE & Operations	Male	Thai	36-50	Bachelor	Hotel and Tourism Management
2	DMC	Managing Director	Male	Belgian	51-65	Bachelor	Decoration
3	DMCPCO	Assistant Event Manager	Female	Thai	20-35	Bachelor	Hotel and Tourism Management
4	EMC	Assistant Event Director	Male	Thai	20-35	Bachelor	Liberal Arts
5	EMC	Managing Director	Male	Thai	36-50	Bachelor	International Business China
6	EMC	Director of Sales & Marketing	Male	Thai	20-35	Bachelor	International Business China
7	EMC	Managing Director	Male	Thai	36-50	Master	Marketing
8	EMC MEDIA	General Manager	Male	French	20-35	Bachelor	Business and Management

The column 2 presents 2 organization types upon 8 organizations questioned: Destination Management Companies (3) and Event Management Companies (5). Two organizations also offer other services: the DMC 3 is also a Professional Conference Organizer and the EMC 8 is part of a Media group

The positions (column 3) show 2 levels of management positions (managerial and directorial) following the criteria set for this study. It appears that most of the informants who

accepted the interview are directors (6 upon 8): Director of MICE & Operations (ID. 1); Managing Director (ID. 2); Assistant Event Director (ID. 4); Managing Director (ID. 5); Director of Sales & Marketing (ID. 6); Managing Director(ID. 7). 2 informants are managers: Assistant Event Manager(ID. 3); General Manager (ID. 8). The high-level of the interviewees might be due to the limited size of their companies and thus their capacity to answer to detailed questions about a sensitive topic.

The gender (column 4) is male dominant with 7 males for 1 female. The table points out the fact that top-positions are held by men in this group.

The nationality (column 5) of the informants is Thai for the major part: 6 upon 8. The 2 other nationalities are Belgian and French.

As to the age group (column 6), the informants are between 20-35 (4), 36-50 (3), 51-65 (1). Despite their high positions (Assistant Event Manager; Assistant Event Director; Director of Sales & Marketing; General Manager), the majority is young: 4 upon 8 informants are less than 36 years' old. The 3 informants between 36 and 50 years are directors, which can be expected in the field of MICE. The last informant aged between 51 and 65 years is also experienced as a Managing Director.

The last 2 columns show that the informants have mainly a Bachelor level (7 upon 8) but come from very different educational backgrounds from Decoration and Liberal Arts to Business and Management studies. Only 1 has a Master's degree in marketingID. 7).

Group 2: Accommodations with MICE Services

Table 0.2 Informants Profile (Group 2)

ID	Org.	Position	Gender	Nat.	Age	Ed. Level	Ed. Subject
9	Hotel	Sales Manager	Female	Thai	20-35	Bachelor	Hotel and Tourism Management
10	Hotel	Assistant Director of Sales	Male	Thai	36-50	Bachelor	Multimedia Journalism
11	Resort	Meetings & Events Manager	Female	Thai	36-50	Master	Communication English
12	Resort	Learning & Development	Female	Thai	20-35	Bachelor	Political Sciences

ID	Org.	Position	Gender	Nat.	Age	Ed. Level	Ed. Subject
		Manager					
13	Resort	Sales Manager – MICE	Male	Thai	20-35	Master	Tourism Management
14	Resort	Marketing and Events Manager	Male	New Zealander	20-35	High School	–
15	Resort	Events Sales Manager	Female	Thai	36-50	Bachelor	Liberal Arts

The column 2 illustrates the 2 organization types studied. The informants work mostly in resorts (5) compared to hotels (2).

The positions (column 3) show 2 levels of management (managerial and directorial) following the criteria set for this study. As the hotels and resorts considered in this study are large organizations, the managerial positions are well-targeted. 6 upon 7 informants held the following managerial positions: Sales Manager (ID. 9); Meetings & Events Manager (ID. 11); Learning & Development Manager (ID.12); Sales Manager-MICE(ID. 13); Marketing and Events Manager (ID. 14); Events Sales Manager (ID.15). One has a directorial position (Assistant Director of Sales, ID. 10). Their missions are quite diverse and are here divided into 2 subgroups: Sales and Other.

• 4 informants are salespersons with the positions of: Sales Manager(ID. 9), Assistant Director of Sales (ID. 10), Sales Manager-MICE (ID.13), Events Sales Manager (ID.15);

• The other informants' positions are: 1 Meetings & Events Manager (ID. 11), 1 Learning & Development Manager (ID. 12), and 1 Marketing and Events Manager (ID. 14).

The gender (column 4) of the informants is quite balanced with 3 males for 4 females.

The informants' nationality (column 5) is Thai for almost all of them: 6 upon 7. The non-Thai informant is a New-Zealander.

Regarding their age groups (column 6), the informants are between 20-35 (4) and 36-50 (3). Again, despite their high positions for some of them (Sales Manager(ID. 9), Learning & Development Manager (ID. 12), Sales Manager – MICE (ID. 13), Marketing and Events Manager (ID. 14)), they are young for the majority (4 upon 7 are less than 36). For the 3 others, their positions match with their age (36-50 years): Assistant Director of Sales(ID. 10), Meetings & Events Manager (ID. 11), Events Sales Manager (ID. 15).

The column 7 shows that mostly the informants have a Bachelor's level (5 upon 7); 2 obtained a Master's' degree; and 1 did not study after High School. Regarding the informants' educational subjects (column 8), as in Group 1 (MICE Organizers), they are quite different ranging from Political Sciences and Liberal Arts to Hotel and Tourism Management.

Sample

The Table 0.3 Informants Profile (Sample) is a matrix presenting the informants' features of the full sample (15 in total)[2]. The 4 columns are displayed in this order: (Sub)category; Group 1 (%): Group 2 (%); Sample (%). The rows are presented by category (and subcategory). 6 categories are considered: organization; position; gender; nationality; age; education level.

Table 0.3 Informants Profile (Sample)

(Sub)category	Group 1 (%)	Group 2 (%)	Sample (%)
Organization			
MICE Organizers	100	0	53
Accommodations with MICE services	0	100	47
Position			
Managerial	25	86	53
Directorial	75	14	47
Gender			
Female	13	57	33
Male	87	43	67
Nationality			
Thai	75	86	80
Non-Thai	25	14	20

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[2]   As the number of organizations is limited, all percentages are rounded up to the nearest whole number.

(Sub)category	Group 1 (%)	Group 2 (%)	Sample (%)
Age			
20-35	50	58	53
36-50	38	43	40
51-65	12	0	7
Education Level			
High School	0	14	7
Bachelor	88	57	73
Master	12	29	20

Category 1 shows the organizations for which the informants work. It is further divided into 2 subcategories according to the 2 study groups: MICE organizers (Group 1) and Accommodations with MICE services (Group 2). The sample results show that the subcategories are balanced (53 % and 47 %), which looks relevant for this case study.

Category 2 represents the informants' position. The Group 1 (MICE Organizers) has mostly directorial positions (75 %) whereas the Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services), managerial (86 %). The reason might be the difference in the size of the organizations. Indeed, the Group 2(Accommodations with MICE services) organizations are biggerand structured in numerous departments with specialized Managers, especially for MICE services, whereas the MICE organizers in Group 1(MICE Organizers) are small companies, with Directors deeply involved in the detailed daily work; they know better all aspects of the activities. At the end, the results for the sample are quite balanced: 53 % are Managers and 47 % are Directors.

Regarding gender (category 3), in Group 1 (MICE Organizers), there is a crushing majority of male directorial positions (88 %), compared toGroup 2 (Accommodations with MICE services)which is more balanced for most managerial positions. Overall, 67 % are males and 33 % are females, which is representative of the Hospitality and Tourism industry with high-level positions (Nickson, 2013), where men are most represented for the high-level positions.

About Category 4 (nationality), the majority is Thai (80 %) and 20 % of the informants are non‑Thai, which shows that some foreigners are stakeholders in the MICE industry

and take part in the organization's decision-making process. Their nationalities are Belgian, French, and New-Zealander.

Category 5 shows the sample's age groups. From the 15 informants, a majority is less than 36 years' old (53 %), 40 % are between 36 and 50 years' old and only 7 % (1 person) is between 51 and 65 years' old. The informants are thus quite young considering their managerial and directorial positions for both groups.

The last category presents the educational level of the informants. Most of them studied in Bachelor programs (73 %), some got Master's degrees (20 %) and one did not study after High School (7 %). Thus, the access to high managerial positions does not seem to require a high educational background.

4.2 Organizations Profile

The tables 4.4 Organizations' profile (Group 1) and 4.5 Organizations' profile (Group 2) are organized in the same manner for both groups and show the 13 organizations' features of the groups. The columns are arranged in the following manner: organization ID; organization type; informant's number per organization; organization inception year; event types. The rows are presented horizontally by organization type in the alphabetical order.

Group 1: MICE Organizers

Table 0.4 Organizations Profile (Group 1)

Org. ID	Type	Informant nb.	Inception year	Events
1	DMC	1	2002	MI
2	DMC	1	2000	MIC
3	DMC – PCO	1	2011	MICE
4	EMC	1	2003-2005*	MICE
5	EMC	2	2012	MICE
6	EMC	1	2010	MICE
7	EMC – MEDIA	1	2005	CE

*The informant was not sure about the exact year and this information is not available online.

Regarding the type of organizations, among the 7 Phuket MICE Organizers, 3 Destination Management Companies were approached (among which one Professional Conference Organizer) and 4 Event Management Companies (one also involved in the Media). In

Phuket, organizations like DMCs, whose prime role is to offer logistic services to the clients regarding the destination, can also offer MICE services. Other organizations like EMCs who are specialized in events only, can offer MICE events too.

For most interviews, only 1 person answered the questions. 2 informants were present during one interview and answered together to the questions: the Managing Director and Director of Sales & Marketing of the EMC 5.

About the 7 organizations' inception date:all are 2000 onwards, including three 2010 onwards. The latter are then quite young in Phuket.

Among the 7 MICE Organizers, the majority (4) provide all MICE (meeting, inventive, convention, exhibition) events, 1 DMC offers MIC (meeting, incentive, convention), the DMC 1 only MI (meeting, incentive) and the seventh Organizer only CE (convention, exhibition). In conclusion, most of them offer all events, but some are more specialized.

Group 2: Accommodations with MICE Services

Table 0.5 Organizations Profile (Group 2)

Org. ID	Type	Informant nb.	Inception year	Events
8	Hotel	1	2016	MICE
9	Hotel	1	2016	MICE
10	Resort	2	2006	MC
11	Resort	1	2009	MIC
12	Resort	1	2014	MCE
13	Resort	1	2003	MIC

Regarding the type of organizations, among the 6 Phuket Accommodations with MICE services, 2 Hotels and 4 Resorts were questioned. As can be expected, Phuket as a dream recreational island has a large range of accommodations, including hotels and resorts catering to all needs for MICE events. Other Phuket lodging facilities (i.e. hostels, villas, etc.) are used by leisure tourists.

As for the first group(MICE Organizers), only 1 person answered the questions for most interviews. 2 informants were present during one interview and answered together to the questions: the Meetings & Events Manager and the Learning & Development Manager of the resort 10.

The oldest companies were created between 2003 and 2009. 3 organizations are very young (2014-2016). In this group also, the companies are fairly young, matching with the growth of tourists coming to Phuket ("Traveler Statistics: 5 Airports", 2018).

As the table points out, both hotels offer all events types (MICE) whereas none of the resorts (4) have the complete range of MICE (meeting, incentive, convention, exhibition) services. The resorts 11 and 13 offer meetings, incentives and conventions, the resort 12 has MCE and the resort 10 only MC. Hence, only a minority has all MICE events. The main outcomeis that the resorts are probably focused more on tourism lodging, and that they actuallyoutsource the missing MICE services to other companies such as DMCs or EMCs.

Sample

The Table 0.6 Organizations Profile (in %)is a matrix presenting the organizations' featuresfor the full sample (13 in total). The 4 columns are displayed in this order: (Sub)category; Group 1 (%): Group 2 (%); Sample (%). The rows present the categories and subcategories. The rows introduce 4 categories: Organization type; Informants number per organization; Organization inception year range; Types of MICE events (the percentages for the events types are divided into the 4 MICE types to show the events the most organized among the sample).

Table 0.6 Organizations Profile (in %)

(Sub)category	Group 1	Group 2	Sample
Organization			
MICE Organizer	100	0	54
Accommodation with MICE services	0	100	46
Informants number			
1	86	83	85
2	14	17	15
Inception year range			
1998-2002	28	0	15
2003-2007	28	33	31
2008-2012	44	17	31
2013-2017	0	50	23
Events			
Meeting	86	100	92

Incentive	86	67	77
Convention	86	100	85
Exhibition	72	50	62

Category 1 shows the organizations approached. It is further divided into 2 subcategories according to the 2 study groups: MICE organizers (Group 1) and Accommodations with MICE services (Group 2). The sample results show that the subcategories are balanced (54 % and 46 %), which proved to be relevant for this case study.

For most interviews, there was only one informant (85 %), otherwise 2 were present (15 %).

As for the organizations'creation, all dates are posterior to1997. This information related to the development of these types of businesses in Phuket is well in line with the global growth of the Tourism industry in Thailand (WTTC, 2017).

Regarding the MICE events' offers, a hierarchy can be observed for the sample: 92 % of the organizations offer meetings, 85 % conventions, 77 % incentives and 62 % exhibitions. Nevertheless, this hierarchy differs between the 2 groups: dominance of 3 event types in Group 1(MICE Organizers) (86 % for 3 event types: Meeting, Incentive, Exhibition) and contrast between event types in Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services). All accommodations offer meeting and convention, but do not necessarily focus on Incentive (67 %) or Exhibitions (only 50 %).

4.3 Section 1: Awareness of Green Practices

The Table 0.7 Results of Green Practices Awarenessillustrates the findings regarding awareness of green practices by the Phuket MICE operators.

Table 0.7 Results of Green Practices Awareness (in %)

(Sub)category	(Sub)category definition	Typical example	Group 1	Group 2	Sample
Perception	Definition of Green Practices in the MICE Industry	Practices within the office and while operating events such as electricity saving, recycling, clearing and cleaning to preserve the environment	100	100	100
Organization Commitment	Importance given to green aspects by the organization	Green practices are considered important in the hotels group	57	67	62
Internal Communication	Internal communication to the staff about green practices		86	100	92
Informal	No official training by the organization about green practices	Informal advice given to the employees to save energy and recycle, especially paper	71	33	54
Training	Compulsory training about green practices	Formal training in two steps: initial green orientation for new employees, followed by two yearly programs about sustainability for all employees	14	67	39
Clients Awareness	Information provided by the organization to the clients about green	Information about the resort green practices provided to clients through the reservation	71	67	69

(Sub)category	(Sub)category definition	Typical example	Group 1	Group 2	Sample
	practices				
Attendees (Guests) Awareness	Information provided by the organization to the attendees and guests about green practices	Information about the hotel certifications given be the sales department to the guests	43	67	54
Solutions	Solutions found by the organization for the implementation of green practices	Suggestion to join hands with other operators in Phuket to improve the green practice implementation	100	100	100

Perception

All informants (100 %) had a fairly good definition of green practices to offer:

'You mean environmental friendly…', said one resort Meetings & Events Manager (ID. 11).

'In our company, we start with our company first. Everyone, when they are working, before they leave their table to go anywhere, they need to shut down the computer. And then, all the recycled garbage, they have to separate in another garbage. And then, for outside, when they have to go for the event outside, all the rubbish that will be definitely also send in the office, like bottle of water, or any kind or the recycled rubbish that they can separate. We are also concerned about the cleaning of the area that we represent for the event. They need to make sure that all the place, after we come and then go, must be clean and clear, and not do any damage for the environment from the area that we rent, or we are having the event in the hotel, or anywhere.' – EMC Managing Director (ID. 7).

The definitions were diverse among the informants and long or short, but never incorrect. As show the quotes, some informants gave theoretical explanations and others instantaneously gave a list of practical examples.

Organization Commitment

62 % of the sample recognized that the organizations are responsible and act at many levels to reduce negative environmental impacts, in which 57 % in Group 1 (MICE Organizers) and 67 % in Group 2(Accommodations with MICE services) (similar results).

'For me, it's important, because the environment is really concerned when we have an event. But it concerns about our clients also, because some of the clients they are very serious about the environment. But some of my clients also, they are not concerned about this issue, depending of the client, but for us, yes.' – EMC Managing Director (ID. 5).

'I think nowadays it is very important, it is also implemented in all our Hotels. In every hotel has to involve with this recycling, or the tools, or the equipment or even though the CSR programs that we give like the linen which can be reused to the local community. I think it is very important, every hotel has to support this program.' – Hotel Sales Manager (ID. 9).

It is interesting to note that one EMC Managing Director made the connection between the Events industry and the negative environmental impacts. Furthermore, the Director

underlined his personal involvement. One Hotel Sales Manager emphasized the importance of going green nowadays, and everywhere. He is proud to be a pioneer in the field and expects others to follow.

Internal Communication

About green practice internal communication to the employees, 92 % testified that their staff is explicitly requested to follow green practices. Two communication channels can be deduced: unofficial training and compulsory training regarding green practices. The numbers are quite similar in both groups (86 % and 100%).

- *Informal*: 54 % of the organizations prefer this mode of communication about green practices to their staff, but there is a significant difference between the groups: 71 % for the Group 1(MICE Organizers) and 33 % for the Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services). One DCM Director of MICE & Operations (ID. 1) said:

'We don't provide much training about green practices to our staff. But we tell our staff to save energy, and to recycle, at least for the paper. We try to maximize not using the paper.'

- *Training*: 5 upon 13 organizations (39 %) organize official training sessions about green practices: 1 in Group 1 (MICE Organizers) (14 %) and 4 in Group 2(Accommodations with MICE services) (67 %). One hotel Learning & Development Manager (ID. 12) answered:

'When we do orientation for the new employees, we have normally full 2 days training, but we add one day for green orientation. We give them knowledge about Green Globe, Green Hotel and what we do in our hotel, what are the practices that we organize in every department in the hotel, so they will know why the department asks them to do this. It's a policy in the hotel. But we do it for the environment. every year, we set at least two classes, from trainers, two programs for green implementation programs and sustainability programs to train the employees here to get more knowledge about the environment and updates. The green implementation program is not for new employees only, it is for everybody who works here, at least two times per year.'

It is interesting to notice that the way to communicate is significantly different between the two groups. It appears that small companies like DMCs and EMCsuse informal

communication channels for the most (71 %) and large hotels and resorts prefer offering a specific compulsory training (67 %). The size of the organizations might explain this difference: the DMCs and EMCs count a small amount of staff, thus do not need to formalize training about green practices but can communicate informally, whereas hotels and resorts are larger and must then organize formal training. Nevertheless, despite this communication channel difference, the willingness to inform and train the staff about green practices is shared by both groups.

Clients Awareness

It appears that most clients are aware of green practices (69 %), especially for the Group 1(MICE Organizers) (71 %), slightly higher than Group 2(Accommodations with MICE services) (67 %).

'Firstly, we should start with the accommodation, because most of hotels have awards, green, sustainable. So, we have to suggest them (the clients) for these hotels.'– DMCDirector of MICE & Operations (ID. 1).

'Clients are aware through the reservation process.'– Resort Marketing and Events Manager (ID. 14).

One DMC Director of MICE & Operations (ID. 1) explained that while negotiating with clients, he orients their choice towards green certified hotels. From the Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services), one Resort Marketing and Events Manager pointed out the fact that it was included in the reservation process, hence informing the clients automatically from the outset.

Attendees (Guests) Awareness

The term 'guests' was added in the table for greater convenience, as the Group 2(Accommodations with MICE services) informants used it frequently to refer to the attendees. For the attendees (guests), only 54 % of the sample are aware of the organizations' green practices, 43 % in Group 1 (MICE Organizers), and 67 %) in Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services).

'It's difficult to tell them: you have to be like that. When we go on the beach, they want to take the shell on the beach, I must tell them: no, you cannot. But they say: why are you being boring to me about one shell. But sorry: if you take one, he takes one etc. On the hand it's one million and after what stays on the beach? If I say too much or too strong, I lose

customers. Then I do slowly, I tell them on the first time: 'please, don't take the shell on the beach, let the nature with the nature'. I tell them one time, they do what they want after. But if I tell them when they take, it's not the same. But I tell them also: don't feed the fish, because if you feed the fish, it's 5000B. if the police catch you, it's more. So, I tell both clients and participants. Because you cannot tell them in advance we are green, green, green, no. you cannot tell like that, you have to jump and tell slowly so they don't get bored. Because some people don't care.'– DMCManaging Director(ID. 2).

'Usually, because our sales department will do inform the guests. Like we are a green hotel, and that we are certified by Green Globe.'– ResortLearning & Development Manager (ID. 12).

The opposite phenomenon is observed than for clients: the attendees are more informed by the Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services) (67 %) compared to Group 1(MICE Organizers) (43 %), thus have probably a greater awareness about green practices. One DMC Managing Director (ID. 2) revealed the difficulties to retain attendees while informing them about the rules to be followed on the beach to preserve nature and the risks taken if they break the rules (fine). In Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services), one Resort Learning & Development Manager (ID. 12) said that the Sales Department usually highlights the certification aspect while informing guests.

Solutions

Regarding the solutions to the obstacles encountered while implementing green practices in MICE, all informants (100 %) had some suggestions to make, which is a very positive result as to awareness.

'Overall, they have to be as a city, you know Phuket, they have to contribute themselves to join as a team or as a unity all over the cities.'– EMCManaging Director (ID. 7).

'Should be setup like this from the school, not just, when they have work. They should know that if you use the full setup, what is happening after that, where the plastic bottle goes, where the water goes, where the paper goes. Because nobody thinks of this. If they have in their mind that if you use more, it will affect the poor and the community. So during that time okay the green environment we implement to all of us, in the world but now, they do not know. Not much practice from the school even I studied for the last 10 years, it is not just focused

on this. We just care that we use the foam, and we affect to the temperature and then the ice of the northern parts, we will affect the global, and that is it. But the next for the students, it is not told that if you bring the notebook, and the bottle and use 2 or 3 times, and what will affect. Nobody tells that.' – Hotel Sales Manager (ID. 9).

One EMC Managing Director (ID. 7) suggested the MICE stakeholders to join hands for a better green practices' implementation. Another Sales Manager (ID. 9) working for a hotel pointed out the educational aspect related to green practices. He referred to both, customer awareness and student awareness. Yet other solutions were to involve the clients with pricing: two hotel and resort managers said that for using more electricity, the clients should pay more, or give special offers to the guests who wish to go 'greener'. The solutions suggested from the sample concerned are: industry association and leadership, education, information, communication, and development of facilities.

4.4 Section 2: Implementation of Green Practices

The Table 0.8 Results of Green Practices Implementation illustrates the findings regarding implementation of green practices by the Phuket MICE operators, results are shown from the highest to the lowest percentages of the sample.

Table 0.8 Results of Green Practices Implementation (in %)

(Sub)category	(Sub)category definition	Typical example	Group 1	Group 2	Sample
Water and Energy Saving	Reduction in water and electricity use		100	100	100
Lighting	Light control strategy	Daylight use instead of lamps	86	100	92
Air-Conditioner	Air conditioner control strategy	Temperature control	86	83	85
Other electricity reduction	Other use of electricity reduction	Computer turn off when leaving	43	17	31
Water	Reduction in water use	Water system turned on only for events	0	33	15
Green Selection of Material and Products	Green criteria while buying material and products		86	100	92
Local material and products	Preference for local material and products	Decision to buy food and flowers from Phuket to offer a local experience and avoid outsourcing	57	100	77
Certified green or 'greener' material and products	Preference to buy material and products with green certification or more environmental-friendly	Choice to buy seasonal and recycled material and products	43	33	39

(Sub)category	(Sub)category definition	Typical example	Group 1	Group 2	Sample
Waste Reduction	Reduction of waste production		86	100	92
Recycling system	Recycling system put in place	Materials and organics separated in different containers to be recycled	86	100	92
Reuse of products	Material and Products kept for reuse	Decoration stored for future MICE events	71	83	77
Use of digital technologies rather than paper	Use of digital devices for communication or registration instead of paper	Sales documentation sent online instead of been printed	71	33	54
Reduction of items provided to the attendees (guests)	Reduction of non-environmental-friendly products	Less paper given to attendees during meetings to avoid waste	29	33	31
Green Selection of Service Providers	Specific green parameters taken into consideration while outsourcing		71	83	77
'Local' service providers	Preference for local service providers	In-house cooking service preferred, but outsourced from local restaurants upon client's request	43	50	46
Service providers with	Preference to work with service providers	Priority given to green certificated	57	17	39

(Sub)category	(Sub)category definition	Typical example	Group 1	Group 2	Sample
green practices	with green practices	hotels unless the client has a different choice			
Green Transportation	Use of less-polluting vehicles, or reduction of energy consumption for transportation	Free mass transit available for staff to avoid individual transportation	43	67	54
Green Certification	Membership of green certification or application underway	Hotel member of Earth check on the process to follow the TCEB standards for green meetings	0	67	31
Material and products donation	Donation of unused material and products	Unsalable amenities donated to the local community	14	33	23

Water and Energy Saving

All organizations pay attention to water and energy saving (100 %). By a refined analysis of the data collected, it appeared that energy (considered basically as electrical) could be subdivided into 4 subcategories: Lighting, Air-Conditioner, Other Electricity Reduction and Water Reduction.

- *Lighting:* The first economy done by the sample regarding water and energy saving concerns electricity reduction with lighting. Indeed, 92 % of the organizations have a light control strategy (86 % of Group 1 and 100 % of Group 2). Different techniques were developed and are implemented within the sample.

'For the electricity, actually when we outsource, when we set up for the lighting, when we use the hotel boardroom, they will charge us for the total that once the event is finished. But we will save the schedule for the client that, what time before the meeting starts. So, we just start 10 minutes before, to make sure that the lighting runs smoothly.' – DMC PCO Assistant Event Manager (ID. 3).

'Our boardroom has light volume, which is good for green meetings. It saves energy for lighting because we can use the day light.' – Hotel Sales Manager (ID. 9).

'You can use smaller rooms to limit AC and lightning'. – Resort Marketing and Events Manager (ID. 14).

The first example links energy saving with budgeting for the client: a schedule is determined to turn on the lights just before the event and to make sure that the lighting system works. The 2 others mentioned the use of natural lighting and use of limited space for small events to save electricity.

- *Air-Conditioner*: In a hot region like Phuket, the second energy saving strategy concerns air-conditioner control strategy: 85 % of all MICE operators. The results are similar for the Group 1 (MICE Organizers) (86 %) and the Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services) (83 %).

'Once we come to the office, office time is 8:30, so from 8:30 to 10, we will open the windows and the fans only. But after 10, we will use the air-con.' – DMC – PCO Assistant Event Manager (ID. 3).

'Sometimes, we need to, like the power we use, like after and before the event starts, we need to practice before the event like conference and gala dinner, we will fix the time like 3 hours before that one, for saving, so we keep the timing like before and after the event.' – EMC Managing Director (ID. 5).

'For the temperature, it is 24/25 degrees.' – Resort Sales Manager – MICE (ID. 13).

'You can use smaller rooms to limit AC and lightning.' – Resort Marketing and Events Manager (ID. 14).

Again, different ways lead to electricity saving: from the air-condition reduction in offices for one DMC – PCO Assistant Event Manager (ID. 3) to events' schedule setup for one EMC Managing Director (ID. 5). Other solutions were mentioned, such as temperature control for one Resort Sales Manager – MICE (ID. 13) and use of appropriate space (small room for small event) for one Resort Marketing and Events Manager (ID. 14).

- *Other Electricity Reduction:* Other means to save electricity were mentioned by 31 % of the informants of which 43 % of the MICE Organizers, and 17 % of the Accommodations with MICE services.

'Another one that we do is for the microphone, once the speaker doesn't use it, we close immediately. Actually, when it's just one day, we remove it, whatever the battery is less, because we have to make sure that during the event, battery is full all the time. It concerns for the operations and green practices because normally the material is the one we going to change, but this one we are saving when we do.' – DMC – PCO Assistant Event Manager (ID. 3).

'Everyone, when they are working, before they leave their table to go anywhere, they need to shut down the computer.' – EMC Managing Director(ID. 7).

The DMC – PCO Assistant Event Manager's (ID. 3) quote suggests that it is important to be efficient during events, thus microphone battery needs to be carefully checked and controlled, avoiding wastage of electricity and batteries. The other example concerns energy saving by turning off computers while not using them. The difference of the numbers between the 2 groups might again be explained with the difference of the 2 groups sizes and roles: small DMCs and DMCs pay much more attention to electricity savings (even small), basically for cost

saving, whereas hotels and resorts have large infrastructures which must be cooled anyway and are less dependent on guests' habits.

- *Water*: Only 2 organizations upon 13 (15 %) reduce water use, and it concerns only the Group 2 (33 %). One Resort Sales Manager – MICE (ID. 13) said:

  'If we do not have events, we turn off the water system for the conference center. If we have one event, we will turn on the system just 2 hours before for the housekeeping to clean.'

  This shows that the resort saves water, opening the system only for MICE events in the dedicated room. This practice seems not to be much taken into consideration by the MICE operators as a small minority implements it (2 upon 13 organizations only). It can be due to the specific geography and climate aspects of Phuket as an island surrounded by water, and rain-fed by tropical monsoons for months. With this large amount of water, water saving is clearly not a priority.

Green Selection of Material and Products

  For the selection of products and material purchase, a great majority of the sample has green criteria (92 %). The 2 groups seem to implement this green practice: 86 % of Group 1 (MICE Organizers), and all Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services) organizations. This category was divided into 2 subcategories: Local material and products and Certified green or 'greener' material and products.

- *Local material and products*: In this table, the term 'local' refers to a short supply chain which is a green behavior (United Nations Environment Program [UNEP], 2012). Most of the organizations prefer local products (77 %). All the accommodations with MICE services buy local (100 %), whereas only a small majority of the MICE organizers do so (57 %).

  'But, some things like decoration, we will use the Thai style because we have one event that the centerpiece will be the Thai, so we use the local one. We try to adapt the Thai products. For example, to make the centerpiece, so this one we can try more expensive, we try to apply Thai products.' – DMC – PCO Assistant Event Manager (ID. 3).

  'Usually for food and beverage, we use local products. We try to offer local menus. And for the flowers, we try to use the local ones, like the orchid trees, so we don't have to order from suppliers.' – Hotel Sales Manager (ID. 9).

One DMC – PCO Assistant Event Manager (ID. 3) explained that the choice of Thai products is linked with the event style. Another Hotel Sales Manager (ID. 9) gives other reasons: the choice of local products aims at offering a memorable local experience, as well as avoiding outsourcing. This might be due to the contrasted purchase needs of the 2 organization types. For example, the MICE organizers might be less concerned with food purchasing than the accommodations, and more concerned with new decoration, for instance.

• *Certified green or 'greener' material and products*: Only 39 % of the sample opt for material and products with green certifications or more environmental-friendly ones. The results are almost the same in the two groups (43 % and 33 %).

'So sometimes they will use the seafood in season and for fruits also. They might have certificates on it like the paper, it's like, ok this one is recycled.' – EMC Assistant Event Director (ID. 4).

'Then, with respect to the event itself, we offer food and catering packages, choose the menu as well, using organic products and environment-friendly practices, package of food. Food and beverages is one major thing. Again, using organic wine and organic food is the creation of story that you then tell, whatever the number of people attending to the event: creating a story in the resort or at the beach that people can talk about is being green efficient. One lady who was in charge of the organization of an event, checked the certification to be sure to have the right product.' – Resort Marketing and Events Manager (ID. 14).

One EMC Assistant Event Director (ID. 4) talked about seasonal products and recycled ones for material and products' purchase. Another informant, a Marketing and Events Manager (ID. 14) working for a resort, referred to the event experience itself involving a strategic choice of organic products and environment-friendly packages. He pointed out that offering a green menu in a memorable event might have a positive impact. He also mentioned that some product certifications were checked before purchasing.

The 'green' selection of material and products is thus an important criterion for the MICE operators, one aspect being the purchase of *local* material and products. Nevertheless, a significant difference is observed between the 2 groups for buying local: 57 % for the Group 1 (MICE Organizers) and 100 % for the Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services). The numbers' variance between the 2 groups can be explained by the difference of goods bought by

the 2 organization types. For example, the accommodations will purchase food, which is locally easily affordable.

Waste Reduction

Only 1 upon 13 organizations does not pay attention to waste production: the EMC – Media (ID. 8). All other organizations, both from MICE Organizers and Accommodations with MICE services reduce waste (92 %). 5 subcategories were determined through the inductive method: *Recycling System*, *Reuse of products*, *Digital technology use replacing paper*, *Reduction of items provided to the attendees (guests)*, *Material and products donation*.

- *Recycling System*: The most important waste reduction is related to the recycling system: it concerns 92 % of the sample (12 upon 13 organizations) and both groups results are quite similar (86 % and 100 %).

'For the waste, when we are on-site, we are going to have the staff to collect. So, we will buy some food for them for the green, we separate the bottles. This one we will keep for sell or to give to the hotel.' – DMC – PCO Assistant Event Manager (ID. 3).

'In terms of the production, we will try to save it also, like let's say the big backdrop, we will use like the wooden, and we also try to recycle it. We will have the trash cans, the big ones. For example, I have done public food exhibition in Phuket Town. It's a public area, it's a public event, so everybody can come and it's one of the problems. We manage by putting the trash cans every corner or as much as we can. We assign a team which is just basically taking care of the trash. We are taking the trash cans to the big truck, the trash truck. And then we ask them to go to the recycling area. Then, they will choose which one to recycle or which one to throw. Let's say we just clean the area, gathering the trash and then we just take that trash to the organization that can take care of the trash.' – EMC Assistant Event Director (ID. 4).

'For the events, we don't recycle all but yes, we separate the garbage in the MICE area, like the waste of food we separate, and there will be some locals who do the farming to feed the animals. So, the food part this way, the plastic of the bottles, the paper or other things on the other side. So, they come to pick up the food every day. It is the staff who separate the garbage.' – Hotel Assistant Director of Sales (ID. 10).

One DMC – PCO Assistant Event Manager (ID. 3) explained that for MICE events, they hire staff in exchange of some food to take care of sorting the waste, in order to sell it

or give it to hotels once separated. The second example shows recycling while preparing events, and solutions found for a big popular public event: to put bins in the event area and assign a company to take care of the trashes after the event. Another way of recycling the waste is given by one Hotel Assistant Director of Sales (ID. 10), explaining that the unconsumed food is given to farmers to feed their animals. Thus, recycling seems to be well implemented among the MICE operators in different manners.

- *Reuse of Products*: The second way of reducing waste is to reuse it: 77 % implement this practice. The results are quite similar for both groups: 71 % for Group 1 (MICE Organizers) and 83 % for Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services). Here the difference with recycling is that material and products are reused by the organizations themselves, for the same purpose.

'We have a building to keep all the prop, the decoration for the themes. For the decoration we reuse it, it can be fake flowers and some kind in plastic, metal that we do. Mostly we keep the center piece, for the themes, we keep it for reuse. It's not only this, sometimes we have the candles and some other decoration.' – DMC Director of MICE & Operations (ID. 1).

'Like some collection that we do, like wooden structures. We try to, after the end of the event, we keep it for reuse it after the event. It depends because as I told you, if there is something that we can reuse, for example steal, wooden or those kinds of things, we can reuse for the new events, and even sometimes we reproduce it, but we still use the same, even the wrap can be reuse for rain protection or something like that, so I mean every single thing.' – EMC Managing Director(ID. 7).

'And if something can be reused, like the flowers, after finishing the meeting, we can put that flowers for other places, like in the lobby, or in the restaurant.' – Hotel Sales Manager (ID. 9).

The MICE operators can reuse decoration: one DMC Director of MICE & Operations (ID. 1) explained that they even rent a building to store all props for reuse. Another EMC Managing Director (ID. 7) mentioned that all material is reusable to create new event props (wood, steal, wrap). One Hotel Sales Manager (ID. 9) talked about fresh flowers, and how they are transferred to another hotel space to be showcased instead of being thrown away. The ways to

reuse waste are quite diverse and these examples show that a large majority of items can be reused in MICE events.

- *Digital Technology Use replacing Paper*: Another notable practice for MICE is related to paper use reduction: a small majority talked about communicating and organizing registration by digital technologies instead of paper use (54 %). A difference is observable between both groups: 71 % for Group 1 (MICE Organizers) and 33 % for Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services).

'Another one is for the selling, when we are going to present to the client, we use the email for the presentation first, and later, when we will meet with the clients, we will show them via iPad, instead of printing on paper.' – DMC – PCO Assistant Event Manager (ID. 3).

'I cannot tell that much, but as long as we do online application for the registration, they are quite excited, and we see that the feedback is good, instead of using the paper.' – EMC Assistant Event Director (ID. 4).

One DMC – PCO Assistant Event Manager (ID. 3) stated that communication with clients is done via digital means and one EMC Assistant Event Director (ID. 4) talked about digital registration. Both agree that these are green practices, to reduce paper use. The difference in groups number might be explained by the fact that the MICE Organizers used to communicate with the attendees via paper in the past. Thus, they clearly see the advantages of electronic modern technologies.

- *Reduction of Items Provided to the Attendees (Guests)*: The fourth waste reduction practice is about the items provided during events to the participants. It concerns 31 % of the organizations and is quite the same for both groups: 29 % for Group 1 (MICE Organizers) and 33 % for Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services).

'For the tour, we have to provide a bottle of water for the guests during the tour. So, we give a small one, instead of a middle one, because the middle one, they don't drink it all and they throw away. So, it is something simple that we do.' – DMC Director of MICE & Operations (ID. 1).

'So yes, we provide paper, but in the past, we had like a lot of paper, but now we use only one, two pages.' – EMC – Managing Director (ID. 5).

'And for the water, drinking water in the bottle, most of the people just drink the half, and then the rest one we have to throw. I think it's better if we can provide in the tank in the meeting room. And then the participants can get the water in that tank, it is better than to provide the bottle of water. And for the pen or pencils we can also provide in the back side of the meeting room. If someone needs, they can take. The pencil is also made from, you have the cut the tree also.' – Hotel Sales Manager (ID. 9).

It appears that the material given to attendees for MICE events can become a source of waste according to these examples. It can include water, paper, pens and pencils. For this reason, some MICE operators reduce those items, by providing water in smaller bottles or drinking water from large containers, presenting less paper pads, or offering pens and pencils kept at the back of the room instead of in front of each participant's seat. Nevertheless, only a minority implement this practice.

• *Material and Products Donation*: The last waste reduction practice is material and products donation for 23 % of the sample. Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services) implements this practice (33 %) more than Group 1 (MICE Organizers) (14 %).

'And when you walk in, you see the calendar? The past year, we have a box there, outside that we have, which is planned to be the, there is one area, one shop that they are, that we have to donate this one, they will bring it to some, you know, to the children, because there is some paper, so they can do some activities, cartoons or whatever, so they keep it, you can see that when you go out. Instead of throwing away, it can be donated. Because she said she use to get there for this one it's like a shop, but it's not a shop, it's like a foundation.' – EMC Managing Director (ID. 7).

'The hotel will have like the sheet, amenity that cannot be reused we will give to the community, the soap and everything we will be given to some communities.' – Hotel Assistant Director of Sales (ID. 10).

One EMC Managing Director (ID. 7) talked about donating calendars for children via a foundation and one Hotel Assistant Director of Sales (ID. 10), about amenities given to the community. It illustrates that other solutions exist to reuse products: donation to the people in need. This is simultaneously a green and social practice.

In conclusion on waste reduction analysis, it appears that green practices of waste reduction are then rather well implemented among the Phuket MICE Operators and a large

variety of innovative solutions can be undertaken, as shown from the previous examples. Only one MICE Organizer is not much concerned about waste reduction.

Green Selection of Service Providers

Regarding service providers, 77 % of the sample select them considering green parameters. As for the material and products' selection, 2 criteria were deduced: local service providers and service providers with green practices.

• *Local service providers*: In this table, the term 'local' refers to a short supply chain which is a green behavior (United Nations Environment Program [UNEP], 2012). About half of the organizations favor local service providers (46 %). The results for both groups are almost the same (43 % and 50 % respectively).

'Usually, for the F&B, the chef will cook. But if the clients are specific with the food, like Indian food, or the food that we cannot cook, we can order from the restaurants outside, but we try to offer local menus.' – Hotel Sales Manager (ID. 9).

'For the F&B, we use local agency, not just local producers.' – Resort Sales Manager – MICE (ID. 13).

'To be specific, we work with an industry in Phuket for the production and in Bangkok sometimes.' – EMC Assistant Event Director (ID. 4).

From the quotes, it appears that in-house cooking service is preferred, but not always appreciated by the client. Hence the food may be ordered outside from nearby restaurants. Others, from Group 1 (MICE Organizers) and 2 (Accommodations with MICE services), explain that Phuket service providers are not the exclusive ones, local can be extended to further areas in Thailand when needed.

• *Service providers with green practices*: Less than half of the organizations choose to work with service providers going green (39 %) with a significant difference between groups: 57 % of the MICE Organizers and 17 % of the Accommodations with MICE services.

'When we work with the hotels, as I told you, as we mostly recommend hotels who got the certificate, it is the first priority, unless the client choose the hotel by themselves.' – EMC Managing Director (ID. 7).

'We will then have a booth Phuket Farmers Club, they are the best farm project on the island. And yes, we ty to find exhibitors as well who are respecting some ethical ideologies.' – EMC – Media General Manager (ID. 8).

The preference for green hotels is clear for the EMC Managing Director (ID. 7), except if the client decides otherwise. The second quote points out the ethical aspect of the business done in partnership with this local farm, showing an eco-friendly behavior. Nevertheless, there is a noteworthy difference between both groups: 57 % for Group 1 (MICE Organizers) and 17 % for Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services). It might be linked with the fact that the accommodations do not need outsourcing compared to the MICE Organizers.

Despite the general positive results for this category, less than the half implement this green practice once the subcategories are dissociated.

Green Transportation

A small majority of the sample uses green transportation (54 %). The results differ between the groups: only 43 % of the MICE Organizers implemented this practice, while 67 % of the Accommodations with MICE services.

'In some of our events, we need to have the great number of staff like 100, 200. For example, for one sportive event, so we try to provide them the transportation, so they don't have to use their own car or motorcycle. So, ok, go to the big place and go to the same way to save the fuel.' – EMC Assistant Event Director (ID. 3).

'But our vans and cars, the transportation for the guests to anywhere outside the hotel, to the airport for example, we use like gasoline and electric. I don't know how to call it. Both gasoline and electric. But internal, we use the electric.' – Resort Meetings & Events Manager (ID. 11).

The first quote suggests that for fuel reduction, the EMC organizes bus transportation for its employees to avoid them using individual vehicles. The Meetings & Events Manager (ID. 11) explained that the resort has its own electric vehicles for internal transportation, and mixed gas and electric vans for external trips. The difference between the groups might be because most hotels and resorts own electric Buckie's and other vehicles while MICE Organizers must outsource, and for longer distances, thus the use of green vehicles might less be appropriate.

Green Certification

About green certification, only 4 upon 13 organizations (31 %) had at least one or started a process of obtaining one. The results show a great difference between the groups 1 and 2 (0 % and 66 % respectively) and, the MICE operators do not seem to be concerned at all.

'We have Earthcheck for the hotel, but if we got it before the meeting room. We do not have the certificate for the TCEB yet, but we are on the process to do, because they have around 1 time a year.' – Sales Manager – MICE(ID. 13).

'Actually, in our hotel, it's not just concerned with MICE, but it's concerned with every area, every department in the hotel, because here we're certified from Green Globe, it's the international certification and Green Hotel, that is from the government (TAT). So, we got Green Globe since long time, since 2011. So, it's concerned with activities in every department and we train new employees to do it. we have a lot of projects to do it. It's sustainable practices. We are not looking for others because it's enough. We have internal audit from our group also. It's not focused only on the environment, but it concerns hygiene. safety, everything. It's a lot of audits already. We renew certificate every 3 years and every year we have to update the documents and every activity to them with the report by documents, pictures and anything. So, we have to pass every year, but the certificate is expired every 3 years. The last time Green Globe visited here was 2 years ago. They will come next year.' – Resort Learning and Development Manager (ID. 12).

One Sales Manager – MICE (ID. 13) was proud of its Resort International Certification and added that the national one was underway and explained the time dimension of the process. Another informant, a Resort Learning and Development Manager (ID. 12) clarified that the green certifications do not concern only MICE services, but the entire organization. She pointed out two other certifications that the resort had obtained and described the measures to maintain them.

It looks that getting certifications might be a long process but also implies an additional amount of workload for the organizations, for maintaining them. Those might be reasons why small organizations like MICE Organizers are reluctant to start the process.

4.5 Section 3: Obstacles of Green Practices Implementation

     The Table 0.9 Results of Obstacles faced for Green Practice Implementation summarizes the findings regarding difficulties encountered in implementing green practices by the Phuket MICE operators. It is classified horizontally by the most frequent to the least frequent obstacle for the sample (column 4).

Table 0.9 Results of Obstacles faced for Green Practice Implementation (in %)

(Sub)category	(Sub)category definition	Typical example	Group 1	Group 2	Sample
Client Request	Client demand incompatible with green practices	MICE event expectations for the high-profile client are difficult to meet while implementing green practices	100	83	92
External Lack of Awareness	External lack of awareness or interest regarding green practices		100	50	77
Attendees (Guests)	Attendees' or guests' lack of green practice awareness	Participants' interest focused on the event position, price and shareholders only	57	50	54
Clients	Clients' lack of green practice awareness	Information gap about green practices implementation costs advantages	57	33	46
Service Providers	Suppliers' or partners' lack of green practice awareness	Lack of concern of some fishermen about respecting seasonality	57	0	31
Difficulties to sensitize other Stakeholders	Problems to communicate externally about green practices	Sensitization difficult to do	57	50	54
Need for Products Import	Need to order products from overseas either unavailable in Thailand or higher quality products	Import of new technology products to reach international standards	43	67	54
Costs	Green practice implementation is too expensive	Importation of Chinese products for costs saving instead of buying local	57	33	46
Difficulties to reach Green	Green standards are difficult to reach or	Too much work involved to get a green	29	33	31

(Sub)category	(Sub)category definition	Typical example	Group 1	Group 2	Sample
Standards	follow	certification for a small company			
Lack of Information	Information about green practices for MICE is absent	Guidelines missing to implement green practices	14	17	15

Client Request

The main obstacle pointed out is the *client demand* which is often incompatible with green practice implementation: 92 % mentioned this problem and both groups state this issue as predominant (100 % for Group 1(MICE Organizers) and 83 % of Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services)). One DMC Managing Director stated (ID. 2):

'That is difficult to say because in the Industry of tourism, we have to follow what request customers. Then many times customers do not request for green. They are requesting for enjoying.'

'As I told you, we don't involve to much in the green practices because our clients when they make a decision they most focus on the costing, and facilities of the hotel, and the budget for this one.' – DMC PCO Assistant Event Manager (ID. 3).

'But sometimes, the needs, the demand of the customer is not like that. They have more expectations of MICE events. One they set up the meeting, your attendants should be got super convenient to meeting, not just, when you have to drink, you have to walk out, to drink outside or even if they want to write something, they have go to pick up the pencil and back, it is not right for me. But just only some of the cases that the meeting should not allow to walk. If you are meeting with the government or the prime minister and you have to walk to get a drink, it is not right. It depends on the customer, we do as they ordered. Sure, the green environment can save the budget, but it cannot save the feelings.' – Resort Sales Manager – MICE (ID. 13).

Phuket as a 'sun, sea and sand' destination is known worldwide for its recreational activities. It is then a solicited province for incentive travel. Hence, some clients do not pay much attention to green aspects while negotiating MICE services. Other clients focus more on pricing and facilities rather than green practices. The last quote shows that in the case of high profile personalities like government officials, it is a sensitive issue to impose green products and behaviors. Hence, the organizations seem to put a brake on green practice implementation to avoid disappointing clients and to defend their reputation.

External Lack of Awareness

The second difficulty encountered by the MICE operators is the lack of awareness of at least one category of stakeholders mentioned by the informants: the attendees (guests), clients and service providers. It concerns 77 % of the sample, in which 100 % of

Group 1 (MICE Organizers), and 50 % of Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services), which is significantly contrasting.

- *Attendees (guests)*: The first external stakeholder, which appears to be not sufficiently aware, is the attendee (guest) for a small majority (54 % of the sample). Both groups results are very similar (57 % for Group 1 (MICE Organizers) and 50 % for Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services)).

'But there are some clients who also do not, understand or not agree with that. For example, they are looking for bottles of water and then, when they have morning sessions, they drink like the half, and then when the afternoon starts, during the coffee break, the staff has to clean the bottles from the tables and then to throw away and replace with a new one. So, this is not something that is not what we are looking for. But you know, if they are part of this green hotel, they will know that.' – EMC Managing Director (ID. 5).

'No, both exhibitors and visitors are not aware because it's not something they actually care. Unfortunately, this is not something, a decision point for them. What is important for them is the position of the event, the price and who is coming. But they don't care if we are green or not.' – EMC – Media General Manager (ID. 8).

One EMC Managing Director (ID. 5) illustrated the attendees lack of awareness with the example of water bottles. Even if he used the term 'clients', he meant attendees as it is shown within the quote. For one EMC – Media General Manager (ID. 8), the participants do not make their choice considering the implementation of green practices, but rather on visibility, price and event reputation.

- *Clients*: About the clients, 46 % of the sample believe they are not aware of green practices. The 2 groups seem to disagree on this issue (57 % in Group 1 and 33 % in Group 2).

'So, it's once we deal with the clients, they sometimes don't have ideas for green.' – DMC – PCO Assistant Event Manager (ID. 3).

'They don't know that it doesn't only save the costs, but save the energy, save everything as well.' – Hotel Assistant Director of Sales (ID. 10).

One DMC – PCO Assistant Event Manager (ID. 3) recognized that clients do not know much about green practices. Another Hotel Assistant Director of Sales (ID. 10) regretted

that the clients do not realize that green practices can save costs for them besides being good for the environment.

- *Service Providers*: The last stakeholder is the service providers for 31 % of the MICE operators. This problem seems to concern only MICE Organizers (57 % in Group 1 (MICE Organizers), compared to 0 % in Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services)).

'But there are some fishermen, they try to get the seafood out of season, and it's not really good.' – EMC Assistant Event Director (ID. 4).

'I think in the restaurants, they are not really educated about the green: how to save the energy, they just do what they are used to do.' – EMC Managing Director (ID. 7).

The EMCs Assistant Event Director (ID. 4) and EMC Managing Director (ID. 7) admitted that some service providers such as fishermen or restaurants are not conscious about green practices.

This obstacle concerns mostly the sample, but the different is great between the 2 groups (100 % in Group 1 and 50 % in Group 2). Both groups agree for attendees (guests), the difference being about clients, and mainly the service providers. It is maybe because the Accommodations with MICE services outsource less than the MICE Organizers, at least for MICE events.

Difficulties to sensitize other Stakeholders

The informants are also conscious of the difficulty to sensitize other stakeholders such as attendees (guests) and clients for 54 % of the sample. The results are quite similar for both MICE Organizers (57 %) and Accommodations with MICE services (50 %).

'If you speak: oh, please don't take the shell on the beach, no throw the paper that goes in the water, don't feed the fish. If I repeat it all day, after people are bored about you, you cannot do that.' – DMC Managing Director (ID. 2).

'This one, if we come to tell them how important or something like this, some clients understand us but some, they pay, they pay money for the meeting, they pay money for the accommodation, they don't have patience. So sometimes we try to avoid this sensitive issue.' – DMC – PCO Assistant Event Manager (ID. 3).

'No, because sometimes it's difficult to talk directly with the participants, we can only talk with the organizer.' – Hotel Sales Manager (ID. 9).

As said before about the clients' request, Phuket is seen as a recreational destination; it seems then quite difficult for one DMC Managing Director (ID. 2) to permanently sensitize the attendees during events about basic green practices. One DMC – PCO Assistant Event Manager (ID. 3) explained that the clients, who spend a limited amount of time in Phuket, care more about the money they involve than the environmental impact of their behavior, so she decides to avoid the subject. The last example shows that for the MICE events, the Hotels Sales Manager (ID. 9) has only one single interlocutor and has no direct access to the attendees.

Need for Imported Products

Another difficulty encountered for green practices implementation is the need to import products from overseas. It concerns 54 % of the overall sample. Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services) (67 %) looks more challenged than Group 1 (MICE Organizers) (43 %).

'Some of the high technology products, most of them, we import from overseas. It's no many products but that high technology that we can buy from Thailand, because the quality is not at the same standards than the clients request.' – EMC Director of Sales *& Marketing (ID. 6).*

'But if sometimes, like some importers items, we also need to improve, like why we are not producing in Thailand. Or the meat is from other countries. Anything that we cannot find in local areas, we have to import, even from Bangkok or overseas, we must do so.' – Resort Meetings & Events Manager (ID. 11).

The first quote shows that to reach international standards, high technology must be imported instead of buying local items. Another example is about food that is not available in Thailand and needs to be brought from overseas. The numbers difference between the groups is maybe because the Accommodations need to import food so that they canreach international guests' requests.

Costs

The sample also pointed out the problem of high costs while implementing green practices for 46 % of them. Both groups mentioned this issue: 57 % of the MICE Organizers and 33 % of the Accommodations with MICE services.

'For the event material, some we import from China because it's cheap there.' – DMC – PCO Assistant Event Manager (ID. 3).

'Most of the time the cost will be too high as well to go green on some points, like the decorations because it's costly and the big companies have to manage their budget as well.' EMC – MEDIA General Manager (ID. 8).

'Because if they pay more, it is not the correct way, right. If they want to do he green practices, we have to regenerate to the green package. The green package price should be lower than the full package. If you want the full setup, okay, but if they want to have the green standard, you go to get a drink in the back of the meeting room, a pencil over there... if we do talk to the customers: Sir, Madam, we have green practices in this event, so could you please get the drink in the back... and the question which comes back is 'why? I paid'.' – Resort Sales Manager – MICE (ID. 13).

'Costs are expensive sometimes. To be green is expensive even for a luxury resort. For example, glass bottles are more expensive than plastic bottles.' – Resort Marketing and Events Manager (ID. 14).

One DMC – PCO Assistant Event Manager (ID. 3) said that he prefers buying products from China instead of Thailand as their price is lower. The EMC – MEDIA General Manager (ID. 8) acknowledged that companies must manage their budget and cannot afford 'green' decoration. The third quote implies that the implementation of green practices such as regrouping pens and water at the back of the room should cost less for the client, passed on to the attendee; in this case, the attendee must do part of the service himself (getting water and pencils…); for both reasons the 'green package' should be cheaper. The last example is about the bottle material: even if glass is more environmental-friendly than plastic, it is stated to be more expensive here. This statement should nevertheless be carefully checked considering the existence of a glass recycling branch in Thailand.

Difficulties to reach Green Standards

About following green standards, 31 % of the sample thinks it is difficult. Numbers are similar for both groups: 29 % for Group 1(MICE Organizers) and 33 % for Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services).

'Not yet, we did not ask for it yet, we are a small company I think for the big organizations, mostly they will get that, we have too many documents, or whatever. But for us, I mean a small organization, we can't have that work, I mean we try to train the staff, we give the information about the importance of if this happens when it comes to MICE. So, I think we are a small company, even if we don't have a certificate but we know, we realize the impact of our projects. About 10 people work in this organization.' – EMC Managing Director (ID. 7).

'In MICE, actually we spend a lot on non-recycling things like plastic bottles of water, everywhere but sometimes you cannot reach the standards.' – Resort Sales Manager – MICE (ID. 13).

The first example illustrates the results of green practices implementation regarding green certification. The EMC Managing Director (ID. 7) explained that he does not prioritize obtaining a certification because the process is tedious, but he is aware of, and does implement green practices anyway. One Resort Sales Manager – MICE (ID. 13) took the example of plastic bottles, widely used in the MICE industry; the standards impose a limited amount of plastic, which makes them challenging to meet.

Lack of Information

Finally, the lack of information regards 15 % of the sample (14 % of Group 1(MICE Organizers) and 17 % of Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services)).

'We don't have any at the moment (certification). But if we can adapt ourselves if someone gives us the rules, the guidelines to do it without losing money, time, yes.' – EMC – Media General Manager (ID. 8).

This EMC – Media General Manager (ID. 8) recognized that with more information and help, but he would try to implement green practices provided he does not lose money.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

Environment has become a major political stake as more and more countries realize that the limited resources on the earth and the fragile atmosphere surrounding it require urgent measures to guarantee to the next generations an acceptable life and a sustainable development. This awareness led for instance to the signature by 175 countries represented by their highest official bodies (31 Heads of State, 3 Vice-Presidents, 24 Heads of Government…) of the Paris Agreement on 12th December 2015 (Change, 2018). The 'Conference of the Parties' or COP ("Conference of the Parties (COP)", 2018) continues to progress yearly, showing a strong momentum.

In this perspective, the tourism industry, with a spectacular growth (about 4 % worldwide between 2016 and 2017), is a major cornerstone, impacting directly the environment (aerial flights, behavior and impact of tourists ontheir destination…) but also benefiting from the quality of the destination, if the latter is kept attractive.

Thailand benefits from this general trend with a spectacular growth of more than 55 % of tourists between 2011 and 2015 according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization 2016 report (Thailand: Country-specific: Basic indicators (Compendium) 2011-2015, 2017). For example, the Tourism Authority of Thailand has launched the Tourism 4.0 initiative ('Travel news from Thailand – TAT Newsroom', 2017), to accompany the growth of Tourism.

In this favorable context, Meetings-, Incentive-, Conventions-, Exhibitions- (MICE) (Marquer & Santos, 2016; Sandy Sou & McCartney, 2015; Vaid, Kesharwani & Kumar Dubey, 2017) Operators are aspecial interest of study as they gather and can implement virtuous practicesdisseminated locally or even on a wider area. This interest is even increased by the lack of existing literature on thisspecific aspect:green practices in MICE Events. The choice of Phuket appeared natural, being one of the major touristic and business destinations worldwide.

This study was undertaken to address one of the main topics of sustainability in the MICE Industry. It focused on its environmental pillar with a zoom on MICE Operators in

Phuket, as a business and tourism paradisiac destination. Socioeconomic and economic aspects have not been directly addressed, even if, as demonstrated later, it is difficult to separate environmental issues from their economic – positive or negative – impacts. In this study, a conceptual framework was developed to quantify as much as possible awareness and implementation of green practices among the MICE operators in Phuket. The data collection was conducted through face-to-face interviews, which produced significant and sufficient amounts of data. To analyze the data and draw conclusions, it was first reduced by coding and categorizing. This allowed generating themes which were later rearranged into categories and subcategories. The themes were deduced inductively using the Green Practices guidelines as reference (Global Reporting Initiative, 2012; United Nations Environment Program [UNEP], 2012; Singapore Tourism Board, 2013;Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau [TCEB], 2013). In the chapter 4, Results, the findings were then displayed in the form of tables, matrices, and quotes selected from the interview transcripts with annotations. They were divided into 5 parts: first the informants and organizations general information, then the 3 study variables: *Green Practices Awareness*, *Green Practices Implementation* and *Obstacles of Green Practices Implementation*.

Two balanced groups of informants were identified:

- Group 1, MICE Organizers (8 persons, 7 Organizations);

- Group 2,Accommodation with MICE Services (7 persons, 6 Organizations).

In this conclusive chapter, only the full sample findings, in the form of numbers (percentages presented in the previous chapter)are given, but shades were developed when a significant discrepancy appears between both groups. For the table 4.8 Results of Green Practices Awareness, the 6 categories were: Perception, Organization Commitment, Internal Communication, External Communication Clients, External Communication Attendees (Guests), Solutions. The table 4.9 Results of Green Practices Implementation 6 categories were: Green certification, Green selection of material and products, Green selection of service providers, Green Transportation, Water and Energy Saving, Waste Reduction. For the table 4.10 Results of Obstacles of Green Practices implementation, the categories determined were: Client request, External lack of awareness, Difficulties for external communication, Need for imported products, Costs, Difficulties to follow standards, Lack of information. Next, the categories and

subcategories in the 3 tables were defined, and typical examples provided, paraphrased from the quotes justifying coding and categorization. Then, numbers were calculated from the data for the full sample, Group 1 (MICE Organizers) and Group 2 (Accommodations with MICE services) to help classifying the findings.

5.2 Findings Discussion in the light of the Objectives

By interviewing 15 operators having managerial positions in 13 MICE organizations in Phuket from August to October 2017, data saturation was reached. The information gathered was reduced and categorized (6 categories for *Awareness*, 6 for *Implementation*, 7 for *Obstacles*, each of them being subcategorized when required). In this section, the matrices of Chapter 4 Results are summarized (Groups 1 and 2 data have been merged) and presented in 3 tables, one for each objective (Table 0.1 Green Practices Awareness, Table 0.2 Green Practices Implementation, Table 0.3: Obstacles faced for Green Practices Implementation).All the tables are structured similarly, with 3 columns: Category, Typical example, Sample (%). Their rows are ranked starting from the highest sample percentage to the lowest, to get a clear picture of the actual situation.

Objective 1: Explore the level of awareness of green practices among Phuket MICE operators

The Table 0.1 below summarizes the findings about awareness gathered from Chapter 4.4 detailed data.

Table 0.1 Green Practices Awareness

Category	Typical example	Sample (%)
Perception	Practices within the office and while operating events such as electricity saving, recycling, clearing and cleaning to preserve the environment	100
Solutions	Suggestion to join hands with other operators in Phuket to improve the green practice implementation	100
Internal Communication	Informal advice given to the employees to save energy and recycle, especially paper	92
Clients Awareness	Information about the resort green practices provided to clients through the reservation	69

Organization Commitment	Green practices are considered important in the hotels group	62
Attendees, (Guests) Awareness	Information about the hotel certifications given by the sales department to the guests	54

It is noticeable that *all* MICE Operators have a clear perception of green practices and that they proposed spontaneously a fairly good definition during the interviews. Furthermore, *all* suggest solutions to spread the 'green culture' to all Phuket operators and diffuse their own perception. This positive outcome is a consequence of the media spread messages of 'going green', including the MICE sector(DeSilets & Dickerson, 2008).

Almost all of them (92 %) have implemented awareness for their employees, either via internal informal training or through structured and compulsory learning sessions. Even if this internal communication is linked with corporate responsibility (Fatma, Rahman & Khan, 2016),the goal might not only be green practice awareness, but also cost savings (waste sorting, recycling, electricity savings, etc.)("ISO 20121 Sustainable events", 2018; United Nations Environment Program [UNEP], 2012).

With respect to information provided to clients and attendees, the outcome is more contrasted depending on the interlocutors of MICE Operators: whereas the client information is fairly good with high receptivity (more than two thirds), the awareness of attendees falls just above 50 %. This result might be linked with the recent development of sustainable MICE marketing allowing planners to demonstrate green values to clients and sell 'greener products'without communicating directly with the attendees (Tinnish & Mangal, 2012). The guests (the attendees) come to Phuket to share information with their international or domestic colleagues in a beautiful place and do not pay attention to green practices during their short stay. A positive point is that the MICE Operators are conscious of this and are keen to improve this regrettable situation. Indeed, their long-term interest is clearly to maintain a high attractivity of Phuket as a MICE destination by preserving the exceptional quality of the site.

Objective 2: Identify the actual green practices that Phuket MICE operators are implementing, and any obstacles encountered

Similarly, to Objective 1, the Table 0.2 below is a synthesis of matrix analyzed in more detail in Chapter 4.5. It is structured in the same way.

Table 0.2 Green Practices Implementation

Category	Typical example	Sample (%)
Water and Energy Saving	Daylight use instead of lamps	100
Green selection of material and products	Decision to buy food and flowers from Phuket to offer a local experience and avoid outsourcing	92
Waste Reduction	Materials and organics separated in different containers to be recycled	92
Green selection of service providers	In-house cooking service is preferred, but outsourced from local restaurants upon client's request	77
Green Transportation	Free mass transit available for staff to avoid individual transportation	54
Green certification	Hotel member of Earth check on the process to follow the TCEB standards for green meetings	31

Energy saving, and in particular electricity saving, is a concern shared by *all* MICE Operators. Electricity saving policies have been implemented for almost all aspects: AC, light, other electricity consumptions (batteries…). Cost savingsare clearly the driving forcetodecrease the carbon footprint(Pace, 2016).Water is a less important saving priority (about 20 % of the informants mentioned it as such):thanks to the tropical climate of Phuket, it is naturally abundant. There are nevertheless some noticeable efforts to reduce water consumption, for example by turning the water system on only when strictly required (Pace, 2016).

The selection of material and products is mainly done using green criteria, as suggested by the corresponding data of 92 %, especiallyby purchasing local items. This choice regards for the most food and beverage, certainly because purchasing local food is viable, reasonable and a good argument to share local experience to MICE travelers (Lee & Slocum, 2015).

Waste reduction is very well implemented among MICE Operators (92 %), with the following ranking in the main practices:

- Recycling: 92 %
- Reuse of products: 77 %
- Use of digital technologies rather than paper: 54 %
- Reduction of items provided to the attendees (guests):31 %
- Material and products donation: 23 %

More surprising is the level of *'green selection of service providers'*,declared by about 77 %,but to be relativized as explained just below. Indeed, as could be expected that, in a country reputed for the quality of its food and natural products, MICE Operators could have been more enthusiastic to offer to their guests local and green products, either in terms of short-circuit supply chain (only 46 %) or through*organic* agriculture label (39 %) (Lee & Slocum, 2015).

Efforts to minimize the carbon footprint by offeringgreener transportation is above 50 %, especially by the resorts, which have they own internal electrical transportation vehicles. It is also known that Phuket has a low public transportation offer, which induces the use of private individual transport vehicles(Le-Klähn, Gerike & Michael Hall, 2014).

In contrast, the unsatisfactory figure about certifications is less surprising, whatever their level (national or international) of less than one third, considering the amount of 'paperwork' necessary, not only to launch a certification application, but also to maintain it afterwards. Refined analysis (see Chapter 4.5) shows nevertheless contrasted attitudes depending on the size of the Operator (the bigger the company, the higher the certification degree implemented of ongoing).

In the light of the results about obstacles stated by the informants, the interpretation of the gap between awareness and implementation is redundant with the analysis of obstacles encountered in the implementation of green practices. Hence, the obstacle analysis is developed in the third objective 'Compare differences between awareness of green practices and their implementation among Phuket MICE operators'.

Objective 3: Compare differences between awareness of green practices and their implementation among Phuket MICE operators

As mentioned just above, the obstacles reflect mostly the gap between the awareness and the implementation of green practices among Phuket MICE Operators. As for the first 2 tables of this conclusive chapter, the Table 0.3 rows below are ranked from the highest obstacle to the lowest.

Table 0.3: Obstacles faced for Green Practices Implementation

Category	Typical example	Sample (%)
Client request	MICE event expectations for the high-profile client are difficult to meet while implementing green practices	92
External lack of awareness	Participants' interest focused on the event position, price and shareholders only	77
Difficulties to sensitize other stakeholders	Sensitization difficult to do	54
Need for products' import	Import of new technology products to reach international standards	54
Costs	Importation of Chinese products for costs saving instead of buying local	46
Difficulties to reach green standards	Too much work involved to get a green certification for a small company	31
Lack of information	Guidelines missing to implement green practices	15

It is rather worrisome that *the main obstacle encountered in the implementation of green practices comes from the client request* (92 % and even 100 % for MICE Organizers). Even if in a service-oriented industry, clients come first as they ask for specific personalized requests (Chon & Maier, 2010), it is the suppliers' duty to propose the best products and services. The literature review shows that it is first the multiple public and private stakeholders to implement green policies and if they do so, the clients would even not have the choice of the products and services which would already be green.According to informants, the main expectation of either clients or attendees is recreation (even for business meetings…); it is surprising that this objective is perceived as incompatible with green practices implementation, especially if the MICE suppliers do such communication to clients (Tinnish & Mangal, 2012).

This aspect should be deepened to have a more balanced view (see section 5.4 Limitations below).

The second obstacle, probably linked to the first one, is the lack of clients' awareness. This could explain the poor figure above (92 %) and could prove to be a strong lever for action, in order to improve the current unsatisfactory situation.

These two statements are also valid for the other stakeholders, such as the attendees, who seem to be the less sensitized of green practices when arriving at their destination. It is thus contradictory that MICE Operators complain about this lack of interest, whereas they are reluctant to emphasize the importance of green practices to their guests.

Costs arrive only at the fifth position in this table: this is a very important outcome of this study and should mobilize Phuket MICE Operators to spread the 'green culture' beyond their area. As mentioned in the section 5.3 Recommendations below, it could become a strong argument to convince all MICE stakeholders that green practices are not necessarily incompatible with cost saving ("ISO 20121 Sustainable events", 2018; United Nations Environment Program [UNEP], 2012). It is very important to merge interests of Phuket MICE Operators (more on a sustainable perspective) and the clients' expectations (based on a short stay). It appears from this study that, if a due information is provided, this objective could be reached for the benefit of both parties.

The last 2 obstacles (difficulties to reach green standards and lack of information) refer to the administrative workload and time spent in the certification process, as well as the lack of information to implement green practices (see also section 5.3 Recommendations).

Beyond the discrepancies observed in this case study between awareness and implementation of green practices, there could also be a wish of 'appearing greener' by the informantswithout really implementing best practices (see section 5.4 Limitations).

In conclusion, it appears that Phuket MICE Operators are more service-oriented with economic growth expectations than concerned by the implementation of green practices. Nevertheless, it appears that MICE Operators could further implement green practices in Phuket at no cost. It is probably vital for them, in order to preserve Phuket as a paradisiac destination worldwide, with its beautiful environment, in a sustainable way.

5.3 Limitations

This study has been performed in a **limited amount of time** (August to October 2017) and was **circumscribed to Phuket area**. It also suffers from several limitations:

- It has **not** been **possible to check the informants' information**; this could explain partly the apparent hiatus between awareness and implementation as stated by the informants. Also, the **case study approach**, focusing on one phenomenon in a particular context might be criticized;

- **No client (neither direct nor attendee) has been interviewed**; hence the informants' assertions with respect to client's perception has not been checked among the latter;

- Similarly, **other stakeholders such as local population** impacted by the MICE activities, **decision-makers**, etc. **have not been questioned**;

- **Language is another limitation**, the interviewer not being able to speak Thai: all interviews were thus conducted in English, which might skew the study.

5.4 Recommendations

As mentioned in section 5.2 above, a better understanding between Phuket MICE Operators (with a sustainable perspective) and their clients' expectations (more on a short-term basis) must be targeted. In the light of the conclusive remarks above, the following recommendations can thus be made:

- First, regarding the TCEB,the public Authority in charge ofpromoting Thailand as a MICE destination ("About Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau: Introduction & Background | TCEB", 2018) and Phuket in particular; two improvementscould be proposed:

  o **A more comprehensive information targeting MICEclients**, such as reputation and costs saving (reference guidelines) coveringadvantages of green practices in a paradisiac island while explaining that their implementation is not systematically synonym of cost increase, on the contrary;

  o **Better assistance and policy checking for MICE Operators** to help them in the implementation of green practicesand thecertification processes;

• Second, it is of the utmost importance to **improve the clients' and attendees' awareness**, as this factor reveals to be the major obstacle to the implementation of green practices among Phuket MICE Operators;

• **Third, positive implementation examples should be widely spread**, to show for instance, how the Phuket environment, which is becoming more and more polluted, can regain its natural beauty thanks to local initiatives;

In conclusion, as mentioned in the limitations section, this study has addressed only MICE Operators; **it should be worth widening to all MICE stakeholders and the survey addressed to a larger number of informants** (quantitative method) to have a more accurate view of the actual situation. In addition, observation of actual awareness and implementation among the operators would be an asset. This study is a first-of-a-kind in Thailand; **other comparable studies should be undertaken in other places to nuance the findings, in both Thailand and other MICE destinations**. To help future research, the following Revised Conceptual Framework (

Figure 0.1) is suggested:

Figure 0.1 Revised Conceptual Framework
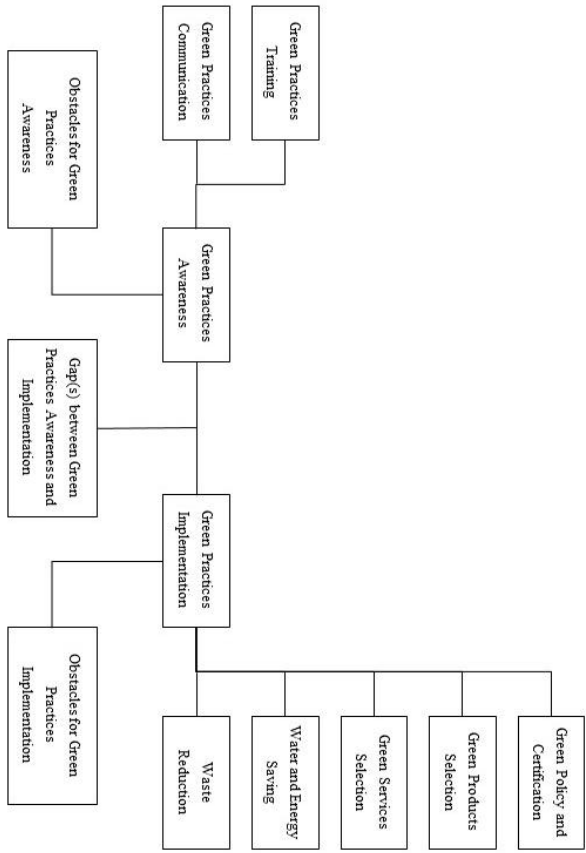
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Appendix

Interview Questions

Introduction: General Information

Contact Details

1. May I have your business card please?

Demographic Features

2. What is your nationality?

3. How about your age? Are you:

       a. Between 20-35 years old?

       b. Between 36-50 years old?

       c. Between 51-65 years old?

       d. Or over 65 years old?

Professional Background

4. When was (organization name) created?

5. For how long have you been working here?

6. For how many organizations have your worked before?

Educational Background (subjects studied and highest level of education)

7. Can you tell me something about your educational background?

Events Type

8. What type(s) of MICE events do you organize?

Events Facilities

9. What facilities do you have for events?

Events Organization

10. Can you explain how you organize the events, from the first contact to the last contact with the client and attendees?

Section 1: Awareness of Green Practices

Green Practices Perception

11. Can you give me your definition of green practices in MICE events?

MICE Industry

12. Regarding the MICE industry, can you tell me what you think about the application of green practices?

Event Organization

13. Concerning (organization name), what importance do you give to green aspects?

Staff

14. Now about the staff, how do you train them about green practices?

Client

15. Regarding the event clients, how are they aware of your green practices?

Attendees

16. And the event attendees, how do you inform them about your green practices?

Section 2: Implementation of Green Practices

Standards, Rules and Regulations

17. What certification do you have or are you looking for regarding green practices? Please explain.

Event Material

18. What do you provide to the attendees during events? (i.e. on the table)

Traceability (origin and evolution)

19. Concerning the event material and products, how do check their origin?

Suppliers Selection

20. About your service providers (Venue, F&B, Accommodation, Transport), how do you select them?

Water and Energy Efficiency

21. Concerning water and energy saving, can you explain how you operate during events? (i.e. lighting, air conditioner)

Waste Efficiency

22. And for the waste produced during events, how do you manage it? (i.e. recycling)

Section 3: Challenges

Problems faced

23. To implement, to carry out green practices in your events, what problems do you face?

Solutions

24. What solutions have you found?

Appendix

Certificate

CERTIFICATE OF PRESENTATION

This is to certify

Florence Anjali Garin

presented a paper entitled

"Awareness and Implementation of Green Practices in the Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) industry.

The Case of Phuket, Thailand"

at the

1st Dusit Gracious Hospitality and Tourism International Conference (DGHT)

"Gracious Hospitality and Tourism Towards 2030: The Thai Approach in the Global Context"

held on 29th November – 1st December 2017
proudly hosted by **Dusit Thani College**
at Dusit Thani College, Bangkok and Dusit Princess Srinakarin Hotel

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Vitae

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Educational Attainment

Degree	Name of Institution	Year of Graduation
BA Honours Events Management	University of the West of Scotland	2016
University Diploma of Technology, Social Careers, Option Urban Management	Institut Universitaire de Technologie Aix-Marseille	2014

List of Publications and Proceedings

Garin, F. A., & Jarumaneerat, T. (2017). Awareness and Implementation of Green Practices in the Meetings-, Incentives-, Conventions- and Exhibitions- (MICE) Industry: The Case of Phuket, Thailand. *Gracious Hospitality & Tourism International Conference 2017,16-27.*