

## **Current Status and Solutions for Developing Tourism in Phu An Bamboo Village in Binh Duong Province, Vietnam**



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**ABSTRACT:** Phu An Bamboo Village in Binh Duong Province is a nature reserve, aiming to preserve and develop bamboo - a typical cultural symbol of Vietnam. With its lush green landscape, rich ecosystem and educational value, Phu An Bamboo Village has great potential for developing ecotourism combining cultural and natural conservation. However, the current status of tourism development here still has many limitations, including incomplete infrastructure, weak promotion capacity, and insufficient participation of the local community. This research paper aims to comprehensively assess the current status of tourism in Phu An Bamboo Village, thereby proposing specific and feasible solutions for sustainable development of this area. The research also focuses on understanding the significance of Phu An Bamboo Village for the development of green tourism in Binh Duong Province, and at the same time recommends effective development strategies, such as improving service quality, enhancing promotion, and building appropriate support policies. The article not only contributes to the local socio-economic development but also raises public awareness about protecting natural resources, preserving culture and building a sustainable tourism image for Vietnam.

**KEYWORDS:** Ecotourism, Phu An Bamboo Village, natural resources.

### **1. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Tourism is a smokeless industry, a field that has brought a large source of revenue to the national economy, it not only brings a significant source of income to the country but also creates many jobs for society, which is a lever to promote the development of other economic sectors. Currently, Vietnam tourism is integrating into world tourism thanks to the support of infrastructure from many countries with developed tourism, due to the right investment of the state as well as many localities. Moreover, in Vietnam, the tourism potential is very large, the geographical location is favorable for traveling to connect with regions around the world, with rich and diverse resources.

Currently, travel businesses in Vietnam have been investing in tourism development in the country's development orientation. In particular, the Southeast region has been included in the key economic tourism development area by the departments, organizations and authorities. In statistics, the choice of weekend travel destinations is mainly to the Southeast provinces, of which Binh Duong stands out. Binh Duong is a place with a particularly important economic and social position. Natural resources are diverse and rich, and at the same time, this place has the potential for tourism development. It promises to be an interesting tourist destination, close to nature. When mentioning Binh Duong as a destination for day-trip activities in harmony with nature, it is impossible to ignore that place, which is Phu An Bamboo Village in Ben Cat town, Binh Duong province. Phu An Bamboo Village is the first bamboo ecosystem conservation area in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. The tourist area attracts many tourists to visit and have fun on weekends. Recently, there have been many directions for tourism development in this area, aiming to protect the local natural environment, increase economic efficiency, satisfy tourists' needs, contribute to job creation, increase income and improve the lives of local people.

### **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

- Collect and process documents related to the topic to write the theoretical basis of the research problem.
- Conduct a field trip to Phu An Bamboo Village tourist area and survey visitors to Phu An Bamboo Village to find out why they come to Phu An Bamboo Village. This survey was conducted randomly (307 people), within a period of one week (September 16 - 20, 2024).
- Collect data and practical evidence; analyze and evaluate the current status of tourism development in Phu An Bamboo Village to propose solutions for tourism development here.

### 3. Research content

#### 3.1. Introduction to Phu An bamboo village tourist area

Phu An Bamboo Village is located at 124, Road 744, Phu An Commune, Ben Cat District, Binh Duong Province, about 40km north of Ho Chi Minh City. Phu An Bamboo Village is both the first and largest bamboo conservation area in Vietnam as well as in Southeast Asia. This project was implemented in 2004. By 2008, the bamboo village was put into operation for tourism.

Phu An Bamboo Village is a large eco-tourism area of Ben Cat district, Binh Duong province. This is a conservation and development area for 300 bamboo species, including 17 different species, from all over Vietnam and the world such as Japan, China, ... This place gathers nearly 90% of Vietnam's bamboo species, including extremely rare species such as *Phyllostachys*, *Bambusa*, *Teinostachyum*, mai ong, vang ve, tre ivory .... Here, bamboo is grown according to the soil and climate of each species. Some bamboo is grown on high mounds, because they live in the highlands.

There are also many bushes grown around ponds and flooded swamps, because they live in the plains. But there are also types of bamboo that cannot be grown here (due to the characteristics and climate of each region), so some bamboo samples will be dried and stored in the museum for research purposes. Therefore, Phu An bamboo village eco-tourism area is divided into 2 areas: outdoor area and indoor research area.

+ Outdoor area – bamboo conservation area: This is the main area of the bamboo village with an area of up to 200 acres dedicated to growing and preserving special bamboo varieties of our country.

+ Research area: This is a dedicated area for students and researchers to learn in-depth information about bamboo from how to grow and breed. Coming to the research area, you will witness interesting products made from bamboo as well as learn about this plant through images and documentaries.

Phu An Bamboo Village is currently an ideal green tourist destination in Binh Duong, with airy space, fresh air and vibrant natural landscapes promising an exciting weekend picnic.

Phu An Bamboo Village was established in 1999 based on the idea of Dr. Diep Thi My Hanh - a lecturer at the University of Natural Sciences in Ho Chi Minh City. Phu An Bamboo Village originated from the project "Elimination of hunger and poverty on the basis of conservation of natural resources", with the main purpose of preserving the biodiversity of Vietnamese bamboo, along with many other endangered species in the Southeast. In 2003, the Rhone Alpes Regional Council decided to fund the project with 596,000 euros (about 13 billion VND) for 6 years (2003-2008). Since then, the project has been officially formed by the cooperation of 4 units: Binh Duong province, Ho Chi Minh City University of Natural Sciences, Rhone Alpes region and Pilat Natural Garden - French Republic. In addition to the sponsorship from the Rhone Alpes region, Binh Duong province decided to grant 10 hectares of land in Phu An commune and contribute an additional VND 1.5 billion to build Phu An Bamboo Village. Up to now, Phu An Bamboo Village has more than 2,000 bamboo bushes, bamboo, mai, vầu... of 300 samples of 17 species collected from all over the country. The collections are divided by region: Southeast, Mekong Delta, Central Highlands, North. Each bamboo bush is marked with the coordinates of finding, time, name of the collector and this work will continue in the coming time to build Phu An Bamboo Village into the largest and most complete "bamboo museum" in Vietnam and Southeast Asia.

With the idea of protecting natural resources to reduce poverty and improve the value of bamboo in the community, this center not only contributes to protecting the biodiversity of Vietnamese bamboo but also researches and transfers technology on the application of bamboo to treat water, soil, green bare hills, create raw materials for processing products, increase the economic value of bamboo, and help escape poverty. Thanks to the use of bamboo from Phu An bamboo village provided by Dr. My Hanh to clean wastewater after the tanning process and reuse it, Saigon Tan Tec Company has significantly reduced production costs. In particular, in 2010, thanks to the use of bamboo cleaning technology by Dr. My Hanh, this company was awarded the second prize by the Organizing Committee of the "Energy Efficiency Award" of the Federal Republic of Germany for its successful and consistent implementation of advanced solutions in the field of using energy and environmental technology. According to the award organizers, the solution applied by Saigon Tan Tec has helped save 40% of energy consumption and reduce up to 2,700 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions into the environment. In addition, the application of new technology also helps this enterprise reduce 50% of water and 15% of chemicals consumed in the production process. Phu An Bamboo Village also creates many opportunities for local women to escape poverty from bamboo products and tourism. More importantly, local people have understood that protecting the ecological environment is protecting their own lives.

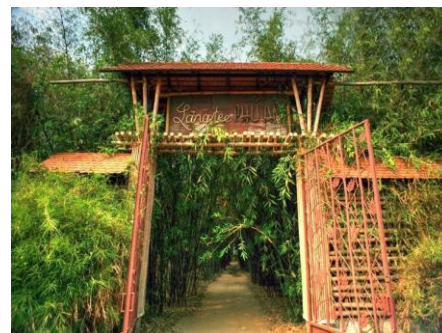


Figure 1. Phu an Bamboo Village  
Source: Internet

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### 3.2. Conditions for developing Phu An bamboo village tourist area

Favorable:

Binh Duong's socio-economic development is a driving force for tourism development. People's lives are increasingly improved, and entertainment needs are constantly improving. Binh Duong tourism is improving the quality of tourism products. Regional linkages for sustainable tourism development. Focus on exploiting the tourist market from Ho Chi Minh City and the Southeast provinces. Developing garden eco-tourism, riverside tourism, developing cultural tourism, developing traditional craft village tourism products, Strengthen tourism promotion activities.

Phu an Bamboo Village with its potential for biodiversity, unique tourism resources, geographical location, convenient transportation from provinces in the region and the whole country, can be an attractive tourist destination for domestic and foreign tourists. Tourism development in the bamboo village is being focused on, tourism infrastructure is being invested in and is calling for domestic and foreign investors to be very interested in Phu An Bamboo Village tourist area.

Hard:

+ Facilities, especially the hotel and motel system of Phu An Bamboo Village are still limited. Currently, there are no motels or hotels in Phu An Bamboo Village. However, around this area, there are many motels and hotels invested by private individuals to serve tourists from far away who come to visit and relax. Dining facilities are also limited. There is a restaurant, but it does not serve regularly, but mainly accepts pre-orders. Here are mainly small-scale snack or beverage shops. Visitors who come here and want to eat and drink at the restaurant must contact and book in advance. The dishes here are usually family-style, rustic dishes.

+ Entertainment: There are no entertainment activities organized by Lang Tre tourist area. This is often the address for picnics and camping trips of friends and groups; organizing folk games, or traditional activities, group/team activities, etc.



Figure 2. A corner displaying tourism products of Phu An bamboo village

+ Sales services: The stalls are still few and poor in variety. The products are mainly handicrafts made from bamboo, such as bamboo handicrafts, activated carbon, bamboo flutes, etc., which have not really attracted the attention of tourists, stimulating their spending to increase tourism revenue.

+ Regarding human resources: human resources are relatively small. Phu an Bamboo Village has about 15 people working regularly, including 4 researchers, 5 technicians, 4 farmers and the Commune Women's Union participating in activities. In addition, there is a group of students who come to work irregularly and depending on the needs.

### 3.3. Current status of tourism development in Phu An bamboo village

Along with the general economic change, Bamboo Village tourism has also changed, the number of tourists tends to increase day by day.

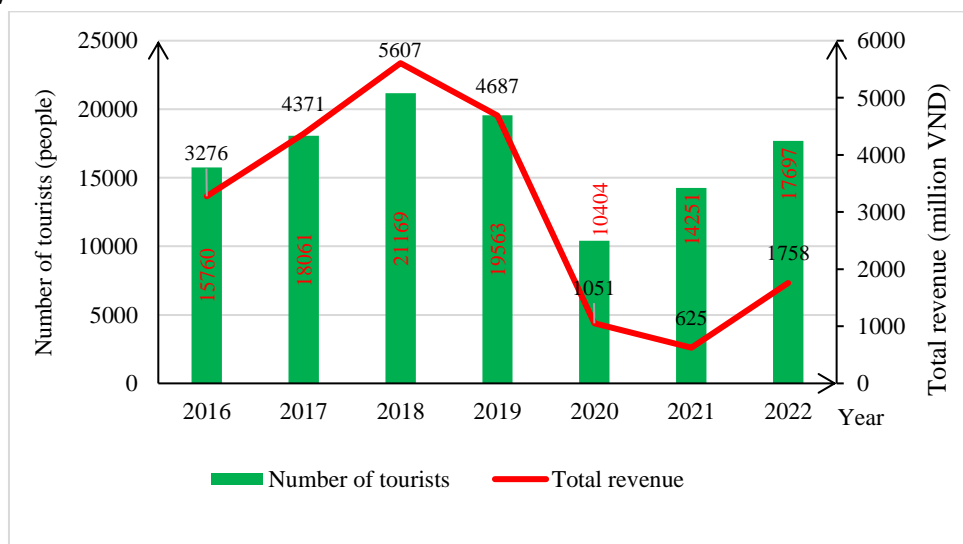


Figure 2. Number of tourists and revenue of Phu An bamboo village tourist area

Source: Phu An Bamboo Village Tourist Area Management

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The number of tourists coming to Phu An bamboo village increased continuously from 2016 to 2018, but in 2019, due to the Covid 19 pandemic occurring at the end of the year, the number of tourists decreased compared to 2018. In 2020, the Covid 19 pandemic broke out in Binh Duong, the whole province was quarantined for a long time, so the number of tourists decreased sharply. In the following years (2021, 2022), tourism in Phu An bamboo village has grown again.

Tourists coming to Bamboo Village are mainly domestic tourists, coming for the day, with many different purposes.

Visitors to Phu An Bamboo Village

| Visitors to Phu An Bamboo Village    | Number (people) | Ratio (%) |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Source                               |                 |           |
| International guests                 | 7               | 2.3       |
| Domestic guests                      | 300             | 97.7      |
| Local customers                      | 235             | 78.3      |
| Reason group                         |                 |           |
| Sightseeing, relaxing, culinary, ... | 92              | 30.0      |
| Study, research                      | 27              | 8.8       |
| Participate in events                | 171             | 55.7      |
| Other                                | 17              | 5.5       |

**Source:** Author's survey

Tourists coming to Bamboo Village are mainly domestic tourists (domestic tourists account for 97.7%, intra-provincial tourists account for 78.3% of domestic tourists), coming during the day, with the purpose of participating in event activities such as team activities, clubs, conferences, Party admissions... accounting for 55.7%. Coming in second is the group of tourists coming for the purpose of sightseeing, relaxing, enjoying cuisine, or taking pictures, accounting for 30%. The group visiting for the purpose of studying and researching accounts for 8.8%. Among the study and research group, mainly students come to research bamboo varieties, tourism development, learn about the environment, ... A small number of remaining visitors come for reasons such as going to exercise (local people), going to buy bamboo, bamboo products, ...

Thus, there are not many visitors to the Bamboo Village for tourism purposes. This proves that Phu An Bamboo Village has not really attracted tourists. Phu An Bamboo Village is only known as an address for activities and meetings due to its green, spacious and airy space, and low cost. This means that Phu An Bamboo Village needs to further promote tourism development, meeting the needs of tourists for rest, entertainment, and recreation, especially tourism promotion. Currently, Phu An Bamboo Village promotes tourism through the main website of the bamboo village: ecobambou-phuan.org, the social networking site Facebook: Visit Phu An Bamboo Village, operating on travel companies such as Vntrip.vn, SCC travel, ... promoting tourism to tourists visiting the bamboo village quickly and effectively. Bamboo Village focuses on innovating forms of tourism information promotion, propaganda, and tourism image promotion on mass media such as: Binh Duong Radio & Television Station, Binh Duong Newspaper, Ho Chi Minh City Television Station, on some channels of Vietnam Television Station. Carry out tourism image promotion and video screening to promote tourist areas, attractions, and public places in the province; Organize programs to propagate, promote, and introduce bamboo village tourism for youth union members, students, and pupils at universities.

Regarding the number of tourists, tourism revenue is also proportional to the number of tourists. From 2016 to 2018, Phu An Bamboo Village's tourism revenue continuously increased. In 2021 alone, although the number of tourists has increased again, Phu An Bamboo Village's tourism revenue still decreased, because Binh Duong province has implemented tourism stimulus, so most tourism activities are free of charge.

The number of tourists and tourism revenue of Phu An bamboo village has been reflecting the development of this tourist area. However, compared to the number of tourists and tourism revenue of the whole Binh Duong province, tourism in Phu An bamboo village is still at a modest level.

The ratio of visitors and tourism revenue of Phu An bamboo village compared to the whole Binh Duong province

| Year | % of tourists compared to the whole province | % of revenue compared to the whole province |
|------|--|---|
| 2016 | 1.0  | 1.3   |
| 2017 | 1.1  | 1.3   |
| 2018 | 1.3  | 1.3   |
| 2019 | 1.1  | 0.9   |

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|      |     |      |
|------|-----|------|
| 2020 | 0.8 | 4.2  |
| 2021 | 1.5 | 8.9  |
| 2022 | 1.6 | 10.1 |

(Data source calculated from Phu Anh Bamboo Village documents and Binh Duong Province Statistical Yearbook, 2018 and 2022)

Phu An Bamboo Village Tourist Area is gradually being invested in and developed to enrich service and tourism activities. Currently, the number of tourists coming to Phu An Bamboo Village is not much compared to general tourism in the province (accounting for less than 2%), so the percentage of revenue compared to tourism in the whole province is still modest: from 2019 onwards, revenue was always 1.3% or less, but from 2020 to now, revenue has increased significantly. In 2022, it reached 10.1%, while tourists only accounted for about 1.6%. This is because Phu An Bamboo Village has increased service activities, such as entrance tickets, food and beverage, organizing events, diversifying tourism products, etc.

### 3.4. Solutions for tourism development in Phu An bamboo village

#### 3.4.1. Solutions for tourism promotion

To promote Lang Tre tourist area, it is necessary to use a variety of communication channels such as building a professional website, developing mobile applications and effectively exploiting social networking platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok. Cooperating with TV channels, YouTube influencers and travel bloggers will help increase brand awareness. In addition, organizing events such as bamboo festivals, local food fairs or folk activities will attract tourists' attention. On the edge, linking with other tourist areas in Binh Duong province to establish a package tour route, and closely coordinating with the Tourism Association and media agencies will be a strategic step.

It is necessary to publish quality publications with detailed information about Phu An Bamboo Village tourism, introducing images of people and tourism products to tourists. Promoting Phu An Bamboo Village tourism in particular and Binh Duong tourism in major domestic and foreign markets needs to be done regularly and continuously. Strengthening relationships with press agencies, radio and television stations to support promotional activities and propaganda on television, social networks, newspapers, leaflets, etc. so that people know, learn, etc. Take advantage of opportunities to organize cultural and sports events, etc. to have conditions to promote tourism products of the tourist area.

#### 3.4.2 . Solutions for tourism service development

Diversifying products and improving service quality are the core factors to attract visitors. Tourist areas can develop more independent experience services such as learning to make bamboo handicrafts, planting bamboo or organizing entertainment activities, construction complexes that recreate activities, living, cultural spaces, folk games ... In addition, it is necessary to build cultural tourism products combined with local cuisine, bringing experiences with a strong local character. Developing accommodation services such as homestays or resorts close to nature will increase visitors' length of stay. To ensure quality, staff need to be well-trained, serve professionally, and meet the diverse needs of customers.

#### 3.4 .3. Infrastructure upgrade solutions

In recent years, the economic growth rate is fast, social life has been improved and enhanced, leading to people's increasing demands for quality and convenience.

- Build accommodation facilities to serve tourism, build places for tourists to stay overnight and rest at the tourist area.
- Develop complete and synchronous transportation, ensure connectivity between regions and the whole country, meet the requirements of economic and social development, strengthen national defense and security in the area. The traffic system of Phu An Bamboo Village tourist area has been completely built, connecting from the center of Ho Chi Minh City to the tourist area, with spacious, clean roads, convenient and safe traffic.

- Build parking lots to serve tourists well. The parking lots are spacious, have good visibility and are airy, with security guards to support easy parking and ensure traffic safety.

#### 3.4 .4. Solutions for human resources in tourism activities

- Invest in and increase the workforce in Phu An Bamboo Village. Improve the quality of the workforce in terms of quantity and quality.

- Applying new technology to develop tourism human resources.
- Retraining and fostering of managers and workers in the industry on professional skills and service attitude.
- International cooperation in human resource development, enhancing training and development of human resources abroad.

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- The team of tourism managers and supervisors are trained in tourism, especially in knowledge of ecotourism and environmental protection.

- Tourism workers are trained and educated in professional skills, foreign languages, and information technology.

- It is necessary to continuously improve the capacity and professional qualifications of staff working in the tourism industry in Lang Tre Phu An. Conduct a survey to classify the professional qualifications of all staff and workers currently working in the tourism industry in Lang Tre and throughout Binh Duong province. The survey results will allow for a specific training plan with different levels of professional qualifications to best meet the requirements of tourism activities.

### **3.4 .5. Solutions on investment capital and attracting investment in tourist areas**

Increasing investment capital from many sources, calling for investment capital from the government, businesses, and individuals. Prioritizing investment capital to develop infrastructure systems and technical facilities serving in tourist areas such as transportation systems, electricity systems, and water supply and drainage systems is very necessary because it not only serves the purpose of tourism development but also improves the living conditions of residents.

Reform and simplify administrative procedures to attract domestic and foreign investment, creating all conditions to attract investment capital.

### **3.4 .6. Solutions for conservation and development of bamboo species**

Village is designed in an open space with two bamboo museum areas and a research area. The space is divided reasonably for visitors to visit and research.

Prepare the best fire prevention and fighting work. The fire broke out and was promptly extinguished, preventing it from spreading, ensuring the conservation of many precious bamboo species of Vietnam.

Bamboo Village has optimal methods for increasing crop productivity, improving the quantity and quality of bamboo, good bamboo harvesting methods and sustainable bamboo garden management techniques.

### **3.4. 7. Environmental protection**

In the development process, tourism activities have a direct impact on environmental resources, both natural and human environments. - Promote propaganda on awareness of preserving and protecting tourism resources and environment. Build awareness of protecting tourism resources and environment from those who directly play a role in tourism development.

- Mobilize tourists, local residents and communities to participate in cleaning up the tourism environment through appropriate programs, promptly remedying acts of environmental pollution from tourism activities.

- Design a system of environmental protection education documents, organize training courses to raise awareness and propaganda and education activities for the community. Coordinate with the education sector to include environmental protection education in the main or extracurricular programs of general education. Increase investment in bamboo conservation and protection to sustainably develop natural tourism resources for tourism development.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

Phu An Bamboo Village Tourism has achieved remarkable results in attracting tourists, preserving ecological values and promoting indigenous culture. However, the inherent potential of this place has not been exploited optimally. Currently, the infrastructure is limited, the human resources serving tourism have not been properly trained, and tourism products are not yet diverse enough to create a distinct mark.

To further promote the value of Phu An Bamboo Village, it is necessary to focus on investing in upgrading infrastructure, improving the quality of human resources and developing more creative and attractive tourism products. In addition, the combination of conservation and development, along with support from the government, businesses and local communities, will help Phu An Bamboo Village affirm its position as a prominent tourist destination in Binh Duong province and the whole country.

With these efforts, Phu An Bamboo Village not only contributes to promoting the local economy but also becomes a symbol of the harmony between sustainable tourism development and preserving traditional values.

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