

ACTIVITY OF CLMV COUNTRIES (CAMBODIA, LAOS, MYANMAR, VIETNAM) AS A FACTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOURISM ECONOMY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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Abstract: The accession of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam, as CLMV, to ASEAN in the second half of the 1990s, strengthened the organisation, which is now an economic competitor even to the European Union. However, the positive trends in this regard are believed to have been determined by the establishment of The Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program GMS-ECP in 1992, with the participation of six countries: China, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. Following the establishment of the Mekong Cross-Border Sub-region in 1992, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam, formed an association of CLMV countries in 1999, seeking joint economic development, contributing to the functioning of tourism as one of the key industries. There are not many publications regarding CLMV, most studies containing information about CLMV concern ASEAN. The study prepared by the authors is the first review study on the organization of tourism by CLMV countries and seeks medical tourism, economic cooperation, trade, transport, and development gap. The collected documents and other source materials were analyzed and assessed. Information on CLMV was considered to be limited due to the informal status of the arrangement.

Keywords: CLMV, ASEAN, Southeast Asia, tourism, political summits, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam

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INTRODUCTION

Due to the charming landscapes, favorable climate and many anthropogenic values, the countries: Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam, as the most economically backward in Southeast Asia, have united into one organizational entity, CLMV, intended to reverse previous negative trends and lead to a dynamic economic development. The study presents the activities of these countries, along with an indication of the correlation between joint activities and the development of tourism. There are just a few scientific studies in Vietnamese and English-language literature regarding tourism in the countries associated with the CLMV. Most of them are guides, travel reports or blogs. They include: Armbricht et al., 2008; Nguyen Ngoc Bich (ed.), 2016; Law et al., 2022; Thang, 2018; Moska, 2021; Moska, 2023.

After the unsuccessful establishment of the ASEA (Association of South East Asia) in 1961 and the successful formation of ASEAN in 1967, it took some 30 years for the more backward states in this part of the world to start uniting into associations, due to the multifaceted barriers existing in the South East Asian region (Moska and Moska 2022:183-184; Skopiec, 2011: 214-215). The opportunity to benefit from the development path and to participate in the structures of ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) is considered one of the keys to the success of the CLMV countries, with the unwritten leadership of this association in the form of Vietnam (Thanh, 2016:147-166; Sluggish recovery, 2021; Vietnam leads, 2021). Table 1 outlines the origins of the CLMV, indicating the important role of the ASEAN and GMS-ECP associations in this regard.

CLMV status

The CLMV, without a management structure, adopted the organisational status of country-led summits and also

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conferences under the leadership of the ministers of economy, finance, transport, agriculture, education and tourism. During its 23 years of existence, tourism has proved to be one of the core activities of the CLMV countries, contributing to their economic development. Due to the dynamic activities, the permanent activity in the implementation of successive solutions and the variability of management, the study adopts a chronological analysis of the activities aimed at the proper organisation of tourism within the CLMV. The CLMV provides a mechanism for open cooperation, promoting the virtues and potential cooperation opportunities of individual member countries and a channel for support from other ASEAN countries and development partners for CLMV countries. It is also a forum for coordinating positions to protect the interests of CLMV countries in the economic integration process with ASEAN and other Asian partners.

Table 1. Genesis of the CLMV (Source: Gin, 2004:186; Tarling, 1999: 287; Association of Southeast, 2022; Celebrating ASEAN, 2017)

	Event	Members	Date
1.	ASA (ASEA)	Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand	1961
2.	ASEAN - 5	Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand	1967
3.	ASEAN - 6	Brunei Darussalam, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand	1984
4.	GMS-ECP	China, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam	1992
5.	ASEAN - 7	Brunei Darussalam, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam	1995
6.	ASEAN - 9	Brunei Darussalam, Philippines, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam	1997
7.	ASEAN - 10	Brunei Darussalam, Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam	1999
8.	CLMV	Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam	1999
9.	ASEAN Plus Six	Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Philippines, India, Indonesia, Japan, Cambodia, South Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam	2005

As a general rule, CLMV Summits to address major issues and directions for cooperation are held annually. Six working groups, related to trade, investment, transport, information technology, human resources, agriculture, economy and tourism, have been established to pursue areas of cooperation.

Development of the CLMV (1999-2022)

The functioning of the CLMV in ASEAN structures was considered as a second-speed membership, similar to the conditions in the European Union. However, the historical difference of the CLMV countries from the rest of Southeast Asia and the economic development gap, due to the prospect of dynamic development and the need to ensure security in the area, did not prevent the pursuit of a unified structure for this part of the world (Soja, 2017: 45).

The countries, operating under a common banner since 1999, have taken many decisions at so-called CLMV Summits. The first event of this type was the CLMV Summit in Vientiane (Laos) on 27 November 2004, the organisation of which was agreed at the ASEAN-Japan Summit in Tokyo in December 2003. In Laos, the so-called *Vientiane Declaration* was adopted on strengthening cooperation and economic integration among CLMV countries in the framework of: trade, investment, agriculture, industry, energy, transport, information technology, tourism and human resource development. During the Eleventh ASEAN Countries Meeting and the First East Asia Summit, the Second CLMV Countries Conference was held in Kuala Lumpur in December 2005, where details on the implementation of the Vientiane arrangements were clarified and principles of cooperation with Thailand were agreed. Also, the Third CLMV Summit was held on the margins of the ASEAN meeting, in 2007 in Cebu (Philippines) (Két nói, 2016; Backgrounder: Cambodia, 2008; Calendar of Meetings, 2004; Tổng quan hợp, 2016). The 4th Summit (Hanoi, Vietnam, 06.11.2008) was dedicated to strengthening cooperation within the CLMV and with other countries in the region, primarily in: trade, transport, agriculture, tourism, vocational education. Cooperation with the economic organisations of Southeast Asia, especially ASEAN, was identified as a priority. There was also support for the region's economic corridor initiatives, such as: East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC), Southern Economic Corridor (SEC) and Central Economic Corridor (CEC) (Joint Statement, 2008). During the fifth CLMV summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia (16.11.2010), arrangements were made to organise working meetings on cooperation: trade (first meeting of CLMV finance ministers in August 2010 in Da Nang, Vietnam), communications, agriculture, human resource management and tourism (Joint Statement, 2010).

The 6th CLMV Summit was held on 12 March 2013 in Vientiane. The leaders of the countries reiterated earlier declarations from previous meetings, raising the need to reduce the development gap within ASEAN and CLMV. They agreed to jointly intensify activities in the spheres of transport, agriculture, tourism, human resource management and encouraging private sector activities in the implementation of CLMV projects.

It was found that the disparity in tourism between ASEAN and CLMV countries started to decrease as early as 2005 and consistently in the following years (Southeast Asian Economic, 2013; 6th Cambodia-Lao, 2022; Joint Statement, 2013). The 7th CLMV Summit held in Naypyidaw, Myanmar, in June 2015, pointed to the need for bilateral economic agreements between CLMV members, optimisation of cross-border economic corridors, creation of incentives for investment in agriculture, industry and energy, and tourism (Cooperation Summit, 2022).

The eighth CLMV Summit 'Shaping the Future and Caring for the Present', was attended by the Secretary-General of ASEAN, the UN Under-Secretary-General, the Executive Secretary of ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) and representatives of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), took place on 16 October 2016 in Hanoi. The arrangements focused on the development of communications by: accelerating the construction of connectivity and economic corridors (north-south, east-west and south); the construction of the Vientiane-Hanoi Expressway; and the development of a feasibility study for the Yangon (Myanmar)- Muong Khoa (Vietnam)-Hanoi route

(Eighth CLMV Cooperation, 2016). The 9th CLMV Summit held on 15 June 2018, for the first time in Bangkok (Thailand), was led by a Cambodian delegation. Participants at the meeting reaffirmed the need to further narrow the development gap between CLMV countries and the rest of ASEAN, also declaring cooperation with China, South Korea and Japan (Cambodian PM Summarises, 2022). The meeting was preceded by the CLMV Regional Conference *Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals*, also held in Bangkok in March 2018.

At the 10th and 11th CLMV summit-videoconferences held on 9 December 2020 simultaneously by the Lao and Vietnamese governments, the individual member states committed to intensifying economic cooperation, including but not limited to regional linkages, improving economic infrastructure and developing economic corridors. The effective implementation of CLMV plans was highlighted through the smooth functioning of the associations: ASEAN and GMS (10th CLMV Summit, 2022; 10th CLMV Summit, 2020).

The CLMV's activities point to the leading role of Vietnam and Cambodia as major players in the association. While addressing a number of fundamental economic and social problems, economic security, counter-terrorism and drug trafficking, the CLMV does not engage in global problems due to its participation in ASEAN structures. Thanks to its dynamic economic development, stable political situation (Myanmar not included), membership of ASEAN and CLMV, it is estimated that Vietnam will become a member of the G20 in 2050 (Soja, 2017:44-69).

Table 2. Summits and main provisions of the CLMV¹

lp.	CLMV peak/place	Date	Decisions, declarations
1.	I Summit/Vientiane	27.11.2004	Vientiane Declaration
2.	II Summit/Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)	10.12.2005	Implementation of the Vientiane Declaration
3.	III Summit/Cebu	12.01.2007	Continuation of the Malaysian declaration
4.	IV Summit/Hanoi	06.11.2008	Declaration of Cooperation with Southeast Asian Economic Organisations
5.	V Summit/Phnom Penh	16.11.2010	Continuation of the Vietnamese declaration
6.	VI Summit/Vientiane	12.03.2013	Declaration on reducing the development gap of CLMV countries
7.	VII Summit/Naypyidaw	22.06.2015	Declaration to make CLMV the world's leading tourist destination
8.	VIII Summit/Hanoi	16.10.2016	Declaration on the construction of expressways linking CLMV countries
9.	IX Summit/Bangkok	15.06.2018	Declaration of cooperation with China, South Korea and Japan
10.	X summit/Laos (videoconference)	09.12.2020	Increasing the combined capacity of the CLMV
11.	XI Summit (CLV)/Hanoi (videoconference)	09.12.2020	Declaration to strengthen cooperation within: Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam

RESULTS AN DISCUSSIONS

Tourism as a core activity of CLMV countries

In 2011, GDP growth in the CLMV group was 14.1 per cent (CLMV Economic Ministers, 2022), one of the higher rates in the world. The joint operation of the four countries under the CLMV and later also the CLMVT (jointly with Thailand) and two Chinese provinces (Yunnan and Guangxi) is believed to have become one of the factors behind the more than 20-fold increase in tourism investment in the Southeast Asian region, from US\$20 trillion in 2000 to US\$400 trillion in 2019, as reflected in Figure 1. It should be recognised that the establishment of one intra-regional cooperation mechanism in the form of CLMV has contributed to narrowing the development gap, improving competitiveness, promoting growth and economic integration of the four sub-regional countries.

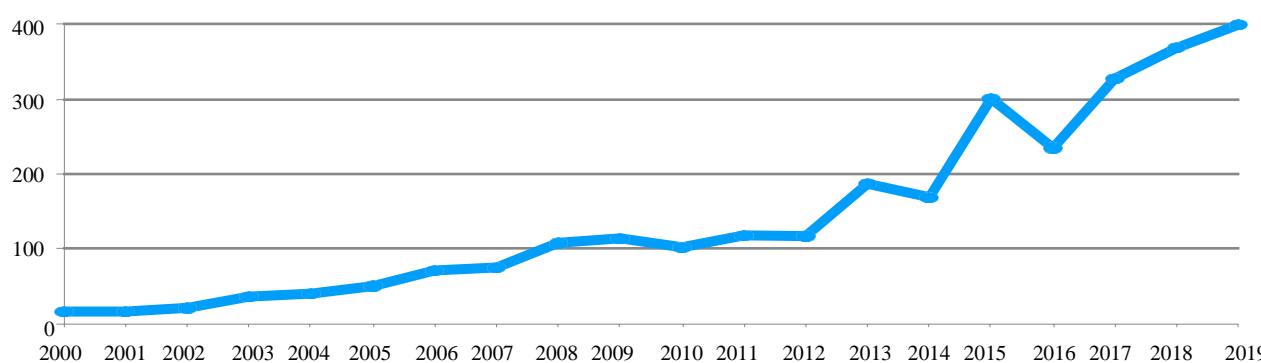


Figure 1. Investments in the tourism sector in the CLMV, from 2000 to 2019 (in USD trillions) (Source: Sihabutr et al., 2021, 1174)

Since 1992, tourism has become one of the highest priorities of the *Greater Mekong Subregion* countries (CLMV, together with Yunnan Province and Thailand) with the support of international organisations, subsequently included in the ACMECS (Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya- Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy) prepared at Thailand's initiative in April 2003. On the other hand, in 1996, at the initiative of ASEAN, 10 Southeast Asian countries and China took part in a joint economic venture (ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Cooperation - AMBDC), which later (2000 - 2001) declaratively indicated the creation of joint tourism projects (Lim, 2008:17-46).

¹ Kết nối, 2016; Backgrounder: Cambodia, 2008; Calendar of Meetings, 2004; Tổng quan hợp, 2016; Joint Statement, 2008; Southeast Asian Economic, 2013; 6th Cambodia-Lao, 2022; Joint Statement, 2013; Cooperation Summit, 2022; Eighth CLMV Cooperation, 2016; Cambodian PM Summarises, 2022; 10th CLMV Summit, 2022; 10th CLMV Summit, 2020.

In 1994, tourism was added to the core business of the GMS - ECP, in addition to transport, telecommunications, energy, human resources, environment and trade and investment, forming the GMS Tourism Working Group (GMS TWG). The year 2002 marked the end of a 10-year period of strategy implementation, with ten flagship programmes, among them tourism in the form of the GSM Tourism Development (Ishida, 2008:115-140).

Financing tourism in the CLMV

The tourism industry, which is developing thanks to the joint decisions of the CLMV countries, strengthening cooperation with other countries in the region and financial and economic organisations, has also been assisted by East Asian countries and banking sector institutions. However, Korean, Japanese and Chinese international policies, among others, have played a major role in shaping the development of the industry in Southeast Asia. The Republic of Korea had already adhered to the principle of investing in CLMV tourism since 1990, recognising it as a factor of dynamic economic growth, and since 2000, selected destinations in CLMV countries (Ha Long in Vietnam, Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Bagan in Myanmar) have been recognised as major tourist destinations in Korea. In 2006, Korean tourists became the foreign group most likely to visit Cambodia and the second (behind the Chinese) to travel to Vietnam.

In the post-2000 period, Japan has been one of the largest donors to tourism development in CLMV countries, supporting, among other things, tourism development in Laos, due to the Lao declaration to join the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) in 2008, and has invested US\$68 million in tourism development in Myanmar during the same period.

By becoming part of the GMS, the tourism industry also began to provide an opportunity for China to build border relations with CLMV countries. In 2004, as part of the CLMV's external support, Vietnam received US\$246 million from China, for such things as hospitality, communications and tourism development (Cheong, 2008:262-297; Uchida, 2008:209-261; Hongmei, 2008:171-208). The CLMV countries also received support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the Mekong Tourism Development Project (GMS) to support the poorer parts of the region became part of the solution.

In 2021, ADB has allocated US\$1.7 million for tourism recovery in Southeast Asia after the COVID-19 pandemic, with funding for local entrepreneurs and the creation of digital platforms. And in 2022 in Cambodia, US\$3.7 million, with a US\$3 million share from the Japanese Support Fund, for a project (*Community-Based Tourism COVID-19 Recovery Project*) for tourism development of the historic Preah Vihear Temple in Preah Vihear Province and Phnom Da Temple in Takeo Province. From Japan's special fund for the ADB-GMS programme, in the period 1993 - 2000, for tourism in the CLMV: US\$0.6 million for the Mekong/Lancang River Tourism Planning Study; US\$1.25 million for tourism skills development in the Greater Mekong Subregion; US\$0.6 million for the preparation of the Mekong/Lancang River Tourism Infrastructure Development Project (Lim, 2008:17-46; New ADB Facility, 2021; ADB Approves, 2022). CLMV countries, have also become a natural beneficiary of funds raised for tourism development by ASEAN. In the period 2011-2015, based on the ASEAN Strategic Transport Plan (ASTP), an infrastructure fund with an initial capital of US\$500 million was established with the support of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and local financial institutions (primarily ADB) (Chheang, 2013:67). Under the SWITCH-Asia Project (2007-2022), with 90% participation from the European Union, €4 million was invested in Laos to implement tourism projects in CLMV countries. The Luang Prabang Handle With Care (Sustainable Tourism Destinations) project, worth €1.8 million, was implemented between 2016 and 2019, and a project titled: SUSTOUR Laos (Promoting Sustainable Tourism by Integrating Small and Medium Enterprises into Sustainable Supply Chains and Raising Consumer Awareness) is being implemented between 2020 and 2024 for more than €2.2 million (SWITCH-Asia, 2022).

Promotion of and through tourism

The implementation of tourism promotion development into CLMV joint activity plans should be discussed in the context of all summits of this association, as well as economic meetings at ministerial and business levels and tourism conferences and workshops. The ASEAN Sectoral Integration Protocol for Tourism, signed on 29.11.2004 in Vientiane, includes, among other things, indications of promotional activities to support tourism development in CLMV countries (ASEAN Sectoral Integration, 2004). Joint proposals for the promotion of tourism of CLMV countries amounted to, among other things, the organisation of: tourism workshops (e.g. a *CLMV Tourism Promotion Project* marketing workshop was organised in Hanoi in 2009, with the additional participation of Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand as well as the ASEAN office and the Mekong Tourism Coordination Centre); tourism conferences (e.g. International Tourism Investment Promotion Conferences "Four Countries - One Destination" in Vietnam 2011, Cambodia 2013, Myanmar 2015 and Myanmar 2016) (Regional Workshop, 2009). Binding decisions on tourism promotion within the CLMV were made at the ministerial level, analysing the implementation of previous commitments. Thus, in September 2012, the tourism ministers of the CLMV countries, at a conference in Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam), assessed the cooperation to date on tourism promotion. In December 2013 in Bokor (Cambodia), during a meeting of CLMV countries' tourism ministers, a joint CLMV tourism cooperation plan for 2013-15 was signed, focusing, among other things, on the exchange of information on tourism planning and marketing. In 2016 in Yangon, during the CLMV Tourism Forum "Four Countries One Goal", arrangements were made for joint promotion of tourism and tourism products. On the other hand, a key meeting of tourism ministers of CLMV countries to approve the CLMV Tourism Action Programme for the period 2019-2021 in the context of, inter alia, tourism promotion was organised in 2019, on the margins of the ACMECS Tourism Summit, in Chiang Rai (Thailand) (A new push, 2012; Hợp tác Du, 2012; Việt Nam tham, 2019; Chheang, 2013, 53-54; Joint Statement, 2013; CLMV floating world, 2013; Tăng cường hợp, 2016; Tăng cường kết, 2016; CLMV Nations, 2016).

Communication solutions

Arrangements for joint CLMV activities required the implementation of communication arrangements, which were

established at successive summits, ministerial meetings, conferences, trade fairs and business meetings and also in relation to the activities of CLMV-related organisations. Particularly important in this regard was the 5th CLMV Summit in 2010 in Phnom Penh, where measures were implemented to facilitate travel between CLMV countries and also the 7th Summit in Naypyidaw in 2015, indicating the need to optimise cross-border economic corridors, and the eighth meeting at this level in 2016 in Hanoi, where arrangements were made to develop communications by: accelerating the construction of connectivity and economic corridors (north-south, east-west and south); the construction of the Vientiane-Hanoi Expressway and the development of a feasibility study for the Yangon-Muong Khoa-Hanoi route. However, as early as 2000, the GMS decided to create three cross-border "corridors", including tourism (Joint Statement, 2010; Cooperation Summit, 2022; Eighth CLMV, 2016; Ishida, 2008:115-140).

In the following years, the role of guiding joint communication solutions began to be filled by ministers of economy, transport and tourism, organisers of trade fairs and conferences and also representatives of East Asian business. Namely, in 2016 in Yangon during the CLMV Forum "Four countries one destination", with the participation of tourism business and banks from each country (Central Bank of Myanmar, Bank for Investment and Development of Vietnam, Hoang Anh Gia Lai Corporation), many agreements were signed between airlines and travel agencies, and the joint recommendations of the Forum focused on river and sea tourism (Tăng cường hợp, 2016; Tăng cường kết, 2016; CLMV Nations, 2016).

In September 2017, the fourth meeting of the CLMV countries' tourism ministers took place in Ho Chi Minh City during the International Travel Expo, where tourism was assessed as the engine that drives their economies. The will to continue the 2012 CLMV project *Four Countries - One Goal* was emphasised. However, most attention was paid to the need to properly organise air transport between the CLMV countries, especially the places under the UNESCO umbrella (Ross, 2017). As part of the assessment of opportunities to undertake transport cooperation between India and CLMV and Thailand, 2018 identified tourism as a core component of joint activity (Strengthening Transport, 2018).

During the 2019 CLMV Tourism Ministers' Meeting, on the margins of the ACMECS Tourism Summit, the ACMECS Tourism Action Plan for 2019-2023 and the CLMV Tourism Action Programme for the period 2019-2021 were approved in Chiang Rai, Thailand. The plans were mainly shaped around: developing the east-west tourism corridor and the so-called southern corridor, air, land and sea communications (Việt Nam Tham, 2019).

With the growth of inbound tourism, the level of airline activity has increased in most CLMV countries (most significantly in Cambodia and insignificantly in Myanmar). Historical circumstances and the majority government ownership of airlines in the CLMV are believed to limit their growth and efficiency (Law, 2022). Opportunities for outbound tourism from CLMV countries to neighbouring countries, including Thailand, have also increased, as exemplified by the development of medical tourism (Chitthanom: 54-77).

Other organisational activities

After a declarative period of joint activity, ministerial-level agreements, seminars, workshops, conferences, became the basis for the implementation of concrete tourism development measures in the countries of the association under review.

In September 2012, the tourism ministers of the CLMV countries, at a conference in Ho Chi Minh City, reviewing the implementation of their 2010 commitments, established closer cooperation to develop the region's tourism sector from 2013 to 2015. They also assessed the cooperation to date in supporting business activities and training human resources. The CLMV's cooperation with Japan, Korea and also the Asian Development Bank (ADB) was appreciated (A new push, 2012).

In December 2013, a meeting of tourism ministers of CLMV countries was organised in Bokor, with the goal of increasing the number of tourists in the CLMV by 100 per cent by 2015. The four ministers signed a joint CLMV tourism cooperation plan for 2013-15, which focused on exchanging information on tourism planning and marketing, cooperating on joint development of tourism products, assisting each other in human resource development, establishing standardisation of tourism services and improving quality, cooperating on tourism investment promotion, cooperating with external international organisations and organising annual meetings of tourism ministers.

Arrangements for joint tourism products, construction of tourism infrastructure, cooperation between tourism and banking and telecommunications, among others, were brought about by the 2016 Yangon Tourism Forum (Chheang, 2013:53-54; Joint Statement, 2013; CLMV floating world, 2013; Tăng cường hợp, 2016; Tăng cường kết, 2016; CLMV Nations, 2016). In 2018, an ASEAN pro-development workshop was organised in Siem Reap, Cambodia, promoting the need for relevant agencies of CLMV countries to implement the MPAC 2025 (ASEAN Connectivity Master Plan).

A tourism capacity-strengthening workshop was organised at the ASEAN-Korea Centre in Busan (Korea), in collaboration with the Busan Tourism Organisation, with delegates from CLMV countries and Korean experts presenting best tourism implementation practices, and in Singapore, with the Secretary-General of ASEAN, during the Tenth CLMV Economic Ministers' Meeting, taking stock of the successive economic growths (especially in the tourism industry) in the member countries, an e-tourism seminar "Innovative Approaches for Small and Medium Tourism Enterprises in CLMV" was organised based on external stakeholders (ASEAN promotes, 2022; CLMV Tourism Capacity, 2018; The Tenth CLMV, 2018). The growth of tourism and the increased importance of diverse tourism activities in Southeast Asia, has put pressure to undertake organisational solutions and support forms of tourism. As part of The Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), the project's priority areas were broadened in 2005 to include tourism, with a focus on ecotourism, among others. Meanwhile, the 2010 meeting of CLMV Culture Ministers in Nay Pyi Taw (Myanmar) set out principles for cultural cooperation, and the 2016 Tourism Forum in Yangon recommended, among other things, the development of cultural, historical, nature, local, river and maritime tourism (Moska, 2021; Joint Statement, 2010; Tăng cường hợp, 2016; Tăng cường kết, 2016; CLMV Nations, 2016).

CONCLUSIONS

The association of the CLMV countries, without a classic organizational structure, operating with Myanmar, experiencing a political crisis, thanks to joint ventures and membership in ASEAN, is entering a period of dynamic economic development, the leading indicator of which is tourism. It should be noted that during a videoconference held on 24.08.2020, representatives of the economic ministries of the CLMV countries signed up to the CLMV Action Plan for Development 2021 - 2022, noting, among other things, the problems of local tourism related to the COVID-19 pandemic (Sluggish recovery, 2021; Economic Intelligence Center, 2022; Ministers endorse CLMV, 2020).

Real economic growth in all CLMV countries in 2022, compared to 2021, places them among the best performing countries in the world today. In this measure, after a period of economic recession due to the pandemic, Vietnam is returning to Asian markets as the leader of CLMV countries, recording 6.5 % GDP growth in 2022, thanks to the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, an increase in vaccination rates, the reopening of borders, and a dynamisation of exports as well as a reopening to foreign tourists. The measures implemented to rebuild tourism activity in Vietnam can be considered exemplary, a solution ready to be implemented in all CLMV countries (Moska, 2021; Moska and Moska, 2022; Moska, 2023). As mentioned earlier, over the period 2021-2022, ADB, with Japan's support, has committed around US\$5.5 million to support the development and rehabilitation of tourism in Southeast Asia.

Although unfortunately, CLMV countries can scarcely hope for a revival in the tourism industry, due to the negligible (only 10%) share of the local tourism market of people from outside the region and China, where restrictive pandemic solutions continue to be implemented (Vannak, 2019), determination in undertaking joint tourism ventures (including communication corridors, cross-border conditions, travel facilitation, tourism promotion) as well as the exceptional attractiveness of Southeast Asia determine the tourism development of CLMV.

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