



Green Tourism Market in Hanoi City: Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract

In the context of global and Vietnamese tourism shifting strongly toward sustainable development models after the Covid-19 pandemic, green tourism has emerged as an inevitable trend, reflecting changes in tourists' needs and destination selection behavior. As the political, economic, and cultural center of Vietnam, Hanoi possesses significant resources for developing green tourism thanks to its rich heritage system, suburban ecological spaces, traditional craft villages, and the diversity of community-based tourism, cultural tourism, and experiential tourism activities. In addition, the increasing awareness of environmental protection, green lifestyles, and responsible consumption, particularly among Generation Z travelers, has created new momentum for the expansion of this market. However, besides these opportunities, green tourism in Hanoi still faces numerous challenges, including limitations in infrastructure, relatively high investment and travel experience costs, uneven product quality, and the lack of synchronization among destination planning, management, and communication compared with its actual potential. Based on both secondary and primary data, the research team conducted an overview analysis of the green tourism market in Vietnam, particularly in Hanoi, identifying opportunities and challenges for individuals, organizations, and businesses developing green tourism products in the city. The research results indicate that there are four major opportunity factors supporting the development of green tourism in Hanoi, along with four key challenges faced by individuals, organizations, and enterprises operating green tourism products. On that basis, the study proposes several solutions to promote the development of the green tourism market in Hanoi.

Keywords:

Green tourism market, green tourism, Hanoi, opportunities, challenges.

1. Introduction

In the context of a global shift toward green growth and sustainable development, green tourism is increasingly recognized as a strategic direction of the modern tourism industry. Rather than being merely a new consumption trend, green tourism reflects a profound change in tourists' awareness and behavior, as environmental factors, social responsibility, and the preservation of local cultural values are increasingly placed on par with traditional criteria such as cost, convenience, and service quality. Especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for safe, nature-based, and environmentally friendly travel experiences has grown significantly, creating important momentum for the development of the green tourism segment worldwide.

In Vietnam in general and Hanoi in particular, green tourism is gradually taking shape as an inevitable development orientation within the strategy of restructuring the tourism industry toward sustainability. As the political, economic, and cultural center of the country, Hanoi possesses significant advantages in diverse tourism resources, including cultural and historical heritage systems, traditional craft villages, peri-urban ecological spaces, and rural areas with strong potential for community-based tourism development. However, alongside these favorable conditions, Hanoi's green tourism market is still in its formative stage and faces several challenges such as the lack of product synchronization, the risk of "greenwashing," infrastructure limitations, and insufficient market management capacity.

Against this backdrop, this study aims to analyze the opportunities and challenges of the green tourism market in Hanoi, thereby proposing relevant implications and development solutions in the new context. To ensure the practical relevance and reliability of the research findings, the authors combined secondary data analysis with primary data collection through a survey. Specifically, a survey of 269 respondents was conducted, focusing on issues related to levels of interest, experiential behavior, and future intentions to choose green tourism among tourists. This survey data serves as an important empirical basis for supplementing and validating key findings on the development trends of the green tourism market in Hanoi.

Based on these foundations, the study not only contributes to a clearer understanding of the overall landscape of green tourism in the capital but also provides empirical evidence to support policy-making and sustainable tourism development strategies in the coming period.

2. Overview of the Green Tourism Market in Hanoi

Green tourism refers to a form of tourism that aims to minimize negative impacts on the environment while preserving natural resources and local cultural values. This type of tourism not only focuses on tourists' experiences but also emphasizes the responsibilities of businesses, local communities, and tourists in the process of exploiting and utilizing resources (UN Tourism, n.d.).

In the context of climate change, environmental pollution, and the depletion of natural resources becoming increasingly global concerns, sustainable development has gradually become a key orientation for many economic sectors, including tourism. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, global tourism trends have changed significantly as tourists are no longer concerned solely with leisure and relaxation but are also paying greater attention to mental well-being, environmental quality, and sustainable travel experiences. Consequently, models such as ecotourism, community-based tourism, and sustainable tourism have gained increasing attention (UNWTO, 2023).

This trend has also become increasingly evident in Vietnam in general and in Hanoi in particular. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, tourism activities in Hanoi mainly focused on cultural tourism products, historical site visits, and traditional urban tourism (Hanoi Department of Tourism, 2021). However, after the pandemic, the demand for nature-oriented spaces, eco-resort experiences, and “healing” tourism has increased significantly, especially among Generation Z travelers (Vo Minh Hieu, 2022; Tourism Magazine, 2022; Le Thi Hoai et al., 2023). In addition, changes in lifestyle, environmental awareness, and the influence of media and social networks have directly affected tourists’ destination selection behavior (Do Thi Ngoc Lan, 2025; Duong Thi Loan, 2025). Instead of prioritizing mass tourism or tightly packed itineraries, many tourists today tend to seek slower, more personalized experiences that are more closely associated with sustainability than before (Ha et al., 2024).

Moreover, the diversity of green tourism products in Hanoi has gradually expanded to meet the increasingly diverse demands of the market. While green tourism was previously associated mainly with ecotourism, the concept has now broadened to include various forms such as community-based tourism, healing tourism, agricultural tourism, indigenous cultural experience tourism, and tourism linked to responsible consumption. Activities such as experiencing traditional craft villages, participating in agricultural production, eco-resort stays, and exploring local cultural spaces are becoming increasingly attractive to young tourists in Hanoi. At the same time, innovation in rural tourism and sustainable tourism has become one of the key development directions for enhancing the competitiveness of Hanoi’s tourism sector in the new context (Vu Dinh et al., 2023).

The green tourism market in Hanoi is currently in a relatively clear stage of development and formation, characterized by four prominent features: a large market scale, diverse tourism resources, increasing environmental awareness among today’s younger generation, and increasingly consistent policy orientations toward green transformation. However, the level of synchronization among policy directions, tourism products, and market organization capacity still requires further improvement for green tourism to truly become a high value-added market segment. Therefore, green tourism in Hanoi can be considered both an opportunity to expand growth space and an important transition in restructuring the capital city’s tourism development model toward greater sustainability (Hanoi Department of Tourism, 2025).

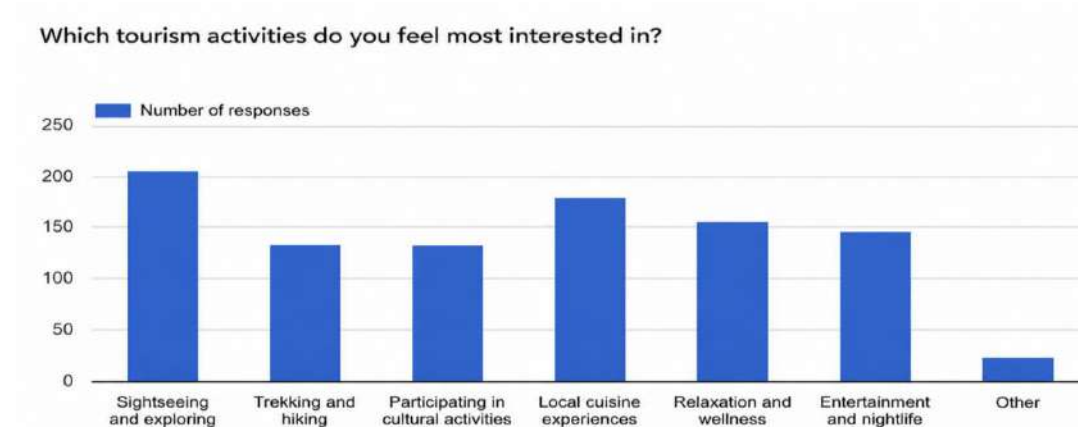
3. Opportunities for Green Tourism Development in Hanoi

First, the global trend toward sustainable development and the prospect of market expansion. The green tourism market in Hanoi is facing significant development opportunities in the context of the global tourism industry shifting strongly toward sustainable growth models. UN Tourism emphasizes that sustainable tourism is not only about minimizing negative environmental impacts but also about organizing tourism activities in a way that ensures a long-term balance among economic, social, and ecological benefits (UN Tourism, n.d.). In practice, this trend has translated into changes in tourism consumption behavior worldwide. According to Booking.com (2025), 84% of global travelers consider sustainable tourism important, while 93% stated that they want to make more sustainable travel choices to some extent. These figures indicate that “green” is no longer a supplementary factor in destination selection but is increasingly becoming a key criterion. In this context, Hanoi possesses many favorable conditions for expanding green tourism as a market segment with long-term growth potential rather than merely a short-term trend.

Second, changes in the awareness and behavior of young tourists, especially Generation Z. As a generation that has grown up alongside social media and digital platforms, Generation Z tends to access tourism information in a fast, visual, and experience-oriented manner. Social media has strongly contributed to shaping young people’s environmental awareness through short videos, images, shared community experiences, and influencer marketing. As a result, messages related to green lifestyles, responsible tourism, and environmental protection have been increasingly disseminated through digital platforms (Nguyen et al., 2025). In addition, trends such as “healing tourism,” “slow living,” and “traveling to reset” are becoming increasingly popular among young people. This indicates that tourism is no longer merely a leisure activity but is also becoming associated with mental well-being, emotional balance, and personal life values (Institute for Tourism Development Research, 2024). Deloitte (2024) reported that approximately 62% of Gen Z are concerned about climate change, while 64% are willing to pay more for sustainable products or services. These findings suggest that environmental awareness among young tourists is not simply a general attitude but has the potential to translate into concrete consumption behavior. In tourism, when evaluating a destination, Generation Z often considers not only cost and convenience but also environmental friendliness, social responsibility, and the degree to which the destination aligns with their personal values. According to Booking.com (2025), 53% of global travelers are now more aware of tourism’s impacts on local communities and the environment, while 69% want to leave destinations in a better condition than when they arrived. These indicators demonstrate that the demand for green tourism does not emerge randomly but is closely linked to a new system of consumption values that is spreading among younger generations.

The research team’s survey also revealed highly positive attitudes among respondents toward green tourism.

Figure 1. Interest in Tourism Activities

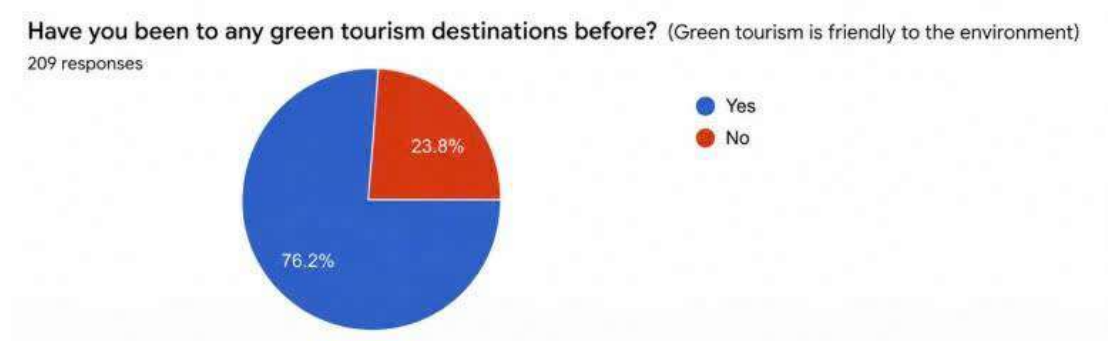


Source: Survey results

Among the 269 survey respondents, 209 participants expressed interest in sightseeing, check-in activities, and nature exploration (observing and learning about ecosystems). Trekking and mountain climbing attracted 136 respondents, while visits to historical and cultural sites interested 135 respondents. In addition, 181 respondents were interested in resort and farmstay tourism, 155 respondents preferred camping and outdoor picnics, and 147 respondents showed

interest in experiencing traditional craft villages, including learning about and directly creating traditional handicraft products. Other tourism activities attracted 27 respondents.

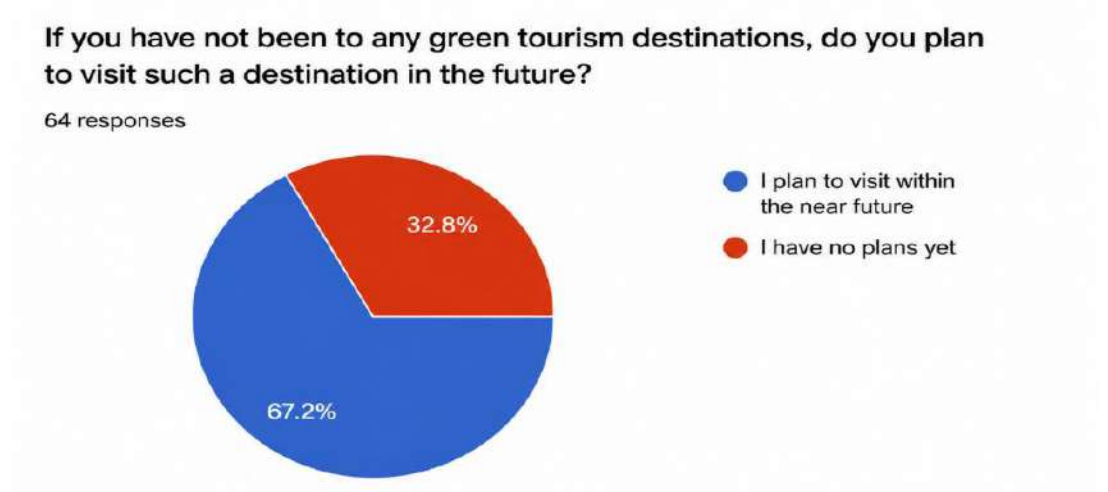
Figure 2. Level of Green Tourism Experience



Source: Survey results

Among the 269 survey respondents, 205 individuals had experienced green tourism, accounting for 76.2% of the sample, while 64 respondents had never experienced green tourism, representing 23.8%.

Figure 3. Intention to Experience Green Tourism in the Future



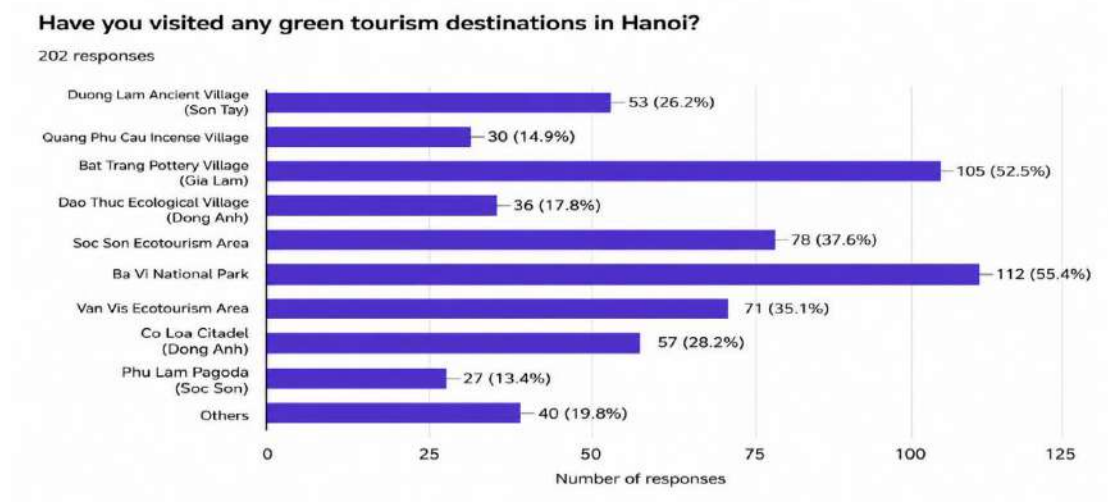
Source: Survey results

Among the 64 respondents who had never experienced green tourism, 43 individuals expressed their intention to experience green tourism in the near future, accounting for 67.1%, while 21 respondents stated that they had no intention of experiencing green tourism, representing 32.8%.

Third, the richness and diversity of tourism resources and the potential for green tourism development in Hanoi. The prospects for green tourism in Hanoi are reinforced by the city's diverse destination resources and its ability to develop tourism products based on existing assets. As the political, economic, and cultural center of Vietnam, Hanoi possesses a distinctive tourism resource system that includes heritage sites, traditional craft villages, suburban rural spaces, ecological areas, and community-based destinations. According to Nhan Dan Newspaper (2022), the city has more than 1,300 craft villages, representing an important advantage for developing tourism products associated with traditional handicrafts, creativity, and cultural experiences.

Suburban areas of Hanoi such as Ba Vi, Soc Son, My Duc, Gia Lam, Thuong Tin, Phu Xuyen, and Thanh Oai, with their natural landscapes, ancient villages, and traditional craft villages, are creating considerable opportunities for the development of ecotourism, agricultural tourism, community-based tourism, and experiential tourism models. From this perspective, the prospects of the green tourism market in Hanoi lie not only in expanding the number of destinations but also in the ability to reorganize existing resources into higher value-added tourism product chains, while simultaneously dispersing tourist flows away from the urban center.

Figure 4. Level of Experience at Green Tourism Destinations in Hanoi



Source: Survey results

Among the 269 survey respondents, 202 individuals had experienced green tourism in Hanoi, accounting for 75.1% of the sample, while 67 respondents had never experienced green tourism in Hanoi, representing 24.9%.

Fourth, tourism policy orientations are becoming increasingly consistent with green transformation goals. The policy orientations of Vietnam and Hanoi have created favorable foundations for the expansion of green tourism. At the national level, tourism development strategies emphasize the requirements of green growth, resource conservation, cultural value preservation, and the enhancement of destination quality within the broader process of sustainable development (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2022). At the local level, Hanoi has been identified as one of the pioneering centers in green tourism transformation through management orientations, tourism promotion programs, product development initiatives, and digital transformation activities serving the tourism sector (Vietnam National Authority of Tourism, 2025). The city is currently focusing on developing ecotourism, cultural tourism, craft village tourism, and community-based tourism products associated with the preservation of indigenous values (Vietnam National Authority of Tourism, 2023; Hanoi Capital Online Government Newspaper, 2026). These developments demonstrate that green tourism has become an integral component of the capital city's development strategy rather than merely a short-term trend.

4. Challenges Facing the Green Tourism Market in Hanoi

First, the issue of product standardization and the risk of “greenwashing” at tourism destinations in Hanoi. Although the green tourism market in Hanoi is developing, many tourism products have not yet been standardized within a clear system of criteria. As a result, the term “green” is sometimes used merely as a label rather than reflecting the true nature of the product. Green tourism requires a transparent and consistent set of standards, including criteria related to environmental protection, destination management, responsibility toward local communities and cultural values, and the quality of tourists’ experiences. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has warned that “greenwashing” is becoming increasingly common in the tourism industry, as businesses use the “green” label as a marketing tool without implementing substantial changes in operational practices (UNEP, 2021). In reality, many tourism products currently focus only on promoting environmentally friendly images or introducing symbolic measures such as reducing plastic waste and using recycled materials, without fundamentally transforming their organizational and operational models. When standards remain unclear, the risk of greenwashing becomes more likely, thereby reducing tourists’ trust in destinations. This issue not only affects the effectiveness of destination management but also undermines visitors’ confidence, particularly among younger tourists who place high importance on transparency and authenticity in tourism experiences.

Second, limitations in infrastructure and destination carrying-capacity management, particularly in areas with potential for ecotourism and community-based tourism. According to UNWTO (2022), carrying-capacity management is one of the core factors in ensuring destination sustainability, as tourist flows exceeding a destination’s capacity can lead to resource degradation, environmental pollution, and conflicts with local communities. However, many suburban destinations in Hanoi, such as ecological sites, traditional craft villages, and rural tourism spaces, have not yet received synchronized investment in transportation systems, waste treatment facilities, directional signage, reception areas, sanitation services, and tourist flow management mechanisms that are compatible with the destinations’ carrying capacities. When infrastructure development remains inadequate, increasing tourist arrivals can place significant pressure on infrastructure systems, landscapes, the environment, and the livelihoods of local communities. This may reduce the quality of tourism experiences and even damage the very “green” foundation that destinations aim to promote. The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (2022) also emphasized that tourism development must be associated with resource conservation and the rational use of tourism spaces. However, the implementation of these objectives in practice still depends heavily on local management capacity and investment resources. As a result, some destinations, despite possessing strong advantages in natural and cultural resources, continue to face difficulties in maintaining service quality and visitor experiences when tourist numbers increase, thereby undermining the very “green” values that tourism development seeks to achieve.

Third, high transition costs and limited implementation capacity among stakeholders, especially small and medium-sized enterprises. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC, 2023), transitioning toward a sustainable tourism model requires significant investment in infrastructure, technology, operational management, and environmental impact control. However, given that most tourism businesses in Hanoi are small and medium-sized enterprises, many still face limitations in capital accumulation and management capacity. At the same time, these businesses must maintain price competitiveness, ensure profitability, and

meet green transformation requirements. Consequently, balancing business efficiency with sustainability standards has become a major challenge. The OECD (2020) also noted that small enterprises often encounter difficulties in accessing the financial resources, technology, and knowledge necessary for green transformation. As a result, implementation tends to be fragmented or limited to only certain operational stages. Consequently, the market may expand in terms of scale but lack depth, as tourism products have not yet achieved the level of quality and sophistication needed to create clear competitive advantages over traditional tourism models.

Fourth, the dual pressure arising from experiential demands and sustainability expectations among potential tourists, particularly Generation Z. Generation Z tends to place greater emphasis on environmental protection, responsible consumption, and community-friendly destinations. At the same time, however, they also demand novelty, aesthetic appeal, convenience, and shareable experiences on social media. In other words, Gen Z is not merely seeking “green” destinations in the ecological sense, but also expects destinations to align with digital lifestyles, possess social sharing value, and create positive impressions from the very first interaction. According to Deloitte (2024), Gen Z is not only concerned about the environmental impacts of tourism activities but also tends to choose experiences that reflect personal values and can be expressed within digital spaces. In addition, Booking.com (2025) indicated that tourists increasingly expect their trips not only to provide personal experiences but also to generate positive impacts on local communities. However, this also creates a certain contradiction: while Gen Z supports green tourism, they simultaneously maintain high expectations regarding convenience, aesthetics, uniqueness, and the ability to share experiences online. As a result, destinations in Hanoi face dual pressures in ensuring sustainability while also building attractive, accessible, and digitally compatible destination images. If destinations fail to satisfy both requirements simultaneously, converting Gen Z’s positive perceptions into actual destination choices will remain challenging, thereby affecting the long-term expansion potential of the green tourism market.

5. Several Solutions to Promote the Development of the Green Tourism Market in Hanoi for Tourists

To promote the development of the green tourism market in Hanoi in the coming years, the city should first establish a unified set of green tourism criteria that can be practically applied to different types of tourism services. At present, many tourism models still use the concept of “green” mainly as a communication or marketing element, despite the absence of clear standards for evaluating the sustainability level of tourism products. Therefore, Hanoi should develop specific criteria for accommodation establishments, travel agencies, community-based tourism destinations, and ecotourism sites based on factors such as waste management, energy conservation, reduction of single-use plastics, utilization of local materials, cultural preservation, and the level of local community participation. On that basis, the city could implement a certification mechanism or introduce a “Hanoi Green Tourism” label for organizations and businesses that meet the required standards, thereby enhancing market transparency and strengthening tourists’ trust. In addition, periodic inspections and the public disclosure of evaluation results should also be carried out to minimize the phenomenon of “greenwashing” in tourism activities. These measures would not only help standardize product quality but also create incentives for tourism businesses to proactively improve their operational models toward greater sustainability.

Alongside standardizing criteria, Hanoi should focus on developing distinctive clusters of green tourism products rather than pursuing fragmented and poorly connected development as is currently the case. Instead of exploiting individual destinations separately, the city could form thematic tourism routes that connect the urban core with suburban areas, thereby creating integrated experience chains and extending tourists' length of stay. For example, an eco-resort tourism route could link Ba Vi with Son Tay; a craft village and cultural experience route could connect Bat Trang (Gia Lam), Van Phuc (Ha Dong), Duong Lam Ancient Village (Son Tay), and Dao Thuc Water Puppet Village (Dong Anh); while an agricultural tourism route could be developed in association with community-based experiences in Soc Son, Gia Lam, and Thuong Tin. Establishing thematic clusters would not only help disperse tourist flows away from the urban center but also enable more efficient utilization of Hanoi's existing resource base. In addition, the city should invest in more experiential tourism products such as hands-on craft-making activities in traditional villages, wellness and healing tourism, green agricultural experiences, and community-based daily-life interactions with local residents. These forms of tourism align well with current trends toward slow travel, relaxation, and nature-oriented experiences among young tourists. Overall, diversifying tourism products toward authentic experiential models will help green tourism in Hanoi create a clearer differentiation compared to traditional tourism models.

In addition, it is necessary to promote the application of digital technology in both the management and promotion of green tourism in order to enhance market accessibility, especially among young tourists. In a context where tourism behavior is increasingly shaped by social media and digital platforms, traditional marketing approaches are gradually losing effectiveness. Therefore, Hanoi should develop a dedicated digital communication ecosystem for green tourism through platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, using short, visual, and experience-rich content. Instead of merely promoting landmarks and attractions, communication efforts should focus on real travel experiences, green lifestyles, local culture, and the emotional values that tourists can gain from their journeys. At the same time, the city could collaborate with travel bloggers, KOLs, content creators, and tourism communities to spread green destination images in a more organic and authentic way. Beyond promotion activities, digital technology should also be applied in destination management through e-ticketing systems, real-time visitor flow monitoring, smart tourism maps, and online service quality review platforms. These tools can help reduce overcrowding at tourism sites while enhancing transparency and improving the management of destination carrying capacity in a more sustainable manner.

Alongside this, Hanoi should implement concrete measures to improve the quality of infrastructure at tourism destinations, rather than focusing solely on expanding investment scale. First, the city could develop direct bus routes connecting the urban center with ecotourism sites and craft villages in order to reduce dependence on private vehicles and ease transportation pressure. At community-based tourism and ecological destinations, it is necessary to install waste segregation bins, public drinking water stations, and standardized sanitation facilities to reduce plastic waste generated during tourist visits. In addition, the planning of designated check-in areas, rest stops, pedestrian pathways, and environmentally friendly cycling routes should be prioritized to enhance visitor experience while minimizing impacts on natural landscapes. For craft villages and community tourism areas, support should also be provided to upgrade electricity, clean water systems, lighting, and public internet access to meet tourists' needs while preserving local cultural spaces. Furthermore, the development of smart tourism information stations integrating digital maps, QR codes, and multilingual guidance will help

improve information accessibility and enhance the overall tourism experience in a more modern and efficient direction.

Finally, Hanoi should establish financial support and green transition mechanisms for tourism enterprises, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In practice, most tourism businesses in Hanoi are small in scale and have limited capital accumulation, while investment costs for green tourism models are relatively high. Therefore, the city should develop targeted support programs such as green credit schemes with preferential interest rates, innovation funds for tourism development, or investment support packages for enterprises implementing eco-lodging models, community-based tourism, and circular tourism initiatives. At the same time, training programs on sustainable tourism management, environmental management, digital transformation, and branding should be strengthened for local enterprises to enhance their practical implementation capacity. In addition, local communities in tourism development areas should also be supported through training in tourism skills, customer service, cultural heritage preservation, and environmental management. This would enable local residents to participate more deeply in the tourism value chain rather than merely playing a supporting role. When local communities become direct beneficiaries of green tourism, their incentives to conserve resources and maintain destination sustainability will be significantly strengthened.

Conclusion

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, global tourism trends have shifted strongly toward sustainable development models, in which green tourism is increasingly becoming a key orientation of the modern tourism industry. It can be observed that, although the green tourism market in Hanoi still faces several barriers such as underdeveloped infrastructure, inconsistent product quality, high transition costs, and the challenge of balancing tourism development with resource conservation, its development prospects remain highly promising. This is largely driven by changes in environmental awareness among tourists—particularly Generation Z—along with the growing trend of green consumption and increasing demand for sustainable travel experiences. In addition, Hanoi possesses significant advantages in terms of cultural heritage resources, traditional craft villages, ecological spaces, and suburban tourism destinations, which provide favorable conditions for the development of ecotourism, community-based tourism, and experiential tourism models. However, in order for the market to develop in a more sustainable and in-depth manner, management agencies need to continue improving supporting policies, investing in infrastructure, standardizing green tourism criteria, and strengthening destination management. At the same time, tourism enterprises should proactively innovate products, apply digital technologies, and improve service quality to meet the increasingly diverse demands of tourists. On this basis, Hanoi should implement synchronized solutions related to planning, infrastructure investment, product standardization, digital transformation, and business support in the development of green tourism. It can be concluded that, if existing advantages are effectively leveraged and current limitations are properly addressed, green tourism will not only become a new consumption trend but also serve as an important driver for sustainable tourism development and enhance the competitiveness of Hanoi in the future. Therefore, close coordination among government authorities, businesses, local communities, and tourists will be essential to building a green tourism ecosystem that is substantive, sustainable, and aligned with contemporary development trends.

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