Tourism is not only a major economic sector of Nepal but also an area with immense potentiality. Our country is exceptionally gifted in nature, culture and heritage. Many of our beautiful locations are yet to be explored and accessed. Even without adequate infrastructure and sophistication, our country is already featured in the top lists of various travel related evaluators. What we lack is adequate infrastructure, facility and due publicity. And here lies the prime significance of Visit Nepal Year 2020. With enhanced publicity, we aim to host two million tourists in 2020 which is roughly double of this year’s number. But more important than the number is the message we want to disseminate to every corner of the world, through Visit Nepal Year, that Nepal is a prized destination for travellers as well as investors who want to do profitable business in the travel and tourism industry. This will be an occasion for us to expand the tourism industry to remote corners of the country through destination development programmes. The ultimate objective is to see a greater share of tourism industry in Nepal’s GDP as this is the sector wherein Nepal has unmatched advantage.
The success of VNY 2020 will depend on our national strengths, competence and integrity to promote Nepal as a preferred travel destination.

Nepal is going through tremendous transitions on the economic and political spheres. We have had significant changes in the past few years and despite the challenges, we have made progress. We also stand in times of unprecedented opportunities for partnerships, trade and foreign direct investment. And we can fulfill our potential only through an integrated approach.

How the world travels has changed today. We need to contemporise and work towards a more experiential tourism campaign; one that interacts and engages with the visitor at all levels. It must also now reflect the strengths and aspirations of all the provinces in the international marketplace.

I view VNY 2020 as not another tourism campaign but as a country development strategy which must be prioritised in accordance with the national policy. In adhering to and advancing the central policy of sustainable development, the tourism sector stands to benefit, by underpinning sustainable and responsible development across the country.

As individuals and organisations working in tourism, you are the key players of VNY 2020. I look forward to learning, collaborating and understanding from your experience to ensure that Nepal once again becomes a preferred travel destination of lifetime experiences.

I sincerely believe that any feedback, ideas and suggestions from you will bring immense value to the VNY 2020.

The success of VNY 2020 will depend on our national pride, willingness and ability to contribute.
Kedar Bahadur Adhikari
Kedar Bahadur Adhikari is Secretary at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation since August 2019 and Chairman of the Program Implementation Sub Committee, Visit Nepal Year 2020. He was formerly the Secretary with the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies. He has also served as the Secretary with the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Secretariat for almost two years with responsibilities for economic and infrastructure affairs, result monitoring and governance.

Adhikari was also Secretary with Ministry of Communication and Information Technology and Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development. He has prior worked as Joint Secretary with Ministry of Health and Population, Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Ministry of Finance and as Minister (Economic) with Nepalese Embassy in New Delhi, India.

As Under Secretary with Ministry of Finance for five years, he was responsible for budget preparation, execution, monitoring and evaluation. As Under Secretary (account) with Financial Comptroller General for five years, he looked after expansion of integrated Financial Information Management System of the Government of Nepal. As Accounts Officer for six years at the beginning of his career, he has worked in different government offices.

He holds a Masters degree in Business Administration from Tribhuvan University.

Deepak Raj Joshi
Deepak Raj Joshi, CEO of Nepal Tourism Board is the recipient of the IPTT Champions Challenge Award 2018. Joshi was honored with the award for his relentless hard work and success in bouncing back and bringing tourism to the forefront in Nepal.

His leadership during the nation’s crisis phase has been recognised and appreciated by the national and international travel trade fraternity. Joshi completed his schooling from Bardiya and moved to Lucknow for intermediate studies. He holds degrees in MBA and Masters in Sociology. He has worked with NTB for 15 years starting his career with the Human Resource Department. He specialises in destination management and promotions.

Uttar Kumar Khatri
Uttar Kumar Khatri is the Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Finance. He holds a Masters degree in Public Administration (MPA) from Tribhuvan University. As Joint Secretary, he has a key role in financial sector management, budget operation management and revenue monitoring and supervision, economic and financial reviews as well as reporting.

He was previously the Chief District Officer for Jhapa working closely on peace, security and disaster management. Khatri has also served as a Chief Tax Officer where he has proven his management skills in revenue management and tax administration. In his role as Chief Customs Officer, he was successful in revenue management and customs administration.

Khatri has also served as Joint Secretary at the Office of The Prime Minister Council of Ministers for two years, and as Under Secretary of the Ministry of Finance for five years.

Deepak Raj Joshi
Deepak Raj Joshi was working at the ministry since September 2015. He holds a Bachelor’s degree in Arts (Economics) from Tribhuvan University and also in Education from Purbanchal University besides a Master’s Degree in Public Administration (Public Policy and Development Management) from Tribhuvan University.

Upadhyaya served as Joint Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, Government of Nepal from 2013 to 2015. He was Program Director, National Planning Commission Secretariat from 2012 to 2013 and Section Officer of the Ministry of Finance from 2003 to 2012 for nine years. He has contributed scholarly articles and co-written a book titled, ‘Revenue Policy and Revenue Administration’ in Nepali language in 2010. Upadhyaya had headed the Mountaineering and Trekking Rescue Investigation, 2018, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Nepal.

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Raj Kumar Chhetri
Raj Kumar Chhetri is the General Manager of Tribhuvan International Airport. He assumed office in July 2019 and has expertise as air traffic controller. He holds a Masters Degree in Arts and Public Administration from Kathmandu University. He is member of Nepal Air Traffic Controller Association (NATCA) and International Federation of Air Traffic Controller Association (IFATCA). He also serves as advisor to the Airlines Association of Nepal (AAON) and is Chairperson of the Airport Security Committee and SLOT Management Committee.

Chhetri oversees daily operations of the Tribhuvan International Airport, slot management and flight operation management besides being responsible for creating and implementing strategy to grow the airport revenue. His responsibilities include direct management of key functional managers and executives, ensuring development of tactical programs to pursue targeted goals and objectives, overseeing key income and revenue generation, evaluating and deciding key investments in equipment and infrastructure, strategic communication and collaborative opportunities. He is a passionate, positive thinker and believes in teamwork.

Awadhesh Kumar Tripathi
Awadhesh Kumar Tripathi (Venerable Metteyya Sakyputta) is the Vice
Chairs of the Lumbini Development Trust. He has specialised in Buddhist Philosophy, Meditation/Buddhist Psychology, Environment, Peace and Development, Education and Social Development, Women’s Issues and Poverty Alleviation, Local Communities and Culture of Lumbini and Kapilavastu and Engaged Buddhism. Tripathi holds a Masters Degree in Buddhist Studies from Lumbini Buddhist University, Nepal, and Bachelor of Arts in Buddhism from Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

Anil Chitrakar

Anil Chitrakar is trained as an engineer and energy planner at the University of Pennsylvania, USA. He works with young people across Nepal and school children to encourage them to be the link between the supply side of solutions and the demand side and enable learning outside the classroom. He has received the Ashoka fellowship for this. He was part of the team that implemented the National Conservation Strategy for Nepal and went on to head the IUCN Nepal office.

Many of the protected landscapes, including Lumbini, are national parks, World Heritage Sites, and the most coveted tourist destinations. He was born in a traditional artisan family of Chitrakars. With democratically elected Mayors in Kathmandu and across Nepal, Chitrakar focuses his efforts on heritage conservation and environmental management. These sites draw most of the tourists who visit Nepal. He is working with a wide network of traditional artists to recover monuments, culture and the economy of historical cities. In 1993 he was one of the 100 ‘Global Leaders for Tomorrow’ awardees at the World Economic Forum in Davos. Chitrakar was Chairperson of the Himalayan Climate Initiative and helped launch the 1550 km long Great Himalayan Trail in Nepal. He is also part of the Kailash Sacred Landscape team. He is currently President of Siddharthnic, a private initiative dedicated to unlocking markets.

Shreejana Rana

Shreejana Rana is the President of the Hotel Association of Nepal and an important figure in Nepal’s tourism and hospitality sector. She is the Executive Director of Hotel Annapurna and is on the Board of the Nepal -India Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Rana became the first female President of HAN in May 2010. She uses incisive analysis and insight to drive best practices and improvement in the organisation, and believes in empowering and developing personnel to realise their full potential. Besides this, she has also been active in her pursuit of raising awareness on women’s empowerment through various platforms in the past and present such as the South Asian Women Development Forum, Association of St. Mary’s Alumnae Nepal, Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Association Nepal and Zonta International. She is currently the Area Director for Area 2, District 25 of Zonta International. She is also Vice-Chairperson of the Jayanti Memorial Trust which works to bring affordable cardiac care to the less privileged of society.

Biplav Paudel

Biplav Paudel is the Chairman of Pokhara Ultralight Pvt Ltd. He is also Executive Director of Hotel Barahi and Barahi Jungle Lodge and is well recognised as a tourism entrepreneur. He is also Director of Byanjan Restaurant Pokhara and Executive Director of Sarangkot Mountain Resort and Spa. He has a Diploma in Travel and Tourism Management and a PG Diploma in Business Administration from Symbiosis College, India.

Shreejana Rana has worked as Secretary of Regional Hotel Association Pokhara from 2002 to 2006, Vice President of Regional Hotel Association Pokhara from 2006 to 2011, President of Hotel Association Pokhara from 2011 to 2012. He is currently President of Mountain Trust Nepal, Executive Member of Mountain Trust Nepal – UK, Central Member of Nepal Swimming Association and Executive Member of Hotel Association Nepal.

Ranjit Acharya

Ranjit Acharya is the CEO of Prisma Advertising. He is also a director, lyricist, orator and motivational speaker besides being an entrepreneur. He also co-founded Himalayan Climate Initiative. Acharya started advertising agency at 21 years of age and his agency represents Ogilvy and Matfer in Nepal. He has produced several top-drawing TV soaps and many reality TV shows. With over 25 years of experience in advertising, Acharya has also ventured into the education sector with Bridgewater Education Foundation and Research Center. He is a highly sought after as a motivational speaker especially known for his ‘Success Mantra’ workshops.

Charu Chadha

Charu Chadha has worked in the media for over 22 years in various capacities. She is the Editor of Business 360, Nepal’s leading business magazine and WOW (World of Women) - a woman and lifestyle magazine, products of MEDIA 9 Pvt Ltd.

She was the Corporate Associate Editor of Specialty Media that published leading magazines in business, lifestyle, gaming, travel and in-flight segments in Nepal and India. Prior to this, Chadha worked as a...
freelance journalist, photographer and documentary film maker with national and international media. She was also associated with the hospitality industry in Nepal specialising in Marketing and Communications. She co-owns Sarang, a forerunner in the fitness industry.

Chadha offers her expertise as a consultant on media relations, public relations, marketing communications, branding and conference design to private and public entities and chambers of commerce. She is also invited to speak and moderate panel discussions on business, free markets, economic empowerment, wellness and personal development, youth leadership, and the future of work - in the country and overseas. She is a strong proponent of freedom, free markets and liberty with integrity and compassion as its core values.

Dr Basudev Koirala

Dr. Basudev Krishna Shastri (Basudev Koirala) is originally from Solukhumbu. He holds a Master’s degree in Astrology and is a well known astrologer. He also holds a doctorate in the field of Astrology (Jyotish Shastra) from Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, India.

Koirala has done a research on the Solar System Movement titled “Gol Tatwa Vimarsah” under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Sadananda Sukla. He has worked in Radio Kantipur and Kantipur Television in the field of Vastu Shastra and astrology for 12 years, and as the presenter of horoscope, Vastu Shastra, Aatma Gyan, Tantra Yoga, prabhachar and Vedic Discourse. He is a program presenter and producer of Vedic Gyan Bikyan on NTV News Channel. He is also Pracharya at Sanskrit Gurukulam and has worked as Chairman of Sanatan Vedic Gyan Bikyan Kendra. Koirala writes articles for reputed newspapers on religious and spiritual topics.

Koirala has expertise in Tantra Yoga, Vedic Yoga, Shrutveda, Bhagwat Geeta, Yagyaacharya and Astro Vastu counselling. He has been recognised with the University Youth Award by Sampurnanda Sanskrit University, Mata Gahyeswari Award by the Third South Asian Astrologers Conference 2006 and the Nepal Bidhyabhusan Ka.

Dawa Steven Sherpa

Dawa Steven Sherpa is the CEO of Asian Trekking. Aside from being part of the family business, he is the most qualified man for the job with an extensive resume of climbing and trekking to his name. Sherpa is an avid climber, having ascended Mt. Everest thrice as well as many other 8000m peaks. He knows these mountains having trekked 155,000m, the entire length of the Nepali Himalaya, along the Great Himalayan Trail (GHT), in 99 days. He also has the unique accolade of setting up the world's highest bakery at Everest Base Camp (5330m / 17,500ft). Under his leadership, more than 150 climbers from 18 different nations have summited Mt. Everest. Since 2008 he has been running Eco Everest Expeditions. On these expeditions he has pioneered environmental practices to make Himalayan expeditions cleaner collecting 15,000 kgs of garbage from the slopes of Mt. Everest. Sherpa’s environmental and conservation efforts have been globally recognised by many international agencies including the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the International Olympic Committee, from whom he has received several prestigious awards. He is also a climate change ambassador for WWF and patron of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Nepal.

Vijay Bahadur Shrestha

Vijay Bahadur Shrestha is a Vice President-Administration of Himalaya Airlines. He has over 25 years of top management experience in international and domestic airlines in Nepal besides entrepreneurial experience in hotel, tourism and education sectors. He holds an MBA degree and a Certified Diploma in Finance and Accounting. He has also successfully launched international airlines in the country and has worked in managing domestic airline start-ups in his career. He has been nominated for the Board Director at the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal.

Krishna Hari Khatri

Krishna Hari Khatri is a well known figure in the travel trade industry of Nepal. He is the Managing Director of Apsara Treks (P) Ltd and Director of Apsara Holidays. With over a decade’s experience, Khatri is known to the industry as a prominent French-speaking guide. While pursuing a diploma in civil engineering, he also studied the French language. He later went to France to study a higher level of the language. On return, he joined Kumbh La Mountaineering & Trekking as Office Manager where he worked for five years. He has also worked with the Himalayan Society for ten years as a tour and trekking leader. He holds a Bachelor’s degree in Sociology and Anthropology and a Masters degree in Sociology from Tribhuvan University.

Khatri has served as Executive Member of the Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal (TAAN) and Coordinator of the Training and Human Resource Department. He has also taken various courses in computers, an international course in tourism projects in rural areas from Israel, Diploma in HRD by SHATEC and HA, tour guide training from NATHM and advance English course from Bishwobhushan Camps.

Nandini Lahe Thapa

Nandini Lahe-Thapa is the Senior Director - Tourism Marketing and Promotion at the Nepal Tourism Board. Thapa is also the Member Secretary of the Visit Nepal 2020 Campaign. With over two and a half decades in the tourism industry, she is a member of the founding team of the Nepal Tourism Board.

Thapa brings with her a huge cache of hands-on experience and in-depth knowledge in driving Nepal’s tourism in the global market. Fluent in six languages, she is a familiar face in the competitive international tourism market. She is passionate about taking Nepal’s tourism to the next level and firmly believes that although tourism is going to be the greatest employer and income generator, conscious measures are needed to diversify and upgrade the product palette offerings and include sustainable and green practices. She would love to see more women at the decision making level in the industry.

Prashant Singh

Prashant Singh, Chairman of Himalayan Climate Initiative, is a social entrepreneur, philanthropist and development activist, who has been making efforts to bring positive change in Nepal through a variety of citizen initiatives. He is a strong advocate of and believer in the green future of Nepal. He sees the lack of societal peace and harmony as the biggest threat to the country’s prosperous future and is actively involving the country’s citizens, particularly its youth to build Sadbhaw (harmony) among the various strata and ethnicities of his country. He founded Himalayan Climate Initiative as a not-for-profit organisation in 2011. He advocates for embracing Nepal’s private sector and youth as active stakeholders in the country’s development discourse and actions. Singh is an active political figure and Secretary of the Samajbadi Party.

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Tourism trade associations play a key role in tourism development of any country. They play a key role in influencing strategies and policies pertaining to tourism as well as facilitating the growth of the industry while representing the common purpose of stakeholders working closely with the government on tourism development and promotion. Building demand for tourism in the country, Visit Nepal 2020 seeks to work in close collaboration with the country’s tourism trade associations to help establish Nepal as a lifetime destination and increase tourist traffic to the country.

Below are the perspectives of the heads of various tourism trade associations in the country on their expectations and recommendations for Visit Nepal 2020.

Sunil Shakya
Chairperson, Pacific Asia Travel Association - Nepal Chapter

**Expectations:**
Visit Nepal Year 2020 is a timely event; we need to do a campaign in every 10 years. There is a target of two million tourists; we are promoting new destinations from all seven provinces. This time it is not just a campaign for a year but we are targeting beyond and we are very hopeful for the tourism sectors. With the two new international airports into function in the near future, we are very hopeful these infrastructures will boost the arrival of tourism. With the growing hospitality business of new hotels and resorts, I can see a bright side of Visit Nepal Year 2020.

**Recommendations:**
Infrastructure development is the most important need for the development and prosperity of the tourism sector. We need a proper infrastructure built from airports, roads, bridges to hotels for the tourists who visit Nepal and spread messages back in their countries. I am hopeful, the government is putting a good budget for the improvement of the hospitality sector with proper marketing and promotion. I think we shall have well trained from security to hospitality sectors especially customer service to make Visit Nepal 2020 a memorable and successful event to the inbound tourists to Nepal. We need to rekindle ‘Atithi Devo Vawa’.

Nava Raj Dahal
President, Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal

**Expectations:**
As the government has already announced the expectation of two million tourists for the Visit Nepal Year 2020, I believe it is time to work in collaboration with the private sector and government to make this a successful campaign.

**Recommendations:**
I see four important aspects to be addressed. One is the speedy restoration of the heritage sites that have been destroyed during the 2015 earthquake. Second is the need of a tourism policy to be implemented as soon as possible for the development and well-managed tourism during the year 2020 and beyond. Third, infrastructure development should be a priority. If we are expecting two million tourists, we shall be able to provide proper infrastructure and facilities during their stay in Nepal. New hiking and trekking trails should be developed and we should be offering more destinations than just Pokhara, Lumbini, Kathmandu and Mount Everest. The fourth important thing is to promote more local culture and new destinations from the tourist viewpoint. We should stop being negative and instead be unified and bring out our best to give the best to our tourists and make this event a successful year for tourism and pave the way for more tourism prosperity in the coming years.

Nim Bahadur Magar
President, Nepal Association of Rafting Agencies

**Expectations:**
Nepal’s tourism industry is based on natural and cultural heritage and we are rich in natural landscape. Nepal is considered one of the best destinations in the world for water adventure. Rafting companies have been established, and have put investment into our rivers as it is an important part of the tourism industry. The private tourism sector has invested billions in the region in areas like Trishuli, Bhotekoshi, Sunkoshi, Seti and Kaligandaki building more than 150 river camps, river beaches, tent camps, hotels and resorts. Rivers of Nepal are regarded as excellent for rafting and adventure water sports, but due to lack of proper publicity and expansion, tourists are choosing countries like India, China, Turkey, South Africa, Dubai, Japan, Australia, Netherlands instead. Visit Nepal Year 2020 will need further cooperation from the government and rafting companies to promote adventure tourism and bring in more tourists.

**Recommendations:**
The current Kathmandu has turned into smoke and dust with pollution and no one is serious about taking initiatives to address this issue. Due to the pollution levels, tourists do not want to stay more than a day in Kathmandu. It is also necessary to pay attention to the management of general roadways. The condition of roads and highways must be improved and check posts should be managed too. There is no surveillance even today for tourists who come into Nepal via land points. We need a proper survey to find out the purpose of visit for tourists visiting Nepal. Is it for the sunrise or trekking, fishing, spending time at casinos or climbing mountains? If we have this research, the private sector will be more attracted to invest. New adventure sports like rafting, kayaking, canoeing, paragliding, cycling, fishing, and Hamilton Marathon Race can be promoted from the adventure tourism perspective for VNY 2020.
Shreejana Rana  
President, Hotel Association Nepal  

Expectations  
The Visit Nepal Year 2020 campaign is not just limited to 2020 but is targeted for 2020 and beyond. The campaign is a lifetime experience. As a Member of the Visit Nepal Year 2020 Program Implementation Sub-committee, our focus is on quality tourism entering Nepal. The hotels are concerned about extra rooms and how we are going to fill them. The government target of two million visitors is an ambitious figure but with all parts of the hospitality sector and government agencies working together, we are optimistic that we will reach this figure. For Visit Nepal 2020, the brand BY ANNAPURNA which includes Hotel Annapurna in Kathmandu; Fish Tail Lodge in Pokhara; and Jagatpur Lodge in Chitwan, will be emphasising on professional service, quality, standards and training that will be a benchmark for the industry.

To improve quality tourism, it is important to note that marketing is something that we cannot compromise on both in quality and investment. Social media plays a huge role in marketing in today’s society enabling us to reach the masses both nationally and globally at a low cost. We must integrate this with other marketing methods to create awareness and better promote our products. Visit Nepal 2020 has been adopting different and more professional marketing strategies than those utilised in the past; we have been tapping into new segments of the market that have not been touched upon before. For example, we have moved away from Pokhara and Chitwan to promote different and unique lifetime experiences one can find in Nepal. I am optimistic that this will help in garnering interest and increasing the number of tourists visiting the country. Simultaneously, I also hope that such strong and consistent promotions will help raise awareness in society and make citizens realise that we each have our own roles and responsibilities to play in making Visit Nepal 2020 and beyond a success.

Recommendations:  
As any sector, the hotel industry is competitive. With an increase in the number of international chains arriving in the country all of us have been motivated. While we have a significant addition to our room inventory, there is genuine concern that there are too many hotels chasing for the same slice of the pie (number of tourists) while the pie has not increased in size. All of us are hopeful that Visit Nepal 2020 will address this situation and benefit us. Also, unfortunately, when it comes to Nepali managed properties, service standards are not at par with international service standards with chain hotels being the only exception. Nepali managed properties had to concentrate so much on politics that they fell back on service standards. This is why the Campaign has put a strong focus on training to produce high quality and standardised services. Our product must be able to compete against a variety of attractions such as destinations and hotels in our region and globally. Ultimately, tourists should be satisfied, secure and content with the hospitality they receive. Infrastructure remains one of our biggest drawbacks. Infrastructure is vital for development, not only for the hospitality and tourism industry but also for all other industries in Nepal. But road connectivity is poor and air connectivity expensive. While the country has taken a positive step towards renovating as well as constructing new infrastructure, the pace is far too slow. I hope the proximity of Visit Nepal Year 2020 will provide the necessary push to relevant departments to conduct work more efficiently. We Nepalese are blessed with a beautiful country but at times it feels like we are taking it for granted. A national campaign like this also has the positive effect of encouraging different aspects of our industry such as restaurants, hotels and trekking agencies as well as different communities to work together for the betterment of each other.

Suraj Bastola  
Treasurer, Homestay Association Nepal  

Expectations:  
We are very excited to celebrate visit Nepal 2020. Being one of the most tourist attraction countries, one of the main goals is to increase the number of tourists and their stay in our country. Even though Nepal Government has announced Visit Nepal Year 2020, it hasn’t given its utmost priority in its promotion. The fact that Tourism Ministry is without a tourism minister - after the tragic demise of Rabindra Adhikari - makes us think that the organisation is lacking a leader figure and we are afraid that Visit Nepal 2020 may not be as effective as it could be. In addition, we feel like Nepal’s rural tourism (home stay) has not been emphasised enough in terms of promotion.

Recommendations:  
We hope that this campaign will promote rural tourism of Nepal. We expect this campaign to not only help promote our business but also to provide an opportunity to present the genuine Nepal to the world. Along with that, we hope it will address things like yoga, meditation, culture, nature, local lifestyle, different temples, monasteries and stupas, trekking, hiking, waterfalls, etc.

Dhurba Simkhada  
President, Village Tourism Promotion Forum Nepal  

Expectations:  
We wish that the Visit Nepal Year 2020 will be a successful event. The development and promotion campaign needs to be more active as it is just a few months away. Visit Nepal committee needs to work in fast track mode and achieve its goals. We believe Visit Nepal Year 2020 should be promoted internally in Nepal as well so that we can prepare ourselves for the arrival of tourists.

Recommendations:  
I wish all the best for the Visit Nepal Year 2020 and the success of this event will be a milestone for the economic development of Nepalese. As tourism is one of the major sources of the economy this event will create job opportunities. We believe that the promotional campaign is also focused on rural sectors this time which is usually focused on the urban and developed areas. We are hopeful this event will be successful and one of a kind to showcase our culture and tradition to tourists visiting Nepal.
together attitude is in place this time as well. the then event a success; a similar gesture of working supported firmly with die-hard co-operation in making this time. If I may recall, in 1998 my organisation year 1998 when the country witnessed Visit Nepal Year may hopefully bring the same fortune as it did in the opportunities. In other words, I am hopeful that 2020 busy during this period resulting in income-generating on I am hopeful that all of my fellow guides will remain robust economic background are likely to visit enabling the country to prosper more. With the promotion going on I am hopeful that all of my fellow guides will remain busy during this period resulting in income-generating opportunities. In other words, I am hopeful that 2020 may hopefully bring the same fortune as it did in the year 1998 when the country witnessed Visit Nepal Year then. I am anticipating the same lucrative duplication this time. If I may recall, in 1998 my organisation supported firmly with die-hard co-operation in making the then event a success; a similar gesture of working together attitude is in place this time as well.

Kedar Tamang
President, Tourist Guide Association of Nepal

Expectations:
On behalf of our organisation, I pledge my full support and commitment to the action taken by Nepal Government to bring to the fore the concept of VNY 2020. I am sure Visit Nepal Year 2020 Secretariat and Nepal Tourism Board are all set to manage the event with all pomp and grandeur. We are extremely delighted to be the part of this fanfare and are hopeful that this committee will be an effective body to execute the on-going task. At TURGAN we have held a meeting on how we can contribute to successfully carry out this mission. Every member of my organisation is well oriented towards playing some role in the run-up to lead the campaign to its successful conclusion of meeting the target of bringing in two million tourists. To achieve this, private and public participation is an absolute necessity.

Recommendations:
The vital point this campaign will ensure and inculcate in the minds of visiting tourists is that they will be confident that Nepal has now recovered from the nightmare of 2015 earthquake and is all set for welcoming visitors and that they can freely travel the country without any obstructions. To achieve this end, I believe VNY 2020 committee shall initiate the campaign through advertisements befitting Nepal as a country, strong enough and capable of welcoming our revered guests. Meanwhile, this time around, during 2020, not only the landmark of two million visitors will usher into our country but even high profile tourists of robust economic background are likely to visit enabling the country to prosper more. With the promotion going on I am hopeful that all of my fellow guides will remain busy during this period resulting in income-generating opportunities. In other words, I am hopeful that 2020 may hopefully bring the same fortune as it did in the year 1998 when the country witnessed Visit Nepal Year then. I am anticipating the same lucrative duplication this time. If I may recall, in 1998 my organisation supported firmly with die-hard co-operation in making the then event a success; a similar gesture of working together attitude is in place this time as well.

Madhusudan Upadhyay
President, Society of Travel and Tours Operators Nepal

Expectations:
Visit Nepal Year 2020 campaign is a platform to promote the tourism sector of Nepal. I am expecting good tourism policies will be formed and implemented to make this event a successful event and we will be able to reach the target of two million tourists in Nepal.

Recommendations:
The VNY 2020 campaign has been announced a year back but we cannot see any new plans and promotion campaigns being carried out aggressively. We have only four more months to end the year of 2019. The branding has been carried out which is a positive move by the committee; this will hopefully help the tourism promotions in the long run. The most important thing that needs to be addressed is the fast track on development activities of infrastructures like roads, bridges, hiking trails, airports, and security system should be well managed and tourists should feel safe to visit our country. There should be aggressive promotion about the VNY 2020 as we have very little time. Furthermore, there should be more flights in national carriers for regional tourists from India. Mumbai and Delhi flights should be increased and new schemes and facilities should be introduced to encourage Indian tourists in Nepal. More importantly, there should be more promotional events.

Narendra Deo Bhatta
Chairman, Himalayan Rescue Association Nepal

Expectations:
Himalayan Rescue Association has been carrying out different activities to control irregularities existing at present in different areas related to mountain tourism in Nepal. We are expecting Visit Nepal Year 2020 committee will work towards promoting mountain tourism with proper coordination with HRA. We are always ready to make mountains of Nepal safe destination by providing necessary information and treatment in the event of the need for trekkers and mountaineers. In this regard, Himalayan Rescue Association Nepal has been saving lives of trekkers, mountaineers and their supporting staff since 1973 having its own Aid Post to provide health assistance in Pheriche, Manang (every Spring and Autumn) and at Everest Base Camp (every Spring). For this, we expect coordination, cooperation and support from VNY 2020.

Recommendations:
We expect momentum in the wide publicity of Nepal for tourism promotion in general and mountain tourism in particular for years to come. We are hopeful that VNY 2020 will introduce new destinations focused on promoting cultural and adventure tourism in a more effective way. We hope this ensures travellers, trekkers and mountaineers that Nepal is safe for them. One of the important aspects for tourism to succeed is to improve the facilities for tourist, this will help the growth of tourists visiting Nepal in many years to come with word of mouth promotion by tourists who will be visiting in VNY 2020. It is important that the government should work on the improvement of infrastructure and to amend rules and regulations that are not friendly to tourists and private sector.
Shiv Raj Thapa
General Secretary, Expedition Operators Association, Nepal

Expectations:
In our view, Visit Nepal Year 2020 should be able to bridge the gap between private sectors (Travel, Tour, Trekking, Airlines, and Hotels/Lodges) and government organisations/departments so that we all can work together to achieve the target of two million tourists. VNY 2020 Committee should share USP (unique selling point) designed for 2020 so we operators can also sing the same sheet of music! The committee should set directives and hassle-free procedures that should be extended to the operators so we can encourage potential tourists to come and visit Nepal next year in big numbers. We are hopeful this campaign will help boost the tourist inflow to Nepal resulting in tourist arrivals twice or thrice in numbers. During VNY 2020, tourists would not just focus on any particular mountain or destination but explore the wide vista that Nepal offers. This campaign will revive Nepal once again as the best tourist destination for people of all walks of life.

Recommendations:
Long extended national holidays (Dashain and Tihar) should not affect tourist movements; concerned departments should be open throughout the year by staff working on various shifts. Another important point that should be strictly followed is Nepal Bandh or any form of the strike should be prohibited. New trekking routes, new peaks, new hotels or destinations should be highlighted in Visit Nepal promotions which should not be restricted to a particular interest of people, everyone should partake regardless of how physically challenged they are. One of the major issues, air traffic movement should be planned well to reduce congestion which has been bothering tourists immensely in recent times. Our state of infrastructure is another concern, the existing conditions should be improved as soon as possible, by all means, so that the tourists visiting Nepal this autumn can spread the word and encourage others to visit Nepal in 2020. VNY 2020 promotion team should reach out to all local operators through EOA, TAAN, NAAFTA, NATO, HAN, etc so everyone is aware of VNY’s efforts and provide support/back up as necessary. Last but not least, each tourist should have an experience of their lifetime from the time they enter Nepal until they depart! This can only be possible when all concerned offices, departments, handling agents and all individuals involved work together cordially.

Pabitra Kumar Karki
President, Airlines Operators Association Nepal

Expectations:
Visit Nepal Year 2020 is expected to significantly increase the inflow of visitors to Nepal. We are confident that this will result in an increase in business with more jobs within the aviation industry. This campaign will also send a message to the concerned ministries and government offices to ensure the improvement in the needs of the aviation sector. At the end of the day, it will be a win-win situation for every sector in Nepal, and we will have satisfied visitors to our credit. To ensure the success of this event, the aviation industry of the country will play a major role. AOAN feels that Visit Nepal Year 2020 can play a major role in pushing concerned Ministries and Departments for the improvement and development of infrastructure building to cater to the expected traffic growth.

CN Pandey
President, Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents

Expectations:
The main goal and the expectation of Visit Nepal Year 2020 is to welcome two million tourists in Nepal. We are well equipped to serve the flow of tourists and have new hotels and resorts being built, we can accommodate tourists comfortably and give them the best hospitality and the services. Nepal is ready to promote tourism in a better form.

Recommendations:
As we have discussed and said earlier, Nepal needs to increase flight connectivity. Our country is dependent on air only. Nepal government should understand this fact and increase international connectivity and open the opportunity to open more gateways for the tourists to visit Nepal. Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) still has not got international routes for flights even after acquiring the wide-body aircraft, this should be addressed. Another is NAC should acquire six more wide-body aircraft as it is the only international national carrier in Nepal. NAC should have direct connectivity to the major cities of the world to make an easy gateway for the tourists willing to visit Nepal and airfare should be made reasonable for passengers. And the Visit Nepal Year 2020 organising committee along with others shall massively organise entertaining activities like Tourism Fare and Nepal Nights and other activities in major tourism hubs. And last but not the least, Nepal should be actively promoting Nepal and its destinations through digital marketing in an international arena and increase visibility to make the event successful.
It seems like the preparations of the event was left for the last minute. A national coordinator should have been appointed and been allowed to get cracking the moment the campaign was announced. Once again the target is set in number of tourists that is two million visitors. In my opinion, the target should have also had a monetary target and length of stay target. The campaign should have targeted monetary aspects and have brought a scheme like 14 Days in Nepal or something along those lines. That would re-align our marketing efforts towards medium and long-haul markets and make us focus on selling our comparative and competitive advantages which lies in nature and adventure based tourism. When the target is set in number of tourists then we look to short haul travellers and this harms our tourist spend an average length of stay. The tourist spend can still be brought up if we are able to put in place the things that our short haul travellers demand of a tourist destination but, we have not even begun to look in that direction. So, the number will be fulfilled but, the underlying target, to make money from tourism will be defeated, after all. Still, we can hope the promotional activities will enable Nepal as a destination to be seen in good light and we can reap downstream benefits for years to come.

Recommendations:
The campaign will raise awareness about tourism and its potential benefits throughout the country. In some cases it may even raise hopes beyond reasonable expectations but, these things happen when the planning period is short and we hurriedly get into the game and do not have enough time to consider all our options. In the short time available we are hopeful that at least some key infrastructure areas will be addressed. The Kathmandu Airport is a management disaster. It is not the smallest or the busiest airport in the world yet, visitors have a very negative view of the arrival and departure experiences. This can be easily remedied using a few industrial engineering and management tweaks and hacks. The roads in Kathmandu and other major tourist areas are a major concern. Indeed, in many cases, like Nagarkot for instance the road has been dug up for years. The roads need immediate fixing, like immediately after Dashain and before the onset of 2020. Major tourist sites in Kathmandu and Pokhara lacks basic infrastructure like toilets, rest areas, designated parking for tour coaches and tourist vehicles, medical facilities, etc. These can be implemented in months and will provide tangible, major relief to both tourists and tour operators. Finally, when the whole thing is on, before it is over, the Government of Nepal must decide why tourism is important, what it can and cannot deliver and make long term plans to make the deliverables reality.

With over 30 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Jean-Louis Ripoche started his journey in 1982 as a Management Trainee at Le Meridien Abu Dhabi. During his professional career with Starwood, Ripoche worked at Le Meridien in Boston, Kuwait, Phuket, Jakarta, Bangkok and Khao Lak.

Later, the French born Ripoche was appointed as Complex General Manager for the Maldives and also as the General Manager for Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa. He also served as the General Manager at Sheraton Tel Aviv, Israel.

Currently, he is the General Manager of newly opened Kathmandu Marriott Hotel. In an interview, Jean-Louis Ripoche throws light on the potential of luxury properties in the Nepal. Excerpts:

**I think we have a lot to look forward in Nepal because of Visit Nepal 2020. Nepal has been a coveted country for its beautiful streets and endless mountains. We are very excited to be a part of VNY 2020 and I think it’s going to be a historic event which will change our outlook towards tourism and the country itself. Talking about expectations, I think that VNY 2020 will not only highlight our country as a destination to visit for its beautiful mountains but also for its rich culture and heritage.**

Kathmandu Marriott Hotel has been well appreciated by the people. What are the key factors behind this appreciation?

I am quite honoured that our offers and services have been well received by everyone around us. We have been graced with a lot of love and compassion from Nepal. We have had an enormous positive impact on the community through our sustainable approach towards staffing and supplying local produce to the hotel. We have been working with local organisations to fill various positions at our property and also supply it with locally produced goods. Hence, underscoring Nepal’s goal of building up its core industries including tourism and agriculture. We try to locally source all our produce like meats, products, coffee, etc. and provide the global business community with an example of how business and philanthropy can work together to improve people’s lives.

Our 214 room hotel here in the country’s capital has created more than 500 jobs. We will be among the country’s biggest and most...
luxurious properties, further enhancing Nepal’s reputation as a hub for conferences and conventions. The hotel will offer world-class meeting spaces with modern amenities to cater to the demands of this rapidly growing market.

What are your expectations from Visit Nepal 2020?

I think we have a lot to look forward in Nepal because of Visit Nepal 2020. Nepal has been a coveted country for its beautiful streets and endless mountains. We are very excited to be a part of VNY 2020! I think it’s going to be a historic event which will change our outlook towards tourism and the country itself. Talking about expectations, I think that VNY 2020 will not only highlight our country as a destination to visit for its beautiful mountains but also for its rich culture and heritage.

What differentiates Kathmandu Marriott Hotel from the existing competition?

Kathmandu Marriott Hotel is thoughtfully designed to ensure a brilliant stay. We look forward to delivering unparalleled guest experiences backed by comfort and great service through best in class facilities and amenities for both international and local guests. We offer four distinctive dining venues to enjoy sumptuous local and international cuisines that is raising the bar for the capital’s culinary scene.

Please comment on the upcoming launch of five star properties...

The country welcomed one million tourists in 2016, reaching a new record to show that this country has great tourism potential. And it’s important that we accommodate the needs and requirements of each and every tourist when required. Accommodation is the key part in development of tourism in any country; the most important thing is availability of different categories of hotels from three to five stars hotels. Existence of hotels is not enough to help development of tourism in certain destination but the level of hospitality should be highly intake.

How can VNY 2020 capitalise on your international chain to draw awareness on the campaign? Any collaborative ideas you would like to share?

We would love to collaborate with VNY 2020. It has already brought so many changes in the country as well as globally with its marketing in London buses. These initiatives are helping the country garner a lot of reach everywhere. I would be delighted to collaborate with VNY 2020 in various segments such as trekking packages, destination packages, meeting requirements and many more. We have a beautiful property which can accommodate the various needs and we are always here to support VNY 2020 for the development of Nepal.

Get ready to explore the best of Nepal’s natural beauty and culture.

BETTER AIR LINKS

Boost tourism

Increase in direct international flights to the country undeniably boosts tourist arrival. Country Managers of several international airlines agree that VNY 2020 will make a difference to promote tourism in the country.

Our efforts to promote Nepal as a tourism destination have been visible since the start of our operation in the country in 2013. We started increasing our flight frequency from 2016 onwards. This year we are increasing our flights by 14-15% and last year we increased to 11%. Also, we are promoting Nepal as a tourism destination in our wider network of 300 destinations. However, we are expecting initiatives from the government to make the operation more feasible.

Visit Nepal Year 2020 should not be just one year campaign but for years to come. For us, the numbers aren’t important but what we are doing to reach that particular number is of utmost importance. Our main motto is to promote Nepal beyond mountains. To facilitate this, we are participating in several international travel marts and promoting Nepal worldwide. Moreover, to bring in a number of tourists in the country, everyone should see themselves in the big picture from tour operators to a layman.

We are planning to bring more tourists from Thailand, especially the pilgrim groups, trekkers and package groups by offering special and group fares. Since Nepal is known as Lord Buddha’s birthplace, many people from different countries want to visit the country to witness the culture and diversity. Further, we are planning to operate four additional flights from Bangkok to Kathmandu, with a total of 11 flights in a week.

In accordance with the on-going initiatives, we believe there are various attributes required that would help facilitate the campaign mission. Firstly, the vision of the government policy for tourism needs to be clear and has to be on the government’s priority list. Secondly, the infrastructure of the country needs the utmost attention. Thirdly, handing over souvenirs to most frequent flyers with VNY symbol will serve as a good gesture. Lastly, the up-gradation of international airport is highly required. As part of an effective strategy, VNY Secretariat should request all airlines coming to Kathmandu to carry at least one article on Nepal in their in-flight magazine.

We are proud to have embraced VNY2020 and are working with the Nepal Tourism Board to make it a success. We recently concluded our Etihad Chefs corner, a successful partnership with NTB and Marriott Hotel to promote Nepal and Nepali local food. We invited our in-flight chef, Sanjar Thakur and the President of World Chef’s Association, Thomas A Gugler, to host the event.

We are also increasing the flight capacity to Nepal with the introduction of our new A320 cabin configuration. This will provide an additional 30 economy seats, bringing the total number of seats to 158 a day. Also, we will double the daily flights during September and November.

The collaboration will be a key attribute in facilitating the campaign mission. Meeting with the team from VNY 2020 and Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation will allow us to discuss possible areas that need assistance and look for solutions to maximise benefits for the campaign. Moreover, UAE is one of the emerging markets which is attracting more tourists for VNY 2020 and we believe there is a huge opportunity to focus on the UAE and wider GCC for greater direct travel between the two regions.

Visit Nepal 2020 is a fantastic initiative to help the rest of the world understand the different facets of tourism in Nepal. Also, it is an initiative to attract more tourists to visit and engage in different activities aside from the usual mountain trekking. Nepal has so much to offer, and the main challenge is how to effectively communicate this to the rest of the world. We hope to work closely with Nepal Tourism Board and Visit Nepal Secretariat and are keen to move forward on our plans to advertise VNY 2020 in several key markets like Australia, Japan and Singapore.

To correct the misconception that Nepal is just a place for mountain trekking, we aim to promote it as a holiday destination of choice by highlighting the range of varied attractions – from jungle safaris to Nepal being the birthplace of Buddha. Through advertising, and equipping our overseas travel agents with ample information on Nepal, we hope to entice more visitors to experience all that the destination has to offer. One strategy that would help Nepal attract more visitors would be providing visa-free entry for tourists.

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Prime Minister Rt. Hon. KP Sharma Oli holds meeting on Visit Nepal Year 2020

At a meeting held in Singha Durbar amidst the main organizing committee and the program implementation subcommittee of the Visit Nepal Year 2020 campaign, the Prime Minister endorsed the budget of Rs 10 crores allocated for the campaign for the current fiscal. National Coordinator Suraj Vaidya was given 10% authority and the programme implementing committee has 15% authority to mobilize the budget. The committee will have to spend the entire budget within three months.

The meeting also took the decision to use the VNY 2020 logo and slogan on every government website and letterheads of public offices. Focusing on the effective implementation of the campaign, the committee has decided to work in close cohesion with provincial and local governments too.

The main organizing committee comprises 50 members, including the prime minister, representatives from the tourism ministry, Nepal Tourism Board, chief ministers and tourism ministers of all seven provinces as well as representatives from tourism organizations such as Hotel Association Nepal, Trekking Agencies’ Association Nepal and Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents.

Soft launch of VNY 2020 in Pokhara

A soft launch of Visit Nepal Year 2020 campaign was held in Pokhara on April 13. Prithivi Subba Gurung, Chief Minister of Gandaki province, initiated the soft launch. National Coordinator of VNY 2020 Suraj Vaidya, CEO of Nepal Tourism Board Deepak Raj Joshi, representatives from the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, along with tourism entrepreneurs and stakeholders were present during the inaugural event. Biplav Poudel, Coordinator of VNY soft launch event had also organized cultural floats that were paraded around Pokhara, from Birausta Chowk to Phewa Lake and passing through Ratna Chowk and Barahi Chowk.

VNY 2020 supports The Lumbini Museum

The Lumbini Museum today hosted a reception on April 25 to announce its vision for a world-class museum of Buddhism in the birthplace of the Buddha, Lumbini. Addressing an intimate gathering of government representatives, private sector leaders, diplomats and cultural experts, the Museum’s Founding Director, Sumnima Udas highlighted the importance of the legacy of Buddha and Lumbini for Nepal and expressed the Museum’s commitment to preserving that heritage and drawing international attention to it. Located inside the Sacred Garden Area of Lumbini, a UNESCO World Heritage site, Phase I of the Lumbini Museum will be housed in a heritage building designed by the Pritzker Prize-winning Japanese architect Kenzo Tange. The 1970s masterpiece is now being re-imagined by leading Taiwanese architect Kris Yao and his team to curate an entirely new cultural and spiritual experience. In a presentation to the audience, the Museum unveiled initial plans and stated that they will be working in partnership with Lumbini Development Trust as well as a wide range of national and global experts and supporters.

Several speakers addressed the gathering, emphasizing the importance of Lumbini to the cultural and spiritual identity of Nepal and the opportunity it presents to showcase the best of Nepal’s rich heritage. Ven. Metteyya Sakypattavice, Vice Chairman of Lumbini Development Trust; Suraj Vaidya, National Coordinator of Visit Nepal 2020; journalist and author Vijay Kumar Pandey and reknowned Buddhist teacher His Eminence Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche spoke at the event expressing their support for the initiative. This marks the formal beginning of Phase I of the Lumbini Museum Initiative. The team is now working to fulfill fundraising priorities, commission and curate artworks and mobilise global partnerships and expertise in service of the vision to provide a truly world-class experience at The Lumbini Museum.

Johan Ernst Nison recognised as Goodwill Ambassador of VNY 2020

A talk event organised by Business 360 in the capital on May 6 featured Johan Ernst Nilson, one of the world’s leading explorers, motivational speaker, philanthropist, eco warrior and author. Nilson has a strong connection with Nepal and is on a unique journey of self exploration, sharing and giving in all of his adventures across the globe.

With over 52 expeditions in 172 countries including Mount Everest, Johan Ernst is a strong advocate against global warming and poverty, and a staunch supporter of education in developing countries and of the protection of endangered species. As a global adventurer for more than 20 years and a Guinness world record holder, Johan has embarked on a journey from the North Pole to the South Pole, has climbed the Seven Summits, has flown a boat across Europe, cycled from Sweden to the Sahara Desert, and a lot more.

He is from Sweden and has been featured on globally renowned media outlets such as the BBC, CNN, the Discovery Channel and the National Geographic Channel besides being featured on the cover of the TIME magazine.

At the talk event held at Hotel Royal Singh, he shared about his deep connection with Nepal and inspired the audience with anecdotes of his vast experiences. He says, “Don’t be afraid because something is really hard, because people keep saying that things are impossible; the impossible just seeks more time.”

Johan Ernst Nilson was recognised as Nepal’s Tourism Goodwill Ambassador for Visit Nepal 2020. Suraj Vaidya, National Coordinator of VNY 2020 presented him with the honour amidst a gathering of tourism entrepreneurs, travel trade association heads, media professionals and youth leaders.

Ambassadors and Diplomatic Corp appraised of VNY 2020 initiatives and plans

A meeting was held to share the plans and undertakings of VNY 2020 among all the embassies, consulates and international organizations working in Nepal on May 23 and 24. Former Secretary of Ministry of Culture Tourism and Civil Aviation, Mohan Krishna Sapkota and National Coordinator, Suraj Vaidya led the discussions. The meeting was positively received with pledges from several embassies to find collaborative ways to support the VNY 2020 Campaign and to promote tourism in Nepal.
VNY 2020 commissions Lonely Planet to produce three pocket guide books to be launched in January 2020

Ctrip is the Chinese provider of travel services including accommodation reservation, transportation ticketing, packaged tours and corporate travel management. It was founded in 1999, it is currently the largest online travel agency in China.

Flame of Peace

Suraj Vaidya met with the Head Monk of the Zen Temple for Buddhist Tourism Promotion to discuss the Flame of Peace to be carried from Lumbini to Shanghai which will shine forever in Jing’an Temple and Bao’en Temple.

Visit Nepal 2020 signs agreement with Shanghai CTRIP to promote Nepal in China

National Coordinator for Visit Nepal Year 2020, Suraj Vaidya signed a long awaited strategic agreement with Shanghai CTRIP Commerce Co to promote Nepal as a preferred travel destination in the China market. The agreement is valid from June 2019 to June 2020 and the promotional campaign will be run under the title: ‘See You In Nepal’, and is the biggest digital marketing campaign for Nepal in China.

China is the world’s largest outbound tourism market with 149.72 million people travelling in 2018. In Nepal, Chinese arrivals dropped from 123805 in 2015 to 104664 in 2017. Despite the drop, China still remains the second largest source market at 11.1% for Nepal.

There is a long history of economic, political and social interaction between China and Nepal. According to the Chinese Outbound Tourism Research Institute (COTRI), the Chinese like Nepal for its close proximity, clean environment, stunning nature and friendly people. There is interest in UNESCO heritage sites and places of religious and cultural significance in Nepal. Pokhara is a favoured hub among Chinese nationals besides jungle safari, handicraft shopping, Mount Everest and the birthplace of Buddha, Lumbini remaining key attractions.

Visit Nepal 2020 has commissioned Lonely Planet to produce three pocket guide books on the themes of spirituality, culture and heritage, and adventure.

Meeting with Airline Operators

During the meeting on May 22, major plans for promoting the Visit Nepal Year 2020 were discussed with members of Airlines Operating Association of Nepal (AOAN). VNY 2020 officials also discussed their plans and work updates with Abdullah Tuncer Kececi, General Manager of Turkish Airlines, Nepal. Several benefits and challenges regarding tourism and aviation in Nepal were discussed along with ways to work together for promotional activities during the campaign.

Three women summit Mt Everest to promote goodwill between Nepal, India and China

A flag off program to honour the three women expedition from Nepal, India and China to scale Mt Everest while spreading the message of universal peace and friendship was held at the VNY 2020 Secretariat. The participants were Kanchhi Maya Tamang from Nepal, Kalpana Dash from India and Liyamu Ma from China. The Team was given the VNY 2020 flag with the signature of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli to hoist on the summit of the mountain.

Tamang is the first woman of her community to successfully climb Mt Everest. She is also involved in social causes with various organisations and is the Goodwill Ambassador of UN Women since 2017. Ma has previously led and climbed Everest, Manaslu, Lobuche, Mustakata. She is associated with Crazy Mountain Expedition-China.

Das was a qualified climber having climbing experience in India, Nepal, Europe, South America and Australia. She had also climbed Mt Everest in 2008 as a team leader apart from climbing six other highest peaks in other continents. All three climbers successfully summated Mt Everest but tragically Indian climber Das breathed her last near the balcony area while descending from the summit point.

VNY 2020 hosts closing dinner for Himalayan Travel Mart

A dinner for Himalayan Travel Mart delegates was hosted by VNY2020 Secretariat on June 9 with the intention to promote the campaign among the international travel trade participants at Lord of the Drinks, Thamel. Over 400 guests what became an immense networking opportunity. Videos promoting Visit Nepal Year 2020 were presented along with live music.

Meeting with SEJON

Introduction and outline of Visit Nepal Year 2020 was shared by the National Program Coordinator, Suraj Vaidya on May 8 with President of Society of Economic Journalists of Nepal, Pushpa Raj Acharya and SEJON team.
The I.R. Committee chaired by Hon. Pabitra N. Kharel and all the members including former Prime Minister Hon. Madhav Kumar Nepal, Hon. Pushpa Bhusal, Hon. Renuka Gurung, Hon. Agni Prasad Sapkota, Hon. Dr. Deepak Prakash Bhatt, Hon. Sarala Yadav, Hon. Sama Siura, Hon. Dibya M. Rajbhandari, Hon. Uma Regmi and Hon. Suraj K. Dura visited the VNY2020 Secretariat on June 10 at the invitation of the National Program Coordinator, Suraj Vaidya for a detailed briefing on the plans and progress of the VNY2020 campaign. Welcoming the dignitaries, the Former Secretary, MOCTCA and Chairman of PISC VNY2020, Mohan K. Sapkota briefed about the major developments and progress made till date and the limitations that the Secretariat was facing due to delayed onset of the campaign and also budget constraints. Suraj Vaidya made a detailed presentation about the works completed, in progress and planned to promote Nepal as a lifetime destination. He focused on airport improvements, media and online marketing, new products and destinations, trainings etc with a focus on the long term economic benefit of the country. CEO NTB, Deepak Raj Joshi briefed on the joint efforts made by NTB with VNY2020. The Parliamentarians gave insightful feedback and expressed full commitment to back its development and strengthen the VNY2020 at the Parliament. They also appreciated the partial renovation of the historical 108 year old Kaiser Mahal that houses the VNY2020 Office and recommended that other such buildings must be converted into museums and hotels in the future. The Committee also asked for regular updates on the progress of the vision and mission of the VNY2020 campaign and to share the same with a wider base of stakeholders.

**Eric Valli recognised as Visit Nepal 2020 Tourism Goodwill Ambassador**

The Visit Nepal 2020 Secretariat has recognised renowned French photographer and film director Eric Valli as a Tourism Goodwill Ambassador for the Visit Nepal Year 2020 campaign. To mark the occasion the VNY 2020 Secretariat hosted a talk program by Eric Valli prior to presenting him with the honour on June 25 in Kathmandu. Eric Valli has a long and strong association with Nepal and captured some of the most remote and inaccessible areas on film putting Nepal on the global map.

Among his outstanding works is the capturing of the salt caravan in Dolpo region, Eric Valli pays homage to the extraordinary culture of the region shooting for months at 15,000 feet. He has made lasting friendships with the Dolpo people and made a film called the Himalaya Caravan that was a 1999 Oscar nominee for the best foreign film.

Eric Valli was born in 1952 in Dijon, eastern France. He originally trained as a cabinet-maker, but has spent most of his career working on the relationship between man and nature. Since 1981 Eric has captured on camera some of the most inaccessible locations in the world, working for titles such as National Geographic, Life, GEO, Paris Match, Stern and Smithsonian magazines, and The Sunday Times of London.

Eric specialises in mountain scenery and is an expert on the Himalayas, in particular Nepal, Tibet and Afghanistan. In 1987, his photo story Honey Hunters – documenting the cliff-climbing Gurung tribesmen of west-central Nepal – won a World Press Award. In 1999 he directed the adventure story Himalaya – a tale of survival in the mountain region – which became the first Nepalese film to receive an Academy Award nomination for best foreign film. Eric has published 14 books to date, including in 2006 The Sky Will Be My Roof, a memoir of adventure and travel. In total, his photography has been recognised with three World Press Awards. In addition he has shot commercial work for Hermès and Louis Vuitton.

**Vriksha turning Nepal green**

Vriksha Foundation has pledged to make plant 26,000 trees under the initiation of artist Milan Rai. They organised a tree plantation event at the Tribhuvan International Airport to mark the World Environment Day. Former Secretary of Ministry of Culture Tourism and Civil Aviation, Mohan Krishna Sapkota, National Coordinator of VNY 2020 Suraj Vaidya, General Manager of TIA, association heads, PISC members, airline officials, VNY 2020 Secretariat team, former Miss Nepals 2018 Shrinkhala Khatiwada, Manita Deskota and Romila Amatya and members of the media attended.

A discussion programme was held on July 8 at the VNY Secretariat in Kaiser Mahal, Kathmandu among the heads of various Travel Trade Associations and the PISC members of Visit Nepal Year 2020 on the product development of destinations identified as Lifetime Experiences under the campaign.

President of TAAN and PISC member, Nava Raj Dahal made a presentation on the 27 identified destinations covering all provinces of the country. The identification and development of new tourism destinations has been given priority by the government to enhance economic activity and create livelihoods in different parts of the country. The destination development program is an integral aspect of the national budget and is expected to facilitate investment and expand tourism to remote corners of the country even as it creates infrastructure and adequate facilities in those areas.

At the interaction, the upcoming budget for the national campaign was also discussed. Some of the key programs for the upcoming year were deliberated and representatives of the trade associations who are experts in their areas and stakeholders of the tourism industry were invited to collaborate and provide feedback for the successful implementation of the Visit Nepal Year 2020.

The meeting was presided by Nandini Thapa Lahe, Member Secretary of PISC, VNY Secretariat. Nepal Tourism Board CEO, Deepak Raj Joshi was also present.

**Interaction with Travel Trade Associations Heads on New Lifetime Experience Products and Budget 76/77**

**Yeti announced mascot of VNY 2020**

Yeti announced mascot of VNY2020.
VNY 2020 honours British hockey players for setting world record

The VNY 2020 Secretariat held a press conference on July 21 to honour the British hockey players team who have created a new world record for playing a match at 5500 metres. The team comprising of Andy Halliday, Manager of the team, who is also a member of National team of English Field Hockey and 25 players shared their experience of playing hockey in high altitude. This team has shown the potentiality of altitude sports in the country which can be a medium of promoting Nepal as one of the world’s best destinations for high altitude sports. Places like Jumla, Manang and Solukhumbu among others can attract a large number of high altitude sport enthusiasts. The recent establishment of high altitude sports training centers in the country has also increased the footfall of sportsperson for altitude sports like hockey, marathon, skiing, archery and cycling.

VNY 2020 launches Brand Identity amidst industry stakeholders

Held at Hotel Yak and Yeti on June 27 a special event was hosted to release the new brand identity of Visit Nepal 2020. Image Ark, an art studio company has been commissioned to create the visual identity and branding guidelines. Former Secretary of Ministry of Culture Tourism and Civil Aviation, Mohan Krishna Sapkota - association heads, PISC members, airline officials, tour operators, hotels, banks, celebrities, ambassadors, consultants and media were invited for the launch. National Coordinator of VNY 2020 presented the need for a visual identity to create a seamless communication strategy for international and domestic markets. A special video recorded message from the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. KP Sharma Oli was played at the event in which he encouraged every Nepali to take ownership of VNY 2020 in creating Nepal as lifetime experience for visitors and guests.

One hundred and eight larger than life sculptures are being made of the yeti which is the official mascot of the Visit Nepal Year 2020. These will be displayed within and outside the country in prime locations to garner interest in Nepal. The greater significance is that each yeti will be painted by prominent artists of Nepal in a display of creativity and ingenuity, and yet another opportunity of taking Nepal’s art to the world.

Nepal Tourism Excellence Awards 2020

The first meeting of the Advisory panel of the Nepal Tourism Excellence Awards 2020 was held in Kathmandu. The panel comprises of Prof Dr Bijay KC - Dean of KUSOM, CA Jitendra B Rajbhandary, Dipendra Purush Dhakal - Former Tourism Secretary, Prachanda Man Shrestha - Tourism Expert and Former CEO of Nepal Tourism Board, Prof Govind Nepal – Chairman of Institute for Strategic and Socio-Economic Research and Advocate Sajjan Bar Singh Thapa. The wards are being promulgated to shine the light on the most innovative and capable tourism businesses and entrepreneurs of Nepal promoting success, innovation and growth.
Raj Gyawali is a social entrepreneur and responsible tourism leader who believes that tourism and development go hand-in-hand. Gyawali is the Founder and Director of Socialtours, established in 2002, a soft adventure specialist based in Kathmandu. Further, he plays a lead role in the activities and practices of the Sustainable Tourism Network in Nepal, MAST, and the Fringe NT Network worldwide. He initiates new networking and joint marketing efforts such as the Green Circuit in the sub-continent, and designs off-road products in Nepal such as the Tamang Heritage Trail, the Chepang Hill Trail, and Shamanism Treks. He actively promotes service learning in Nepal focusing on responsible volunteering. After a Bachelor degree in Agriculture and an MBA in Development, he got interested in responsible ways to support his country. He loves trekking, mountain biking, bouldering and anything adventurous.

For VNY 2020, Raj Gyawali is leading a team which is working towards developing a lifetime experience in mountain biking in the deepest gorge of the world, Kali Gandaki. In an interview he shares the details about the on-going project, the activity build towards developing a lifetime experience in mountain biking in the deepest gorge of the world, Kali Gandaki.

What is the best time of the year for mountain biking?

It is interesting to look at that, Mountain biking in the Annapurna is good all year round. Similarly, biking in Kali Gandaki can be good any time of the year as well. Though getting there might get complicated during the monsoon because of the road conditions. But the recent development in transportation might solve this problem to a greater extent. Overall, it is a year-round biking destination in different conditions at a different level. The higher regions may be better now but the lower regions will be a little later in the year.

Can you share more details of the week-long Kali X festival?

The current packages are run by the mountain biking community out there. For instance, the Mustang area is already being used by mountain biking with packages like seven days, five days and three days. For longer mountain biking experience the Annapurna serves the purpose. Besides, there are a lot of activities which are already taking shape. One of them being Yak Attack which is the highest mountain bike race on earth. The 2019 edition will have even more single track than ever before and include more Enduro sections – including the highest timed Enduro section, from 5416m down to 2800m above sea level. The other is the Yak Ru Enduro – an event that is equal parts big-mountain competition, alpine adventure, and exploration through the heart of the Nepalese backcountry. The best trails and scenic views of the rugged and amazing Annapurna Circuit – known primarily for its trekking routes – are showcased in this remarkable high-altitude event.

What are some of the best mountain biking trails in the country?

Our country is made for mountain biking. If you look at Nepal, our entire mid-hill up to 3000m above sea level is ideal for mountain biking. However, the best biking trails are Annapurna circuit, Manang, Hetudra, Illam and Phapha as you can see Everest from there.
VNY 2020 GOODWILL AMBASSADOR PROFILES

The Visit Nepal 2020 Secretariat recognises global persons of influence who have a wide range of talents and achievements and are committed to promoting Nepal as a tourism destination as Goodwill Ambassadors. These are people who will use the positive power of their fame to help promote Nepal to the world. Below are the profiles of five goodwill ambassadors so far appointed for VNY 2020.

Johan Ernst Nilson

Johan Ernst Nilson is today one of the world’s leading explorers, motivational speaker, environment explorer, author, and eco-warrior. With over 52 expeditions in 172 countries including Mount Everest, Nilson is one of the world’s leading explorers and his dream is to motivate people to follow their dreams and inspire them to reach their goals.

He started his career as an explorer and motivational speaker 20 years ago. His motto in life - “Everything is Possible - the Impossible just takes more time!” has made him one of the world’s leading explorers having accomplished 52 expeditions in 172 countries.

Besides being a global adventurer, Nilson is recognised as a keen philanthropist, a strong advocate against global warming and poverty, and a staunch supporter of education in developing countries and of the protection of endangered species.

As a global adventurer for more than 20 years and a Guinness world record holder, he has embarked on a journey from the North Pole to the South Pole, has climbed the Seven Summits, has flown a boat across Europe, cycled from Sweden to the Sahara Desert, and a lot more.

He is from Sweden and has been featured on globally renowned media outlets such as the BBC, CNN, the Discovery Channel and the National Geographic Channel besides being featured on the cover of the TIME magazine.

Eric Valli

Renowned photographer and film director, Eric Valli was originally trained as a cabinet-maker, but Valli spent most of his career working on the relationship between man and nature. Since 1981, he has captured some of the most inaccessible locations in the world, working for titles such as National Geographic, Life, GEO, Paris Match, Stern and Smithsonian magazines, and The Sunday Times of London.

Egberton Rulove “Roelly” Etienne-Winklaar

Egberton Rulove “Roelly” Etienne-Winklaar was born and raised in the Dutch-controlled Caribbean island of Curacao. Although Roelly enjoyed bodybuilding from a young age, he became serious about the sport after a near-fatal car crash. He then set his goals to becoming a pro, which he achieved by earning his pro card in 2009. He first came to national prominence in the US with his overall win at the 2009 NPC Arnold Amateur Championships, displaying a rare combination of massive size and shredded conditioning that heralded big things to come.

After earning his pro card, Roelly returned for the 2010 IFBB Arnold Classic and turned plenty of heads with an eye-popping physique that earned him a strong seventh-place finish in a deep field in his IFBB debut. After placing third at the 2010 IFBB Australia Pro Grand Prix, he shocked the bodybuilding world by winning the 2010 IFBB New York Pro. Seemingly out of nowhere a new star was born. Another remarkable success was when he was crowned the people’s champion at the 2018 Mr. Olympia with the debut of the fan vote.

He specialises in mountain scenery and is an expert on the Himalayas, in particular, Nepal, Tibet and Afghanistan. In 1987, his photo story Honey Hunters – documenting the cliff-climbing Gurung tribesmen of west-central Nepal – won a World Press Award. In 1999 he directed the adventure story Himalaya – a tale of survival in the mountain region – which became the first Nepalese film to receive an Academy Award nomination for the best foreign film. In total, his photography has been recognised with three World Press Awards. Moreover, he has published 14 books to date, including The Sky Will Be My Roof, a memoir of adventure and travel. Besides, he has shot commercial work for Hermès and Louis Vuitton.
To promote the Karnali Quest, we are conducting a kayak race on October 22, 2019 as a pre-promotional event. This event will have participation of world-class kayakers which will help in the promotion of the Karnali Quest 2020.

How is it set to be a record holder?

As far as we know 180 km rafting race has been done before in the Amazon River. Karnali Quest is going to be the longest rafting race at 240 kms. This five-day Karnali quest will start from Dailekh and finish at Tikapur.

Megh Ale, President, Nepal River Conservation Trust, also known as River Man in Nepal is transforming the way people understand the value and economic potential of Nepal’s rivers. Ale is saving the rivers of Nepal through ecotourism, conservation, and cleanup through his organisation, the Nepal River Conservation Trust.

Karnali Quest 2020 is slated to be the longest rafting race in the world covering a distance of 240 kms where world class kayakers will compete. The event has made it to one of the top 20 lifetime experiences of Nepal identified by Visit Nepal 2020. Excerpts of a conversation with Megh Ale:

What is the Karnali Quest?

Karnali Quest is a world-class event for rafting enthusiasts and kayakers and rafters with lots of good rapids of three-plus and four-plus grades to flat water at the West Seti confluence for white water rafting and a lot of adventure. This is one of the most amazing white water rafting in the world as defined by rafters themselves. This event is going to be one of a kind which will demonstrate rafters a lifetime rafting experience along with discovery about the indigenous culture of the Karnali region.

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Shree Shivkrupanand Swami

Shree Shivkrupanand Swami, also known as ‘Baba Swami’ is an Indian spiritual teacher and author. Swami is known for Samarpan meditation and meditation workshops that he runs for free in India, United States, Canada, United Kingdom and other countries. He also runs the Samarpan Meditation Foundation. His spirituality was paved in Nepal during one of his visits. He learned about meditation technique as a way for the soul’s path to liberation in the Himalayas. He established Samarpan Ashrams in Dandi, Punadi, Ajmer, Shiroda, Rajkot and Long Acre, UK. In April 2015, he conducted an eight-day Samarpan Dhyanyog Meditation Camp for Indian Parliamentarians. He has also conducted Samarpan Meditation workshops in Sri Lanka in 2016. The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe had shown great interest in conducting meditation workshop for Parliamentarians of Sri Lanka on similar lines to the workshop conducted for Indian Parliamentarians in 2015.

Heinz Egli

Heinz Egli brings with him 30 years of experience in hotel management, restaurant operations and private club administration. Egli came to Hong Kong as Sous Chef for the Baron’s Table at the Holiday Inn, Golden Mile. In 1983 he became one of the youngest Executive Chefs in Asia, opening the first International Hotel in China - The Holiday Inn, Lido Beijing.

As Corporate Chef for New World Hotels International, based in Hong Kong, he was involved in the opening of more than 10 Hotels in the People’s Republic of China and Southeast Asia. With the opening of the Novotel Citygate, Hong Kong he delivered new standards in buffet dining, developing one of Accor’s most successful buffet restaurant concepts. Later he moved to India as the opening General Manager of Novotel’s flagship property in Mumbai. He has further worked with International franchise companies including Burger King, Ajisen Ramen, Cafe Ritazza and Caviar House to name a few. In addition to his extensive professional experience, he is also the founding President of the Hong Kong Chef’s Association.
unseen raw beauty of Karnali itself. Could you share some background on rafting and our rivers?

There is a rapid grade ranging from 1 to 6 in the rafting waters of our rivers. Karnali has the highest rapid of class 4 to class 5 rapids which is suitable for adventurous rafting. November is the right time for rafting as it’s not high water current but medium current. The water current will be adventurous but not dangerous for rafting.

Karnali is the longest and only free-flowing river of Nepal which offers plenty of rapids that will quench your adrenaline rush with an unforgettable rafting adventure before reaching the Seti-Karnali confluence. How well is this adventure sport being promoted in Nepal?

As far as adventure sports are concerned, they are being promoted in Nepal but we cannot see the same ratio of promotional activities for white water rafting. Nepal has not been able to promote white water rafting as it should have been as Nepal is blessed with beautiful rivers and water diversity. White water rafting has a huge scope and it should be taken seriously from the tourism prospect as well.

What is your target audience for the Karnali Quest?

We are looking towards the participation of the world’s best national teams and world-class athletes. This will lead to news coverage from international media and TV channels which will help in promoting Nepal and the virgin territory of Karnali province to the world.

What is the format and when will it be held?

Karnali Quest will be one of the world-class rafting runs that will see the participation of international athletes and rafting record-holders. Karnali is one of the five best rivers of the world and the only free-flowing river of Nepal that offers thrilling white water rafting experience with a lot of good rapids ranging from class three rapid to class 4 rapid grades and flat water at West Seti confluence with loads of adventure. On November 24, 2020, we will reach the venue and prepare for the fest and will offer a grand puja on the occasion of Maha Ekadashi on November 25. The Karnali Quest will start on November 26 and last for five days till November 30.

What are the key highlights of this event, and how will it support Visit Nepal Year 2020?

In the five days event, in every camp, there will be different cultural counters of the indigenous tribes of the Karnali region. At the reception, there will be different tribes and indigenous groups showcasing their unique culture, food and hospitality to the rafters and other participants. There will be cultural reception from Majhi and Khas culture at the starting point of the rafting. Following that on the next stop there will be Badhi reception, then next will be from Raute tribes, Magars, Raji’s (another fisherman tribe), Shonah and Tharu tribes respectively for five days. This will promote the Karnali region and the tribes residing there.

Karnali Region, Province 6 is a virgin territory of Nepal. This quest will work as a gateway to Karnali. It is one of the five best rivers for white water rafting in the world. This will help promote the entire Karnali and show the world the unseen raw beauty of Karnali itself.

How well is this adventure sport being promoted in Nepal?

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CHINA OUTBOUND TOURISM & NEPAL VISITOR ANALYSIS

CHINESE OUTBOUND TRAVEL TRENDS

VNY 2020 SECRETARIAT STAFF DIRECTORY

NEELAM KUMAR NEUPANE
Under Secretary
Mob: 9843109821
neelam.neupane@nepal2020.org.np

GOPAL ADHIKARI
Account Officer
Mob: 9851157399
gopal@nepal2020.org.np

ROHINI PRASHAD KHANAL
Manager – Programs
Mob: 9851029360
rohini@nepal2020.org.np

NIKI SHRESTHA
Tourism Specialist
Mob: 9860438364
niki@nepal2020.org.np

DAMBAR BAHAJUR SUNUWAR
Section Officer
Mob: 9851120968
damber.sunuwar@nepal2020.org.np

RAJENDRA RAJ DHAKAL
Section Officer
Mob: 9841592564
rajendra.dhakal@nepal2020.org.np

PRADIP GAIRE
Officer
Mob: 9849078908
pradip.gaire@nepal2020.org.np

SAMIN POUDEL
Officer – Media
Mob: 9843799344
samin@nepal2020.org.np

PREETI ALE
Officer
Mob: 9816198805
preeti@nepal2020.org.np

JATAK TARA SHAKYA
Officer
Mob: 9841592564
jatak@nepal2020.org.np