

Strategies for high-quality coastal tourism development in Western Guangdong based on international experience

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Abstract. Western Guangdong is a key region for coastal tourism development in Guangdong Province. With favorable development conditions, it possesses the potential to become a well-known coastal tourism destination of high international and domestic standards. Drawing on the successful experiences of internationally renowned coastal tourism destinations in areas such as top-level planning for tourism development, exploration of distinctive features, product development, marketing and promotion, facility and service provision, and sustainable development, this paper examines the practical circumstances of coastal tourism development in Western Guangdong. Based on this analysis, it proposes policy recommendations for promoting high-quality development of coastal tourism in the region from several perspectives, including industrial positioning and policy support, exploration of local characteristics and product development, brand building and multidimensional marketing, improvement of facilities and service quality, as well as ecological protection and sustainable development.

Keywords: coastal tourism, international experience, high-quality development, Western Guangdong

1. Introduction

Western Guangdong occupies a favorable geographical position at the junction of the Beibu Gulf and the South China Sea. It is one of the few subtropical coastal tourism regions in China. The area is endowed with a distinctive and profound cultural heritage and possesses abundant high-quality coastal resources, giving it strong potential to develop into a well-known coastal tourism destination of high national and international standards. However, constrained by factors such as the relatively late start of tourism development and insufficient systematic planning, the overall level of coastal tourism development in Western Guangdong still lags considerably behind that of renowned coastal tourism destinations both in China and abroad. As China's economic and social development enters a stage of high-quality growth and Guangdong advances the strategic goals of building itself into both a "strong tourism province" and a "strong maritime province", the question of how to fully explore the distinctive coastal cultural and tourism resources of Western Guangdong and develop high-level coastal tourism destinations has become an important issue that urgently requires systematic planning by the provincial government and local governments across the region. Learning from the advanced experiences of other regions and applying them to the scientific planning of local tourism development is a common practice worldwide. Therefore, based on the current development of the coastal tourism industry in

Western Guangdong, it is necessary to summarize and draw on the successful development experiences of internationally renowned coastal tourism destinations and to propose policy recommendations for the high-quality development of coastal tourism in the region, thereby providing strong decision-making support for the systematic planning and construction of high-level coastal tourism destinations in Western Guangdong.

2. Successful development experiences of internationally renowned coastal tourism destinations

To systematically summarize the successful experiences of international coastal tourism destination development, this study selects several globally recognized coastal destinations as case studies, including Bali in Indonesia, Phuket in Thailand, Hawaii and Miami in the United States, Jeju Island in South Korea, Santorini in Greece, Cancun in Mexico, and the Maldives. By examining their tourism development processes, the study identifies and synthesizes key lessons from their development practices.

2.1. Government support and policy assistance as the foundation

Coastal tourism development involves numerous complex fields, including land-use planning, infrastructure construction, ecological protection, and destination image building. Relying solely on spontaneous market forces makes it difficult to achieve optimal resource allocation and sustainable industrial development. Consequently, many internationally renowned coastal tourism destinations established comprehensive top-level planning at the early stages of development and subsequently adjusted their strategies in response to different stages of industrial development as well as evolving challenges and demands [1]. At the same time, governments provided policy support and fiscal investment to establish a stable framework for coastal tourism development.

Regarding top-level planning. To prevent disorderly development and homogeneous competition, governments of internationally renowned coastal tourism destinations typically prioritize the establishment of industrial status, the creation of dedicated management institutions, the formulation of development plans, and the clarification of destination positioning in their strategic planning. For example, as early as the 1970s, the Indonesian government designated Bali as a national key tourism development zone, establishing tourism as the core industry in Bali's economic and social development. It also established a specialized tourism management authority, the Bali Tourism Bureau, responsible for coordinating tourism development across the island. Several editions of the *Bali Tourism Development Plan* were subsequently formulated, while differentiated functional positioning was assigned to different areas of the island to promote complementary development and avoid disorderly competition [2].

Regarding policy support. Governments of internationally renowned coastal tourism destinations commonly use policy instruments such as fiscal subsidies, tax incentives, and simplified approval procedures to reduce investment barriers and attract high-quality capital into the tourism sector. For instance, the Mexican government granted hotel investors in Cancun corporate income tax exemptions for 10–15 years and provided low-interest loans to support hotel construction. In addition, foreign investment approval procedures were streamlined, and foreign investors were permitted to wholly own and operate hotels and tourism projects, thereby attracting major international hotel groups. Similarly, the South Korean government established the *Jeju Tourism Development Fund*, which subsidizes up to 30% of construction costs for enterprises developing distinctive coastal tourism projects such as "marine ranches" and diving experience centers [3].

Regarding fiscal investment. Public funding is typically allocated through targeted fiscal investment strategies. Under conditions of limited total funding, governments prioritize investment in enhancing a

destination's accessibility and safety. Transportation and environmental infrastructure therefore often constitute the primary focus of public investment in internationally renowned coastal tourism destinations. For example, during the early stages of Cancun's development, the Mexican government invested heavily in building an integrated road network connecting the urban center, resort areas, and surrounding attractions, greatly facilitating tourist mobility. The Maldives, given its coral island geography, has heavily invested in the development of seaplane services and high-speed boat transportation networks, creating a comprehensive multi-modal transport system covering the entire archipelago. In addition, solar and wind power stations have been constructed on several islands, enabling the tourism industry to pursue environmentally sustainable development [4].

2.2. Resource integration and the exploration of distinctive features as the key

The core appeal of coastal tourism destinations does not lie in the isolated presentation of a single resource. Rather, it emerges from the systematic integration of diverse resources—including natural, cultural, and industrial assets—and the in-depth exploration of regionally unique characteristics. Through this process, diversified product systems that cater to the needs of different visitor segments can be developed, ultimately forming sustainable competitive advantages. Resource integration addresses the issue of factor aggregation, the exploration of distinctive features resolves the challenge of differentiated positioning, and diversified product development ensures market alignment. These three elements are progressively interconnected and collectively constitute the key logic behind the success of many internationally renowned coastal tourism destinations.

Regarding resource integration. Most internationally renowned coastal tourism destinations rely on governments or leading institutions to guide resource integration through planning coordination and institutional innovation. By breaking down barriers between resources, they achieve multidimensional integration such as "nature + culture", "core attractions + supporting facilities", and "local resources + external resources", thereby effectively addressing the problem of resource fragmentation. For example, the success of Santorini in Greece lies in the precise integration of volcanic geological resources and blue-and-white architectural culture. Unique geological landscapes—such as the volcanic crater, Red Beach, and Black Beach—are spatially integrated with the iconic blue-and-white towns of Oia and Fira, forming a core tourism route characterized by "geological exploration and town strolling" [5]. Likewise, the rise of Phuket in Thailand has benefited from the integration of marine resources, cultural heritage, and tourism-related industries, while Hawaii's global influence derives from the deep integration of volcanic ecology, Polynesian culture, and marine sports. Through such integration, originally isolated resources are transformed into mutually reinforcing tourism product systems, producing a significant value-enhancement effect.

Regarding exploration of distinctive features. Internationally renowned coastal tourism destinations generally follow a three-dimensional logic in identifying their distinctive characteristics: resource endowment—cultural genes—market demand. First, they build upon unique natural endowments, such as volcanic landforms, to highlight the value of natural wonders. Second, they trace historical and cultural contexts to distill cultural elements such as folk festivals and traditional craftsmanship. Finally, by aligning these characteristics with market trends, they transform resource features into experiential products that correspond with tourist preferences, thereby creating distinctive and memorable destination identities. For example, Santorini centers on the theme of "volcanic romantic aesthetics", transforming elements such as blue-and-white architecture, volcanic sunsets, and the Aegean Sea into globally recognized symbols of romance. Similarly, Jeju Island in South Korea emphasizes "volcanic ecology and Korean-style wellness", converting

volcanic landscapes, natural hot springs, and organic agriculture into signature wellness and leisure experiences.

Regarding diversified product development. In response to the increasingly diversified demands of modern tourists—encompassing sightseeing, leisure, experiential activities, and wellness—internationally renowned coastal tourism destinations typically anchor their development in core characteristics while constructing product matrices based on the principles of all-season operation, all-age accessibility, and full-industry-chain integration. This strategy enables comprehensive coverage of diverse consumption scenarios. For example, Miami in the United States has developed a tourism product system spanning urban leisure, coastal experiences, cultural arts, and high-end business tourism. For vacation-oriented tourists, it offers core products such as sunbathing at South Beach, yacht cruising in Biscayne Bay, and nightlife in South Beach. For cultural enthusiasts, programs such as visits to the Art Basel exhibition and educational tours of historical museums are designed. For business travelers, high-end convention and exhibition services are integrated with coastal resort facilities to provide "conference + leisure" packages. Meanwhile, for younger visitors, extreme sports activities such as surfing, skateboarding, and kitesurfing are promoted. This cross-sector integrated product system has enabled Miami to move beyond the positioning of a single beach resort destination, with the proportion of business and cultural tourists continuing to rise steadily [6].

2.3. Precise positioning and diversified marketing as key guarantees

In the increasingly competitive global coastal tourism market, even destinations endowed with high-quality resources and comprehensive product systems may struggle to stand out without clear self-positioning and effective marketing promotion. Therefore, precise positioning and diversified marketing strategies often serve as critical guarantees for the successful development of internationally renowned coastal tourism destinations.

Regarding precise positioning, most internationally recognized coastal tourism destinations conduct in-depth analyses of their own resource endowments, market demand, and competitive landscape to develop a three-dimensional positioning system encompassing resource positioning, visitor segment positioning, and value positioning. Resource positioning focuses on a destination's most core resource advantages—for example, the Maldives' top-tier coral islands and Santorini's volcanic romantic landscapes—transforming resource features into unique brand symbols. Visitor segment positioning is based on market segmentation to identify the main tourist groups, such as Bali's "cultural experience and family vacationers" and Miami's "urban fashion and business travelers", ensuring that products and services are precisely aligned with target needs. Value positioning conveys the core experiences the destination can offer visitors—for instance, Hawaii's "Aloha spirit and multicultural immersion" and Jeju Island's "volcanic ecology and wellness leisure"—helping to build tourists' emotional cognition and value recognition of the destination. Through precise positioning, coastal tourism destinations can avoid a vague "all-encompassing" image and occupy a unique place in the minds of target visitor groups.

Regarding diversified marketing, internationally renowned coastal tourism destinations excel at integrating multiple channels and methods, carrying out precise communication for different visitor groups and scenarios to enhance destination awareness, reputation, and tourist conversion. Especially in recent years, with the development of digital technologies, tourism marketing has expanded from traditional advertising to a comprehensive "online + offline" system. From a marketing perspective, online promotion often leverages social media, short-video platforms, content marketing, KOL collaborations, and live-streaming sales to reach younger audiences. For example, the Bali Tourism Board cooperates with platforms such as TikTok, inviting global tourism KOLs and cultural bloggers to experience traditional batik dyeing in Ubud or film sunset scenes at the Sea Temple, showcasing cultural experience scenarios through short videos and multimedia

content [7]. Offline marketing strengthens tourists' on-site perception and interaction through participation in tourism exhibitions, themed events, and tourism experience centers. Collaborative marketing involves coordination with airlines, hotel groups, and OTA platforms to launch joint packages and points redemption activities. Cultural marketing enhances brand value and cultural appeal by developing cultural IPs and festival events, such as Hawaii's Polynesian Cultural Festival and Bali's Nyepi Day celebrations.

2.4. Comprehensive facilities and high-quality services as support

Well-developed infrastructure and high-quality service systems are regarded as the skeleton and flesh of a tourism destination, serving as key supports for ensuring visitor experience and enhancing destination competitiveness. Infrastructure addresses the basic needs of tourist travel and stay, while high-quality services satisfy visitors' emotional and experiential expectations. Together, they form the core support for the sustainable development of internationally renowned coastal tourism destinations.

Regarding facility development, internationally recognized coastal tourism destinations generally construct comprehensive infrastructure systems around three main requirements: accessibility, comfort, and convenience. Transportation infrastructure is the key to accessibility, including airport route coverage, cruise port docking capacity, and efficient inter-site transit networks. Accommodation facilities are central to comfort and must offer diversified options to meet the needs of different visitor segments, ranging from high-end resorts to budget hotels and unique local homestays. Public service facilities ensure convenience, covering visitor centers, parking lots, restrooms, and accessibility features. For example, in Bali, Indonesia, Ngurah Rai International Airport provides flight connections to major continents worldwide. The island features a well-developed road network, and dedicated tourist shuttle buses operate between scenic areas, ensuring smooth travel for visitors. Accommodation ranges from high-end cliffside villas to budget hotels and culturally themed homestays. Public service facilities include multiple visitor centers in core areas, sufficient ecological parking lots, and restrooms near beaches and scenic sites. By establishing an inclusive, comprehensive infrastructure system that serves all visitor segments, Bali has become one of the most inclusive and benchmark coastal tourism destinations in Southeast Asia [2].

Regarding service system development, internationally renowned coastal tourism destinations typically adopt a visitor-centered approach, building a holistic service system encompassing service philosophy, service standards, staff professionalism, and personalized services to meet tourists' emotional needs and experiential expectations. For instance, in terms of service philosophy, many destinations have established distinctive service brands: Phuket, Thailand, is known for "Thai smile" service, the Maldives offers "private butler service", and Santorini, Greece, emphasizes "romantic atmosphere creation". Based on these distinctive service philosophies, destinations continuously improve service standards and personalized offerings. In Phuket, Thailand, a unified service protocol for the tourism industry has been established, providing practical customized services for different visitor segments, including niche attraction guides and shared transport information for young backpackers, as well as Mandarin-speaking reception and payment guidance (Alipay, WeChat Pay) for Chinese tourists. Additionally, Phuket has established a tourist police force capable of arriving at the scene within 30 minutes to coordinate the resolution of consumer disputes.

2.5. Ecological protection and sustainable development as the core

In coastal tourism development, ecological resources constitute the most essential "lifeline". Clear seawater, intact coral reefs, clean beaches, and diverse marine life form the foundation for the long-term survival of the tourism industry. Implementing ecological protection and sustainable development principles and scientifically

planning tourism development are among the core factors enabling internationally renowned coastal tourism destinations to achieve long-term, sustainable prosperity.

Regarding marine ecological protection, the focus is on using scientific methods to maintain the integrity, stability, and sustainability of coastal ecosystems, thereby providing a long-term resource base for the tourism industry. Common measures include delineating ecological red lines, controlling pollution, protecting biodiversity, managing ecological carrying capacity, and promoting ecological education. For example, the Maldives legislates that the total building area on resort islands must not exceed 20% of the island's total area, with building heights limited to two floors, and any excavation of sand or coral is strictly prohibited [4]. Additionally, ecological red lines have been established, designating 30% of national waters as marine protected areas, where fishing, construction, and tourism development are prohibited. Wastewater must meet tertiary treatment standards before discharge, and solid waste follows an "on-island sorting + off-island disposal" policy, with visitor quotas implemented for each island. In Jeju Island, to preserve the ecological environment and original landscape of Hallasan Mountain, no sightseeing cable cars or elevators have been constructed, and all marine aquaculture, which could cause pollution, is strictly prohibited [3].

Regarding the promotion of sustainable tourism development, the emphasis is on constructing a "ecology–development–revenue–feedback" closed-loop system. Tourism development is planned with ecological protection as the prerequisite, following an ecotourism model. Common measures include adopting green development methods, developing ecological tourism products, and strengthening community participation. For instance, the Maldives implements an ecotourism development model encouraged by the World Tourism Organization, focusing on low-impact activities such as snorkeling observation, marine biology study tours, and night-time stargazing. Efforts include creating "zero-waste" resorts, encouraging local residents to participate in tourism services (e.g., as ecological guides or local restaurant operators), and allocating 10% of tourism revenue to a community ecological protection fund, supporting activities like beach cleaning and marine debris collection. Hawaii emphasizes local resident participation and benefit-sharing in the development of its international tourism islands, conducting resident opinion surveys every two years to gather feedback and adjust development strategies accordingly [8].

3. Recommendations for the high-quality development of the coastal tourism industry in Western Guangdong

Drawing on the successful development experiences of internationally renowned coastal tourism destinations and combining them with the current situation of coastal tourism in Western Guangdong, the following recommendations are proposed for achieving high-quality development of the region's coastal tourism industry.

3.1. Clarify industrial positioning and strengthen government policy support

3.1.1. Top-level design and positioning planning

High-quality development requires high-quality positioning as a foundation, enabling greater resource investment and broader development space. First, it is recommended that the Western Guangdong region leverage its unique status as China's only South Asian tropical climate zone, situated at the strategic convergence of the Greater Bay Area, the Beibu Gulf urban cluster, and Hainan International Tourism Island. By coordinating with Hainan and Guangxi, the region could jointly promote a "China Coastal Tourism Golden Triangle" regional positioning, enhancing its role in the national tourism development landscape and securing greater national or provincial policy and financial support. Second, in light of Guangdong's development goal

of making cultural tourism a pillar industry of the province, the three cities in Western Guangdong could further elevate tourism to a key pillar industry, thereby providing stronger policy support for industrial development. Finally, the region should break administrative boundaries by establishing a coastal tourism development coordination leadership group to oversee planning and positioning for the three cities, clarifying the overall positioning and development framework for regional coastal tourism. Functional positioning should be tailored to the resource endowments of each city to achieve differentiated development. For example: Zhanjiang could leverage its mangroves and Leizhou cultural heritage to focus on "marine ecology + cultural study tours". Maoming could capitalize on China's First Beach, the Romantic Coast, and coastal hot springs to prioritize "coastal resort + wellness tourism". Yangjiang could utilize the high-quality beaches of Hailing Island to emphasize "coastal sports + leisure entertainment".

3.1.2. Policy support and factor guarantees

Local governments in Western Guangdong need to construct a full-chain policy system to support coastal tourism development. In terms of financial support, it is recommended that provincial and municipal governments coordinate to establish a coastal tourism development special fund for infrastructure construction, key project subsidies, and brand promotion. For land and marine use, coastal tourism areas should be prioritized, adopting mechanisms such as "point-based land allocation" and "flexible lease periods" to increase land and marine-use quotas. Regarding market access, thresholds for high-risk tourism activities such as offshore fishing should be reduced, and the approval process for coastal tourism projects should be streamlined to shorten implementation cycles. For industrial innovation, support measures should be introduced for emerging tourism formats, including cruise yachts, marine ranch tourism, marine sports adventures, marine performances, immersive marine-themed spaces, and marine wellness tourism. Such measures could include tax reductions and preferential rates for water and electricity use. In terms of talent support, local universities should be encouraged to develop tourism-related programs, and high-end talent in areas such as tourism planning and operations management should be prioritized for recruitment to address talent shortages. Additionally, lessons from Hainan's Free Trade Port policies could be applied, such as piloting "off-island duty-free shopping" in areas like Hailing Island, Yangjiang, to attract high-end consumer segments.

3.2. Deeply explore local characteristics and build a diversified product matrix

3.2.1. Deep exploration of local characteristics

Western Guangdong should break away from the traditional approach of developing natural resources in isolation and focus on regional culture, ecology, and industry characteristics, promoting a "coastal +" multi-dimensional integrated tourism product development model. First, the region should deeply explore cultural characteristics, advancing the integrated development of "coastal + culture" tourism. Key local cultural resources include Leizhou culture, Shigou culture, Danjia culture, Lady Xian culture, Nianli festival culture, Maritime Silk Road culture, and volcanic culture. A systematic study of how these cultural elements can be integrated into coastal tourism development should be conducted to create a coastal tourism product system rich in local cultural identity. Second, the region should explore ecological characteristics, promoting "coastal + ecology" tourism integration. Leveraging high-quality ecological resources such as mangroves, coral reefs, Chinese white dolphins, and volcanic geology, Western Guangdong can develop coastal ecological tourism products. Third, the region should explore industrial characteristics, strengthening "coastal + industry" tourism integration. This involves linking tourism development with tropical and subtropical agriculture, fisheries, seafood cuisine, and water sports, creating industry-integrated tourism products. For example: Maoming could leverage its "Hometown of Litchi in China" brand to offer "coastal resort + litchi picking" experiential tourism

during the litchi harvest season. Yangjiang could use the national-level Zhapu Fishing Port to create a series of "coastal tourism + fisheries festivals" themed products. Zhanjiang could focus on marine ranches, the "China Seafood Capital" brand, and its world-class diving champions to develop tourism products centered on marine ranching, seafood cuisine, and water sports.

3.2.2. *Build a diversified product matrix*

Western Guangdong should construct a coastal tourism product matrix tailored to different visitor segments, structured as "basic experiences + high-end customization + themed specialties". First, enhance basic experience products to meet the needs of the general tourist population. Utilizing high-quality beach resources such as Shili Silver Beach in Yangjiang, China's First Beach in Maoming, and Longhaitian in Zhanjiang, the region can develop inclusive, high-quality public beach resorts. By improving beach leisure facilities, offering activities like beach volleyball, jet skiing, parasailing, and building marine-themed parks, seafood streets, themed night markets, and leisure shopping areas, the basic needs of coastal tourism visitors can be fully satisfied. Second, develop high-end customized products to attract premium tourists. Along premium coastal areas, high-end resort zones should be planned and constructed, introducing domestic and international luxury hotel brands to create private beach resort tourism products. Customized services such as private yacht cruises or small cruise ships combined with island exploration can provide exclusive coastal tourism experiences for high-end clientele. Third, develop themed specialty products to cover niche visitor segments. For younger tourists, "marine sports + social media hotspots" products can be developed by constructing water sports bases, scenic walkways, and beach libraries, and hosting surfing competitions, sailing events, and beach music festivals to attract young visitors. For the elderly, the region can leverage abundant geothermal resources to establish wellness tourism bases, offering "hot spring therapy + coastal leisure" products. For families with children, coastal mudflats and mangrove areas can be used to develop interactive parent-child tourism products, such as mudflat exploration and mangrove ecological education.

3.3. Shape distinctive images and establish a multi-dimensional marketing system

3.3.1. *Shape a distinctive tourism brand image*

Based on the characteristics of coastal tourism resources and the target visitor segments in Western Guangdong, it is recommended to build a "core brand + sub-brand" coastal tourism brand system. The core brand could be established as "South Sea Silk Road · Green Coastal Charm", highlighting Western Guangdong's profound Maritime Silk Road history and culture as well as its ecological coastal resources. The sub-brands should be designed to reflect the distinctive features of the three cities, with three symbolic sub-brands: "Ancient Port Legacy, Mangroves and Green Shores, Blue Bay Surfing". Zhanjiang-"Ancient Port Mangroves · Leizhou Style" emphasizes marine ecology and Leizhou culture. Maoming-"Hsieh Tai's Hometown · Wellness Blue Bay" highlights historical culture and wellness tourism. Yangjiang-"Vibrant Island · Sports Paradise" focuses on marine sports and leisure entertainment. Additionally, a unified brand visual identity system should be designed, including the brand logo, standard colors, mascots, and slogans, applied consistently across scenic spot signage, transportation hubs, and promotional materials to strengthen brand recognition.

3.3.2. *Establish a multi-dimensional marketing system*

A multi-dimensional marketing system should integrate both online and offline approaches. Online marketing relies on new media platforms to build a "content seeding + traffic conversion" marketing loop. Strengthen social media operations: Launch official Western Guangdong Coastal Tourism accounts on platforms such as Douyin, Xiaohongshu, and WeChat Video Channels. Targeting younger visitors, produce a series of short videos on "Western Guangdong Coastal Hotspots", inviting travel KOLs and food bloggers to experience the

destinations firsthand, and use live streaming, text, and photo guides to generate interest. Collaborate with mainstream online travel platforms: Work with platforms like Ctrip to integrate tickets, hotel accommodations, and travel routes into "Western Guangdong Coastal Vacation Packages", using limited-time offers and prize draws to deliver promotions to targeted audiences. Build a digital marketing matrix: Develop an H5 mini-program "Western Guangdong Coastal Check-In Map" with check-in tasks. Visitors completing scenic spot check-ins and sharing on social media receive coupons, enhancing interaction and dissemination.

Offline marketing involves event planning, channel partnerships, and on-site promotion to strengthen visitors' real-world perception and brand influence. Host themed festivals and events: Establish the "Western Guangdong Coastal Tourism Season" event brand, featuring diverse tourism festivals, such as the Yangjiang South Sea Silk Road Cultural Festival, Zhanjiang Mangrove Ecotourism Festival, Maoming Lady Xian Cultural Festival, and Western Guangdong Nianli Cultural Festival. Strengthen cross-regional cooperative marketing: Collaborate with the Pearl River Delta, Beibu Gulf of Guangxi, Hainan, and other regions to launch joint tourism routes such as "Western Guangdong + Hainan" and "Western Guangdong + Pearl River Delta", carrying out combined promotional campaigns. Promote film and media marketing: Produce documentaries showcasing Western Guangdong's coastal tourism features for broadcast on CCTV and overseas Chinese-language channels. Attract film and TV productions to shoot in major coastal tourist attractions, leveraging media exposure to increase tourism visibility. Encourage tourism enterprises to participate in domestic and international tourism exhibitions, such as the China International Travel Mart, to showcase tourism products and brand images and expand visitor channels.

3.4. Improve infrastructure and build a high-quality service brand

3.4.1. *Improve tourism infrastructure*

Western Guangdong needs to establish a tourism infrastructure system characterized by "convenient transportation, diversified accommodation, and intelligent services". First, enhance transportation convenience. For external transport, increase the flight density from Wuchuan Airport to major domestic cities, particularly in the Northeast and Northwest regions, and add international direct flights. Integrate the Guangzhou–Zhanjiang high-speed railway into the national high-speed rail network as soon as possible, increase direct trains to other provinces, and introduce combined ticket packages such as "high-speed rail + scenic spot admission". For internal transport, build high-standard transportation facilities connecting key hubs and coastal tourist attractions, accelerate the construction of the Western Guangdong section of the Guangdong Coastal Tourism Highway, link major scenic spots across the three cities, and launch cross-city and cross-scenic area shuttle buses. Second, establish a diversified accommodation system with "high-end leadership, mid-range support, and distinctive supplementation". Introduce international high-end hotel brands in key coastal resort areas such as Hailing Island in Yangjiang, Donghai Island in Zhanjiang, and China's First Beach in Maoming; develop mid-range business hotels along other coastal tourism zones; encourage renovation of old villages and vacant houses to create distinctive coastal homestays that incorporate local Western Guangdong cultural elements. Third, build an intelligent public service facility system. Equip major visitor centers with smart inquiry terminals and VR experience devices. Install smart monitoring and facial recognition systems at key scenic areas to enable face-scan entry. Promote contactless services in hotels and scenic spots, such as intelligent robots for food delivery and self-service check-in machines, to enhance service efficiency.

3.4.2. *Build a high-quality service brand*

Western Guangdong coastal tourism should develop a service system characterized by "advanced concepts, unified standards, and professional service", creating the "Warm Travel in Western Guangdong" service brand.

From the perspective of service philosophy, advocate a philosophy of "sincerity, professionalism, and attentiveness," integrating the local cultural element of hospitality into service. For example, scenic area staff can greet visitors in local dialects and recommend local specialty foods to convey a sense of regional warmth. Regarding service standards, focus on the tourism reception industry including hotels, scenic spots, and travel agencies. Establish local service regulations specifying service processes, etiquette, and safety requirements. For service professionalization, prioritize enhancing the professional competence of tourism service personnel. Organize regular training for in-service staff covering service etiquette, foreign language communication, emergency response, and local cultural knowledge to improve overall professionalism.

3.5. Strengthen ecological protection and implement sustainable tourism practices

3.5.1. *Strengthen marine ecological protection*

In terms of marine ecological protection, Western Guangdong should focus on building a robust ecological protection system and innovating governance mechanisms. First, establish a marine ecological protection system that combines rigid constraints with scientific management. Use spatial planning and other tools to delineate ecological red lines, clearly defining the protection scope for key ecological areas such as high-quality sandy beaches, mangroves, coral reefs, and Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins, and strictly enforce all protective measures. Strengthen pollution control by addressing wastewater discharge from aquaculture in coastal tourist areas, improving sewage collection and treatment facilities along the coast to prevent direct ocean discharge. Enhance biodiversity protection by establishing a Western Guangdong Coastal Biodiversity Monitoring Center to conduct real-time monitoring of mangroves, coral reefs, and marine species. Second, implement a multi-stakeholder governance model of "government-led + enterprise participation + community co-construction". Establish an ecological protection compensation mechanism by allocating a portion of tourism development revenue to a Marine Ecological Protection Fund for ecological restoration, pollution management, and community development. Encourage enterprises to fulfill ecological responsibilities; tourism businesses actively engaging in marine ecological protection can receive tax reductions, priority project approvals, and other incentives. Strengthen community participation by encouraging residents to take roles such as ecological guides or mangrove rangers, providing them with stable income. Promote a community-shared tourism revenue mechanism by distributing a portion of tourism project earnings to local communities, thereby enhancing residents' motivation for ecological protection.

3.5.2. *Implement sustainable tourism practices*

To achieve synergy between tourism development and ecological protection, Western Guangdong should draw on the sustainable tourism development experiences of internationally renowned coastal destinations, actively promoting an "low-impact development + eco-friendly experiences" model of ecotourism. First, adopt a "pristine + light development" approach to create low-impact ecological tourism products. For example, in mangrove reserves, develop "wetland hiking + birdwatching" projects with wooden boardwalks and quiet sightseeing vehicles to minimize ecological disturbance. Second, implement carrying capacity management by scientifically assessing the environmental limits of each coastal tourism site and adopting reservation systems with limited entry. Third, build ecotourism demonstration projects, such as establishing South China Sea marine ecological education centers, creating zero-carbon scenic areas or coastal resorts, guiding visitors to practice green tourism. Fourth, conduct visitor ecological education. Distribute marine ecological protection manuals at scenic entrances and visitor centers, set up ecological signage within attractions, and use guides and intelligent navigation systems to educate tourists on the importance of protecting Western Guangdong's marine ecological resources.

4. Conclusion

Tourism destination development is a large-scale, scientific, and systematic undertaking that must both highlight local characteristics and follow universal principles. Internationally renowned coastal destinations have accumulated extensive successful experience through years of development, primarily reflected in five key aspects: government guidance, characteristic-driven development, marketing empowerment, service support, and ecological priority. Based on the lessons learned from these international cases, promoting the high-quality development of Western Guangdong's coastal tourism industry requires leveraging local resource endowments and overcoming development bottlenecks. This entails government-led guidance as the guarantee, characteristic excavation as the core, brand marketing as the support, high-quality services as the foundation, and ecological protection as the baseline. By constructing a deeply integrated "culture + ecology + tourism" development model, Western Guangdong can be cultivated into a domestically leading and internationally recognized coastal tourism destination, contributing to Guangdong's goal of becoming a strong cultural and tourism province.

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