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Report Author(s): Bonnie S. Glaser, Scott Kennedy, Derek Mitchell and Matthew P. Funaiolo

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# Taiwan and Tourism

Tourism exhibits a nation's cultural heritage and offers significant economic benefits for businesses operating in travel destinations. In 2016, Taiwan's tourism industry contributed \$NT432.2 billion in revenue to Taiwan's economy (2.6 percent of GDP) and directly created 296,100 jobs (2.6 percent of total employment).<sup>1</sup> Leveraging this potential is crucial to the success of the NSP. In a Facebook post from April 2017, Tsai noted that tourism is among Taiwan's most important industries and highlighted Taiwan's efforts to diversify tourist experiences and improve Taiwan's tourist services.<sup>2</sup>

A large portion of Taiwan's overseas tourists come from Mainland China. In an effort to improve cross-Strait relations, President Ma Ying-jeou decided to ease restrictions on visits by Mainland Chinese tour groups.<sup>3</sup> Visitors from the Mainland grew from 289,000 in 2008 to over 4 million by 2015, accounting for over 40 percent of Taiwan's inbound tourists that year.<sup>4</sup>

This influx of Mainland visitors has paid significant economic dividends for Taiwan. On average, the daily total expenditure of tourists from Mainland China was second only to those from Japan, at \$241.42 and \$198.43, respectively, in 2016. Expenditures are in large part driven by consumer goods (\$96.30), as Mainlanders spend far less on accommodations (\$45.50) and meals (\$25.22)

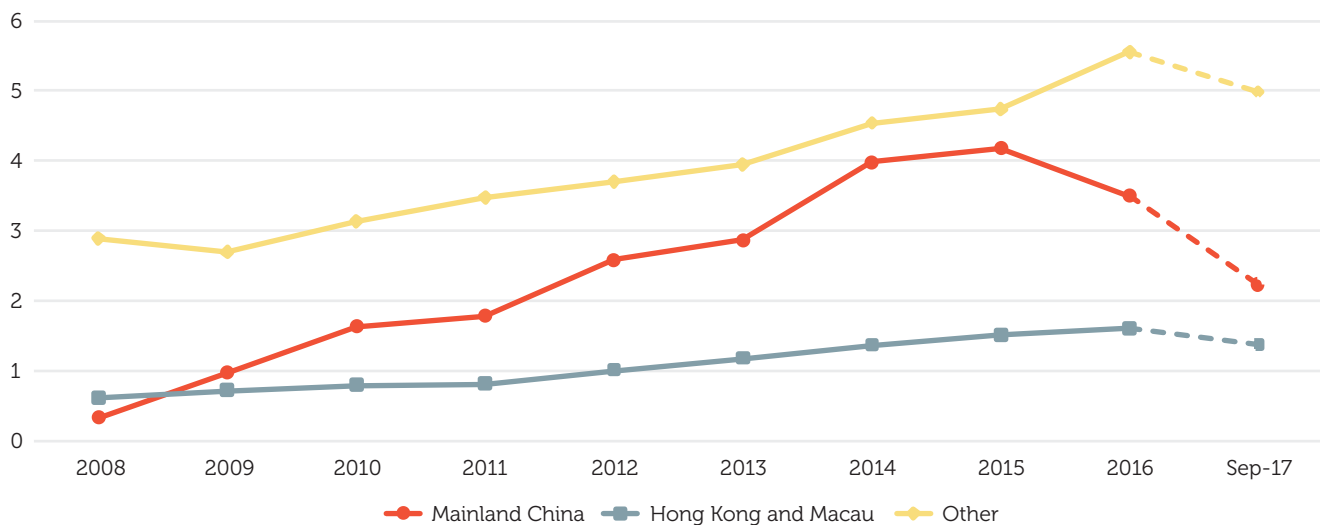
1. “近十年觀光外匯收入及國內旅遊支出及總收入” [Income from Foreign and Domestic Tourism in the Past Ten Years (jin shinian guanguang waihui shouru ji guonei lvyou zhichu ji zongshouru)], Tourism Bureau, ROC (Taiwan), May 22, 2017, <http://admin.taiwan.net.tw/public/public.aspx?no=315>; “Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017 Taiwan,” World Travel and Tourism Council, <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/countries-2017/taiwan2017.pdf>.

2. Tsai Ing-wen, Facebook, April 3, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/tsaiingwen/posts/10154142144776065>.

3. Min-Hua Chiang, *China-Taiwan Rapprochement: The Political Economy of Cross-Straits Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2016): 76.

4. Data are from Taiwan's Tourism Bureau's Tourism Statistics Database, <http://stat.taiwan.net.tw/system/index.html>; Min-Hua Chiang, “Tourism Development across the Taiwan Strait,” *East Asia*, vol. 29, no. 3 (2012): 235–253, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257771550\\_Tourism\\_Development\\_Across\\_the\\_Taiwan\\_Strait](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257771550_Tourism_Development_Across_the_Taiwan_Strait).

**Figure 7.1. Number of Tourists from Mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau, and Rest of World 2008–2017 (millions)**



Source: "Tourism Statistics," Tourism Bureau, ROC (Taiwan), <http://admin.taiwan.net.tw/public/public.aspx?no=315>.

than tourists from elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> Although these economic contributions are significant, the benefits for Taiwan are not always direct. The overwhelming majority of tourists from the Mainland (around 90 percent in 2012) travel on carefully planned itineraries managed by PRC state-owned travel agencies.<sup>6</sup> These itineraries often make use of discounted hotels and tend to limit interactions between Mainlanders and people of Taiwan.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, much of the spending by PRC tourists is concentrated in Mainland companies operating in Taiwan, meaning that local businesses do not reap as many benefits from tourists traveling across the Strait as from those from elsewhere.<sup>8</sup> As a result, the economic revenue generated by tourists from Mainland China often produces uneven benefits for Taiwan's population due to a lack of local spending contrasted with high retail spending.

Overdependence on the Mainland as a source of tourism also carries a considerable amount of risk. Beijing has a history of leveraging its outbound tourists as a political tool. In protestation over the THAAD missile system, Beijing has placed considerable pressure on South Korea. These measures include—but are not limited to—pressuring PRC tour companies to cease selling tour packages to South Korea, restricting PRC cruise ships from docking there, and canceling several

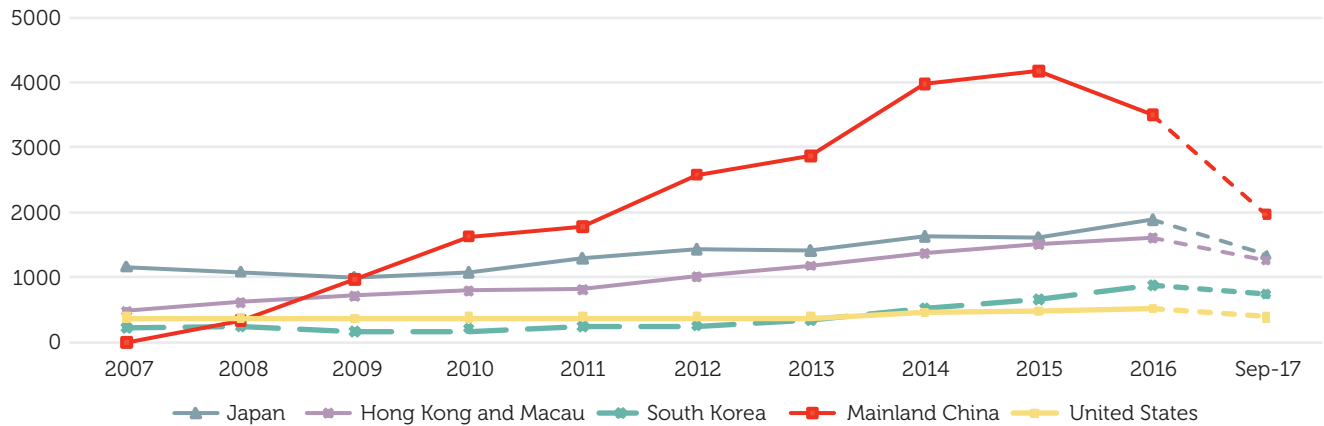
5. "Average Daily Expenditures per Visitor by Residence," in *Annual Statistical Report on Tourism 2015*, Tourism Bureau, ROC (Taiwan), [http://admin.taiwan.net.tw/upload/contentFile/auser/b/annual\\_statistical\\_2015\\_htm/pic/p\\_23.jpg](http://admin.taiwan.net.tw/upload/contentFile/auser/b/annual_statistical_2015_htm/pic/p_23.jpg).

6. Ian Rowen, "Tourism as a Territorial Strategy: The Case of China and Taiwan," *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 46 (May 2014): 62–47.

7. "Tourism in Taiwan: Putting Out a Welcome Mat for Travel-Happy Chinese," *Knowledge at Wharton*, September 28, 2011, <http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/tourism-in-taiwan-putting-out-a-welcome-mat-for-travel-happy-chinese/>.

8. Chris Horton, "With Chinese Tourism Down, Taiwan Looks to Lure Visitors from Southeast Asia," *New York Times*, May 17, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/world/asia/taiwan-china-tourism.html>.

**Figure 7.2. Top 5 Sources of Inbound Tourists to Taiwan (thousands)**



Source: "Tourism Statistics," Tourism Bureau, ROC (Taiwan), <http://admin.taiwan.net.tw/public/public.aspx?no=315>.

direct flights.<sup>9</sup> Goldman Sachs estimates that Beijing's curbing of tourism could cut the South Korean tourism industry's revenue by about \$5 billion.<sup>10</sup>

Since Tsai's inauguration, relations between Beijing and Taipei have cooled. In an effort to compel Tsai Ing-wen to accept that Taiwan and the Mainland are part of the same country and to provide more explicit assurances that she will not pursue independence, the PRC has put considerable pressure on Taiwan. Not only did Beijing suspend official cross-strait communication with Taipei in June 2016, it also reportedly restricted the flow of tourists.<sup>11</sup> In 2016, the number of tourists from Mainland China dropped by more than a half million, to 3.5 million visitors.

The financial consequences of this downturn are significant for several segments of the economy. For instance, tourists from the Mainland have been key contributors to the growth in Taiwan's lucrative medical tourism industry. Between 2012 and 2016, over 300,000 Mainlanders visited Taiwan for medical treatment, with the number of visitors surging in 2013 to 95,778. Based on an average spending of NT\$17,500 per visiting patient, medical tourism pumped an estimated NT\$1.7 billion (US\$56.7 million) into Taiwan's economy in 2013.<sup>12</sup> Tightened visa restrictions reduced the flow to Mainland medical tourists to 55,534 in 2014, before it rebounded slightly to 60,504 in 2015. As a likely consequence of Beijing's effort to squeeze the Tsai administration, the number plummeted to just 30,713 in 2016—representing a year-on-year revenue loss (not including travel

9. Musun Kim, "Jeju Island: China Punishes South Korea Tourism over North Feud," *Al Jazeera*, April 18, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/blogs/asia/2017/04/jeju-island-china-punishes-south-korea-tourism-north-feud-170418054719438.html>.

10. Bruce Einhorn, "Angry China Puts Economic Squeeze on South Korea," *Bloomberg*, March 9, 2017.

11. Javier C. Hernandez, "China Suspends Diplomatic Contact with Taiwan," *New York Times*, June 25, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/26/world/asia/china-suspends-diplomatic-contact-with-taiwan.html?mtrref=www.google.com>; Ben Blanchard and Faith Hung, "China, Taiwan Add Tourists to Their Squabbles," *Reuters*, May 11, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-taiwan-china-tourism/china-taiwan-add-tourists-to-their-squabbles-idUSKCN0Y305W>.

12. "Medical Tourism from China Declines," *China Post*, September 10, 2016.

costs) of an estimated NT\$521 million (US\$17.4 million). Smaller medical centers, which commonly conduct the elective procedures sought out by Mainlanders, are likely to suffer the most from this downturn.

Taiwan's leaders are eager to hedge against further revenue losses from a decline in tourism from the Mainland by attracting tourists from other parts of the world. To facilitate this effort, Taiwan's Tourism Bureau has identified seven strategies for implementing the NSP's tourism initiative:

1. Simplifying the visa process;
2. Harnessing the skills of new immigrants in Taiwan and individuals from Taiwan living overseas;
3. Integrating local governments into tourism promotion;
4. Employing more targeted marketing in NSP target countries;
5. Establishing more foreign offices;
6. Providing accommodations for Muslim tourists (such as certifying halal restaurants and hotels, opening prayer rooms);
7. Invigorating the cruise-ship tourism market.<sup>13</sup>

## EASING VISA RESTRICTIONS

Taiwan is currently experimenting with various methods of easing visa restrictions for visitors from NSP target countries. In doing so, Taiwan is following a strategy that has benefited similar countries, such as Japan, which experienced a substantial increase in tourism after it relaxed visa requirements for visitors from Thailand and Malaysia in 2013.<sup>14</sup>

Although still in the early stages of implementation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' efforts to simplify the visa process have already made some headway in boosting tourism from target countries. Taiwan already permits visa-free entry for Singaporean and Malaysian nationals.<sup>15</sup> In August 2016, Taiwan extended its second-most lenient visa policy—a 30-day visa exemption—to citizens of Thailand and Brunei, which allows citizens of these countries to stay in Taiwan without a visa for up to 30 days. In the eight months after this change was implemented, there was a noticeable

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13. “因應陸客縮減及新南向政策推動，我國觀光發展轉型之檢討，未來如何有效提升觀光競爭力報告” [Report on the Discussion of How to Transform the Tourism Industry to Effectively Increase Its Competitiveness in the Future, in Response to the Declining Number of Mainland Tourists and the Launch of the New Southbound Policy (yinying luke suojian ji xinnanxiang zhengce tuidong, woguo guanguang fazhan zhuanxing zhi jiantao, weilai ruhe youxiao tisheng guanguang jingzhengli baogao)], Transportation Bureau, ROC (Taiwan), March 20, 2017, <http://admin.taiwan.net.tw/upload/public/20170420/9cacd049-5d78-4ac4-8e28-f626ac7e98af.pdf>.

14. Atsushi Kodera, “Tourism Emerges as New Economic Driver for Japan,” *Japan Times*, August 25, 2014, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/08/25/reference/tourism-emerges-new-economic-driver-japan/#.Wh27tUqnHcs>.

15. “New Southbound Policy Energizes Taiwan Tourism Industry,” *Taiwan Today*, January 3, 2017, <http://taiwantoday.tw/news.php?unit=6&post=106647>.

uptick in tourism from both Thailand (57 percent) and Brunei (52 percent).<sup>16</sup> Building on this success, Taiwan announced plans to extend this 30-day visa exemption policy to other countries including Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, and the Philippines. Some of these changes may come into effect in the coming years.<sup>17</sup>

To streamline the visa process, Taiwan's government has established alternative programs for target countries that are ineligible for the 30-day visa exemption status. Per the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, these include introducing an e-visa program for businesspersons and tourist groups, where travelers can easily apply for and receive their visas online.<sup>18</sup> Since November 2015, Taiwan has begun relaxing its visa restrictions for travelers from key ASEAN states without visa exemption status (Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam), as well as India. These lightened restrictions were expanded in September 2016 to include Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar. For these countries, the new application process for multiple-entry visas can now be completed online. The new policy is specifically designed to attract higher-spending "middle-class nationals" and tourist groups from these seven countries.<sup>19</sup>

Importantly, Taiwan's push for greater regional integration remains beholden to pressing security concerns, such as the Marawi crisis. Taiwan intends to offer visa-free entry for Philippine nationals, but the conflict between ISIS and government forces in the city of Marawi compelled Taiwan to hold off on implementing this policy until the crisis was resolved.<sup>20</sup> On July 10, 2017, Gary Song-Huann Lin, a representative at the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in the Philippines, stated, "We are reviewing the administrative and security procedures to ensure that people like [terrorist leader] Hapilon don't enter Taiwan."<sup>21</sup> Three months later, on October 18, TECO announced a trial period for visa-free travel would begin on November 1, 2017, and last through July 31, 2018. The announcement came just days before Manila officially declared that the battle against Islamist rebels in Marawi was over.<sup>22</sup>

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16. Numbers calculated from tourism figures over July 2016 to March 2017 period, <https://data.gov.tw/dataset/30845>.

17. "觀光新南向政策工作計畫報告" [Tourism Bureau Southbound Policy Work Plan Report (guanguang xinnanxiang zhengce gongzuo jihua baogao)], Ministry of Transportation and Communication, ROC (Taiwan), October 21, 2016, <http://admin.taiwan.net.tw/upload/public/20161229/0f8b5382-453b-4e08-b330-f128811b0650.pdf>.

18. "MOFA to Ease Visa Rules for New Southbound Policy Countries," April 13, 2017, *Taiwan Today*, <http://taiwantoday.tw/news.php?unit=2,6,10,15,18&post=113798>.

19. "Taiwan Relaxes Visa Rules for Nationals of Six ASEAN Members and India," Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROC (Taiwan), September 21, 2016, [http://www.ROC-taiwan.org/ph\\_en/post/1730.html](http://www.ROC-taiwan.org/ph_en/post/1730.html).

20. "Taiwan Holds Visa-Free Entry for Philippines Citizens," *Taiwan News*, July 12, 2017, <http://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3209132>.

21. Zsarlene B. Chua, "Visa-Free Travel to Taiwan Tied to Marawi Outcome," *Business World Online*, July 11, 2017, <http://www.bworldonline.com/content.php?section=Nation&title=visa-free-travel-to-taiwan-tied-to-marawi-outcome&id=148044>.

22. "Taiwan to Allow Visa-Free Entry for Filipinos Starting November," *ABS-CBN News*, October 16, 2017, <http://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/10/16/17/taiwan-to-allow-visa-free-entry-for-filipinos-starting-november>.

**Table 7.1. Taiwan's Visa Exemption Programs for NSP Target Countries**

	Visa Exemption			Travel Authorization Certificate	Business E-Visa	Multiple Re-Entry Visa + Tourist Group E-Visa
	(90 days)	(30 days)	(14 days)			
Australia	Y (until 12/31/2017)	-	-	-	-	-
New Zealand	Y	-	-	-	-	-
Singapore		Y	-	-	-	-
Malaysia	-	Y	-	-	-	-
Brunei	-	Y (until 07/31/2018)	-	-	-	-
Thailand	-	Y (until 07/31/2018)	-	-	-	-
Philippines	-	-	Y (until 07/31/2018)	-	-	-
Indonesia	-	-	-	Y	-	Y
Vietnam	-	-	-	Y	-	Y
Laos	-	-	-	Y	-	Y
Cambodia	-	-	-	Y	-	Y
Myanmar	-	-	-	Y	-	Y
India	-	-	-	Y	Y	-
Sri Lanka	-	-	-	-	Y	-
Bhutan	-	-	-	-	Y	-
Pakistan	-	-	-	-	Y	-
Bangladesh	-	-	-	-	Y	-
Nepal					Y	-

Source: "我與新南向18國相互簽證待遇" [Visa Agreements between Taiwan and 18 New Southbound Policy Target Countries (wo yu xinnanxiang 18 guo xianghu qianzheng daiyu)], Bureau of Consular Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROC (Taiwan), November 1, 2017, <http://nspp.mofa.gov.tw/nspp/news.php?post=105482&unit=344>.

## PROMOTING TAIWAN AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

In addition to relaxing visa restrictions, the Tourism Bureau is also actively promoting Taiwan as a tourist destination. Under a new business-to-business (B2B) marketing strategy, the Tourism Bureau has invited Taiwan's travel companies to advertise their services to foreign travel agencies and at trade fairs.<sup>23</sup> The Tourism Bureau is also expected to promote Taiwan by continuing its campaigns in NSP target countries, which include outdoor advertising, media invitations, multilingual websites, and multimedia content. Toward this end, Taiwan participated in the 2017 Thai International Travel Fair. The Tourism Bureau arranged this exhibition in collaboration with hotel and farm resort operators from Taiwan to highlight the island nation's appeal as a travel destination for Thai nationals.<sup>24</sup>

To appeal directly to potential tourists from NSP target countries, the Tourism Bureau has endeavored to subsidize the cost of traveling to Taiwan. For example, it is now offering subsidies between NT\$400 (US\$13) and NT\$800 (US\$27) for tourists traveling with tour groups from these target countries.<sup>25</sup> These subsidies (for groups larger than 50 tourists) can be spent on activities like attending cultural performances or visiting historic site visits.<sup>26</sup> The Ministry of Culture has a similar scheme in place that offers subsidies between NT\$80,000 (US\$2,669) and NT\$120,000 (US\$4,003) to groups attending local art performances or visiting certain historic and cultural sites recommended by local governments.<sup>27</sup>

Similar incentives have also been developed at the local level. Kaohsiung, which earns around NT\$2 million in revenue per cruise ship port visit, has offered incentives to cruise companies and worked with travel agencies to increase cruise tourism not only from Southeast Asia, but also from Japan and Hong Kong.<sup>28</sup> City governments have also engaged with the NSP through city-to-city diplomacy internships and joint exhibitions. For example, Taichung has opened service centers for business travelers from NSP target countries and has attempted to strengthen its local tourism industry.<sup>29</sup>

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23. "Taiwan Tourism Bureau Carries Out Aggressive Marketing Strategies with B2B Workshop and Participation in BLTM," *Travel and Hospitality Global*, November 3, 2016, <http://www.tnhglobal.com/taiwan-tourism-bureau-carries-out-aggressive-marketing-strategies-with-b2b-workshop-and-participation-in-bltm/>.

24. "Taiwan to Attend Travel Fair in Bangkok to Boost Tourist Arrivals," *Focus Taiwan*, August 9, 2017, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aeco/201708090021.aspx>.

25. Shelley Shan, "Tourism Bureau Offers Incentives," *Taipei Times*, April 13, 2017.

26. Shelley Shan, "MOTC Dismisses Rumors of Bureau 'Tourist Subsidy,'" *Taipei Times*, March 9, 2017, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2017/05/09/2003670232>.

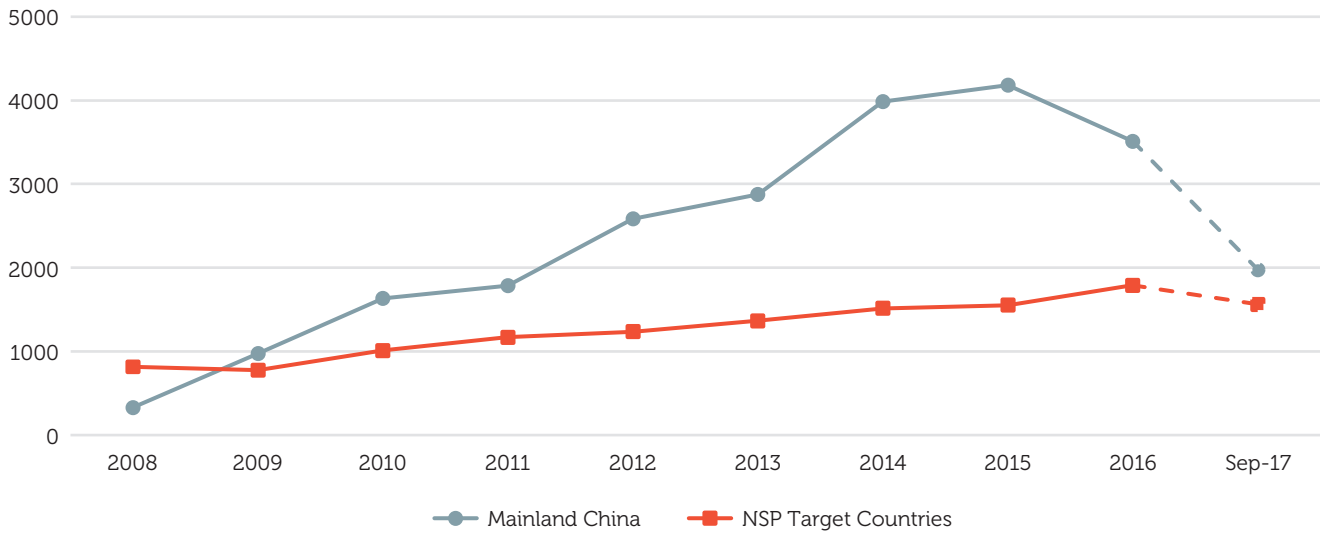
27. Ibid.

28. Shwu-fen Wang and Elaine Hou, "Kaohsiung Aiming to Boost Cruise Tourism," *Focus Taiwan*, March 21, 2017, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aeco/201703210010.aspx>.

29. Alan H. Yang, "Revisiting Taiwan's New Southbound Policy: Agenda, Networks and Challenges," *問題與研究 [Issues & Studies]*, vol. 56, no. 1 (March 1, 2017): 123–143, <http://www.airtilibrary.com/Publication/alDetailedMesh?DocID=05912539-201703-201709110015-201709110015-123-143>.

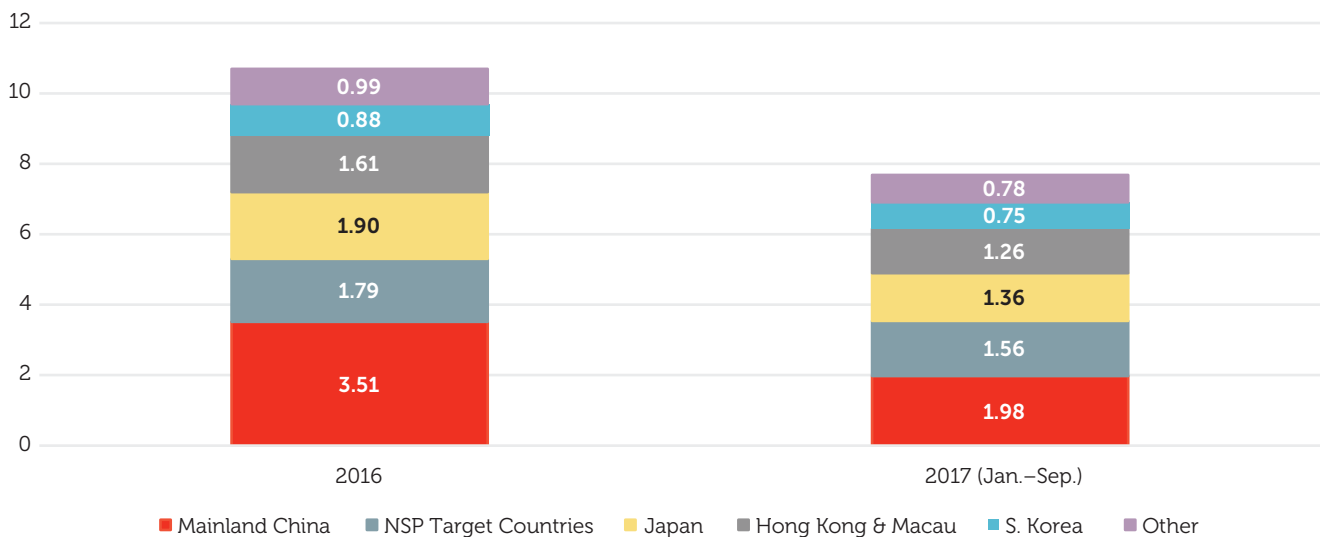


**Figure 7.3. Number of Inbound Tourists from Mainland China and NSP Target Countries, 2008–2017 (thousands)**



Source: "Tourism Statistics Database," Tourism Bureau, ROC (Taiwan), [http://stat.taiwan.net.tw/system/country\\_months\\_arrival.html](http://stat.taiwan.net.tw/system/country_months_arrival.html).

**Figure 7.4. Main Sources of Tourists to Taiwan, 2017 and 2018 (millions)**



Source: "Tourism Statistics Database," Tourism Bureau, ROC (Taiwan), [http://stat.taiwan.net.tw/system/country\\_months\\_arrival.html](http://stat.taiwan.net.tw/system/country_months_arrival.html).

As part of its efforts to increase the friendliness of the industry, Taiwan's Tourism Bureau is likewise seeking to make Taiwan more accessible to tourists from NSP target countries.<sup>30</sup> However, Taiwan suffers from a shortage of tour guides proficient in Southeast Asian languages. According to a 2015 Taiwan Tourism Bureau report, Taiwan only had 56 tour guides proficient in Thai, 34 in Indonesian, 26 in Vietnamese, and 7 in Malay.<sup>31</sup> In an effort to increase the number of Southeast Asian language-speaking tour guides, the government established a foreign-language tour guide certification program in 2015. The majority of applicants are new immigrants, according to Tourism Bureau director Huang Yi-Cheng, who hopes to promote the program at universities to attract students from abroad.<sup>32</sup>

To further appeal to Southeast Asian countries—many of which have majority Muslim populations—the Tourism Bureau has also focused on marketing Taiwan as a Muslim-friendly destination by opening prayer rooms and certifying halal restaurants and hotels. As of April 2017, there were 104 halal-certified restaurants in Taiwan. Prayer rooms have also been established in major transport hubs, such as airports and bus terminals, around the country. This effort to improve tourism quality aligns with Taiwan's "2015–2018 Tourism Action Plan," which similarly seeks to improve the quality of tourist services, add new features, market new cross-area features for tourists, and make Taiwan's tourism smarter and more sustainable.<sup>33</sup>

## MAKING EARLY GAINS

Taiwan's efforts to increase tourism overall, including from NSP target countries, has experienced some initial success. Statistics provided by the Tourism Bureau show that tourism from NSP target countries reveal a year-on-year increase of 15 percent in 2016, totaling some 1,783,495 visitors in 2016.<sup>34</sup> By comparison, annual tourism growth was only 2.4 percent in 2015. This surge in visitors was largely driven by tourists from Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines, which jumped by 57 percent, 35 percent, and 24 percent, respectively.

Mainland China continues to play a significant role in Taiwan's tourism industry. Taiwan's Tourism Bureau statistics show that the 3.5 million Mainland tourists who visited Taiwan in 2016 accounted for roughly double the total number of tourists coming from all NSP target countries combined. Nevertheless, total and Mainland tourism numbers have experienced some decline in the past

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30. "觀光新南向政策工作計畫報告" [Tourism New Southbound Policy Work Plan Report (guanguang xinnanxiang zhengce gongzuo jihua baogao)], Ministry of Transportation and Communications, ROC (Taiwan), October, 21, 2016, <http://admin.taiwan.net.tw/upload/public/20161229/0f8b5382-453b-4e08-b330-f128811b0650.pdf>.

31. Hsiao Yu-hsin and William Hetherington, "Language a Bar to SE Asian Tourism," *Taipei Times*, April 11, 2017, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2017/04/11/2003668505>.

32. Ibid.

33. "Promoting the 'Taiwan's 2015–2018 Tourism Action Plan' to Connect a Wonderful Life," Executive Yuan ROC, [http://admin.taiwan.net.tw/upload/contentFile/auser/b/annual\\_2014\\_hm/English/chapter7\\_1.html](http://admin.taiwan.net.tw/upload/contentFile/auser/b/annual_2014_hm/English/chapter7_1.html).

34. "Visitor Arrivals, 1956–2015," in 觀光統計年報 [Tourism Statistics Annual Report (guanguang tongji nianbao)], Tourism Bureau, ROC (Taiwan), <http://admin.taiwan.net.tw/upload/statistic/20170209/07d830ed-10d5-499f-8982-bef744453288.xls>.

year. Aggregate tourism statistics from the first 11 months of 2017 show a 0.27 percent decline in total tourists and an 800,000 (or 24.5 percent) decline in the number of visitors from Mainland China, compared to the same period last year. By contrast, visits by Southeast Asian tourists increased by almost 460,000, or 32.6 percent of the late-2016 number.<sup>35</sup> It seems likely that, given its proximity and cultural similarities, Taiwan's tourism industry will continue to be somewhat dependent on Mainland visitors.

Nonetheless, increased tourism from NSP target countries has the potential to contribute to robust growth in Taiwan's tourism industry, particularly if the economies in NSP target countries continue to experience steady growth. President Tsai touched on this potential during the 2017 year-end press conference when she noted that between January and October tourism from New Southbound target countries had increased by "over 30 percent" compared to 2016, and that at present "over 31,000 exchange students from these countries [are] studying in Taiwan."<sup>36</sup> Tourism from target countries could be more profitable for Taiwan's tourism sector, because these tourists tend to spend more on accommodations, transportation, and food. Despite dwindling numbers of tourists from the Mainland, the World Travel and Tourism Council forecasts that tourism will contribute 3.3 percent to Taiwan's overall GDP in 2017, a significant rise from 2 percent of GDP in 2016. Beyond the economic potential for Taiwan's tourism industry, visitors from NSP target countries provide an audience for Taiwan's cultural heritage and soft power, while also cultivating personal relations with individuals from across the region.

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35. "2017 Visitor Arrivals by Residence Data, January–November 2017," Tourism Bureau, ROC (Taiwan), [http://admin.taiwan.net.tw/statistics/month2\\_en.aspx?no=22](http://admin.taiwan.net.tw/statistics/month2_en.aspx?no=22).

36. "President Tsai Holds 2017 Year-End Press Conference," Office of the President, ROC (Taiwan), December 29, 2017, <http://english.president.gov.tw/NEWS/5313>.