

# Locum Destination Consulting

## New Assignments at Europe's Leading Destination Consultancy



### The Maitreya Buddha, India

The Maitreya Project is creating one of the world's great monuments dedicated to the values of loving-kindness, compassion and peace. The Maitreya Project is located in Bodhgaya, Bihar, the home of the world-renowned Mahabodhi Stupa, where the historical Buddha gained enlightenment.

The Buddha statue (reaching a height of 150 metres) and its throne-building, a 17-storey, modern structure containing prayer halls, a museum, exhibition hall, library, audio-visual theatre and auditorium, will be placed in a beautifully landscaped 40-acre park with meditation pavilions, fountains and pools, a guesthouse, and a playground designed especially for the enjoyment of children and their families. A secluded monastery and nunnery will be located nearby.

The Maitreya Project will create one of the 'wonders of the next Millennium' – a major world destination for Buddhist pilgrims and tourists from India and abroad. The project has the potential to generate significant domestic and international tourism to Bihar, a state in desperate need of wealth creation. The architectural wonder of the project is framed by its potential economic and social benefits to the region. In addition, much attention has been paid in the development process to meeting the stringent demands of environmental sustainability.

Travel, in itself, is central to the practice of Buddhism. The historical Buddha wandered, and taught others to wander – it could be called a religion of movement. Ultimately, the type of pilgrimage and the exact nature of the sacred sites visited is immaterial; the Buddhist traveller is concerned with devotion, ritual and the completion of the trip. Whether walking ancient paths or packed into an air-conditioned coach, a pilgrim's experience begins when he or she leaves home. This has implications for the management of the Maitreya Project. Bodhgaya can and should become a focal point of pilgrimage for Buddhists from around the world – a place that each tries to visit once in a lifetime. In India, there are tremendously powerful sites of religious pilgrimage for the devout Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Buddhist. Not only do they attract members of their specific religious 'market', these sites have historical, artistic and spiritual appeal to growing numbers of Western tourists.

The creation of a spiritual destination demands a level of planning that goes beyond architecture and art to address all the issues the destination will inevitably create. The Locum team has been asked to advise on market and destination issues associated with this project. Challenging the normal tenets of traditional market analysis, Locum has developed a bespoke methodology to cope with the special nature of this project, that combines traditional techniques with a close examination of comparable projects world-wide. A Locum team is due to visit the site in January and witness first hand the 'breaking ground' ceremony, as this project kicks off in earnest.

### Further information

on the project can be found at [www.maitreyaproject.org](http://www.maitreyaproject.org).

