

# Assessment of the Current Status of Search Engine Optimization Activitives for the Website of the Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism

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## Abstract

Optimizing the search engine for a website is one of the crucial activities to bring Vietnam's tourism closer to its target market, enhancing competitiveness in the market, and fostering rapid and sustainable integration into the international economy. To provide a basis for recommending improvements to this activity, the author utilized a combination of various online tools such as SEMrush, SeoQuake, and SEOptimer to assess the current status of optimization activities on both on-page elements (URL, title, heading, meta description, image, internal links, and external links) and off-page elements (link building, social media marketing) of the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism website. Additionally, in this article, the author analyzed the website interface, search keywords, and the author provided a more comprehensive insight into the SEO activities of the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism website. This article has highlighted the limitations in the SEO activities of the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism website such as headings, meta descriptions tag, images have not been optimized, and social media sites have not been diversified to meet user needs.

**Keywords:** SEO Onpage, SEO OffPage, Website, Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism

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## I. INTRODUCTION

While the "health status" of Vietnam's tourism industry has yet to fully recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, the digital transformation wave is approaching. Along with creating opportunities, this wave also presents numerous challenges for the tourism sector. We cannot avoid or reverse this wave. To overcome and sustainably develop, Vietnam's tourism industry needs to seriously evaluate itself, learn from the digital transformation experiences of other countries, and innovate without following conventional paths. However, until now, the author realized that there has not been any research on evaluating the current status of search engine optimization activities for the website of the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism.

For this reason, the author conducted this study to identify the strengths and limitations in the SEO activities of the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism's website, which could serve as a foundation for further research aimed at advancing Vietnamese tourism further.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1. SEO concept

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is a set of processes aimed at improving the visibility of a website on search engines, with the goal of receiving more organic traffic. SEO activities strive to meet user search needs by creating relevant, high-quality content and providing the best possible user experience. [7]

There are two decisive factors for success in SEO implementation are: On-page SEO and Off-page SEO.

### 2.2. SEO OnPage

On-page SEO involves tasks aimed at optimizing elements directly on the website with the purpose of improving the website's ranking on search engines, helping it increase traffic and have more opportunities to reach potential customers.

Here are some top On-page SEO standards that Google evaluates: [2][6][8]

- URL: This is one of the most significant factors affecting On-page SEO. A good On-page SEO URL should have the following three elements:

- + Short yet descriptive, encompassing the entire idea, to save Google Bot's crawling budget.
- + Relevant to the content of the post.
- + Contains the primary SEO keyword (with the highest search volume).

- Title: The title is one of the most important SEO factors. If the title is well-crafted and appealing, and aligns with the search intent, users are more likely to click on the article. From the search engine's perspective,

optimizing the title helps crawlers quickly and accurately gather data, enabling them to understand the content of the article.

- Heading 1: This is the first heading displayed in the content of the article. It is a concise section that reflects the entire content of the article and is placed at the top. The H1 tag is the largest and should contain only one Heading 1 in an article. Heading 1 plays a role in creating a clear structure for the article and helps search engines understand what the main content of the article is about, allowing Google to determine whether this content matches the user's search query.

- Heading 2-3: Heading 2 is a child of Heading 1 and helps create a more coherent and meaningful structure for the article. Heading 3, in turn, is a child of Heading 2 and serves to further clarify the meaning of Heading 2. In addition to optimizing Heading 1, businesses should focus on optimizing Heading 2-3 to help Google better understand the content of their website.

- Meta Description: This is a short description displayed in search results, allowing users to get a brief idea of the business website's content before clicking. A good Meta Description helps attract users to visit the website, increases the click-through rate (CTR), helps search engines understand the overall content of the page, and helps users grasp the content they are about to access.

- Image: Optimizing images involves optimizing content, quality, size, and file size of images, as well as adding relevant image information to the website. Image optimization enhances user experience and helps Google better understand the content. Images can appear in Google's Featured and Top Image sections, contributing to brand and local brand visibility.

### **2.3. SEO OffPage**

SEO Offpage refers to activities conducted outside the website, including building quality backlinks, social media marketing, and social bookmarking to boost the website's ranking on search engine results pages (SERPs).

The effectiveness of SEO Offpage is maximized when the website has good content and structure. In cases where the content and structure of the website are not up to standard, investing in Offpage SEO may prove futile. For this reason, Offpage optimization is typically carried out after Onpage optimization has been completed. [1][4][5]

Here are some effective techniques for implementing Offpage SEO: [6][9]

- Link Building: This is the process of creating a strategy for other websites to link back to a business's website. This increases traffic and the authority of the website. Google and other search engines rely on links to determine website rankings for keywords. However, natural link building is crucial to ensure the sustainable growth of the website, rather than using manipulative tactics that can be harmful.

- Social Entity Sharing: This involves sharing a business's content on social media, which can positively impact a website's ranking on Google. However, to achieve such effectiveness, we must choose appropriate social media platforms and handle them accurately.

- Content Syndication: This is an SEO technique based on republishing website content on different platforms to enhance reach and brand recognition. Content Syndication can help a website attract additional traffic from referral sources and improve SEO performance by acquiring more quality backlinks.

- Traffic User: The method of increasing user traffic to the website is to apply strategies and techniques to attract more users to the business website. There are six different sources of traffic: referral traffic, social traffic, direct traffic (visits directly to the website), organic traffic (visits from natural search results), paid traffic, and email traffic.

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

To assess the current status of SEO activities on the website of the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism, the author synthesized relevant research documents and utilized online support tools such as SEMrush, SeoQuake, SEOptimer, along with the Keyword Effectiveness Index (KEI) to analyze on-page (SEO On-page) and off-page (SEO Off-page) optimization activities. The author analyzed in the following order:

- Analyze the website interface to consider whether the website's structure and visibility are good or not.

- Use SEMrush tool combined with keyword effectiveness index (KEI) to analyze website keywords.

- Onpage SEO analysis: the author used a combination of SeoQuake and SEOptimer tools to analyze URL, Title, Heading, Meta Description, Image, Internal links and Outbound links. The purpose of this analysis is to check the optimization of display elements right on the website of the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism.

- Offpage SEO analysis: the author utilized the SEMrush tool and checked Social Media Marketing on the homepage of the website. The purpose of this analysis is to evaluate activities outside the website of the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism.

## IV. RESULTS

### 4.1. Interface analysis

The website <https://www.vietnamtourism.gov.vn> is the official electronic information portal of the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism, under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. The target audience of the website includes domestic and international tourists seeking information about destinations, activities, and events in Vietnam, as well as tourism service providers, including travel companies, hotels, etc., government agencies, and stakeholders in the tourism industry.



Fig. 1 – Website interface of Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism

The website <https://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/> is designed with a clear layout and content arranged logically, making the website look tidy and easy to follow. The navigation menu is user-friendly and has a clear structure, allowing users to easily find and access other subpages. Images and colors are also used appropriately, creating a visually appealing and user-friendly experience. Additionally, the website supports both Vietnamese and English languages flexibly.

All of these aspects contribute to providing a better user experience for the website. An understandable and logical structure helps users easily search for and access the information they need. This creates a positive experience, increasing interaction rates and continued website visits. A good structure helps identify the homepage and subpages within the website, making it convenient for users and Google bots to recognize the hierarchy and importance of the content pages. This benefits the website by making it easier to index and display in search results quickly.

To check the responsive display capability on different devices, the author used [ami.responsivedesign.is](https://ami.responsivedesign.is) to evaluate the website of the National Tourism Agency of Vietnam, and the result showed that the website's display on all devices is compatible.



Fig. 2 – The website's visibility on all devices is good

## 4.2. Keyword analysis

### - Organic Keywords

Using SEMrush tool to analyze organic keywords as of March 2024, the results are as follows:

- + Total number of keywords: The website has 100,411 organic keywords.
- + Top 3: There are 2,229 keywords ranking within the top 3 search results on Google.
- + Positions 4-10: There are 6,864 keywords ranking between positions 4 and 10.
- + Positions 11-20: There are 9,904 keywords ranking between positions 11 and 20.
- + Positions 21-50: There are 31,587 keywords ranking between positions 21 and 50.
- + Positions 51-100: There are 49,773 keywords ranking between positions 51 and 100.

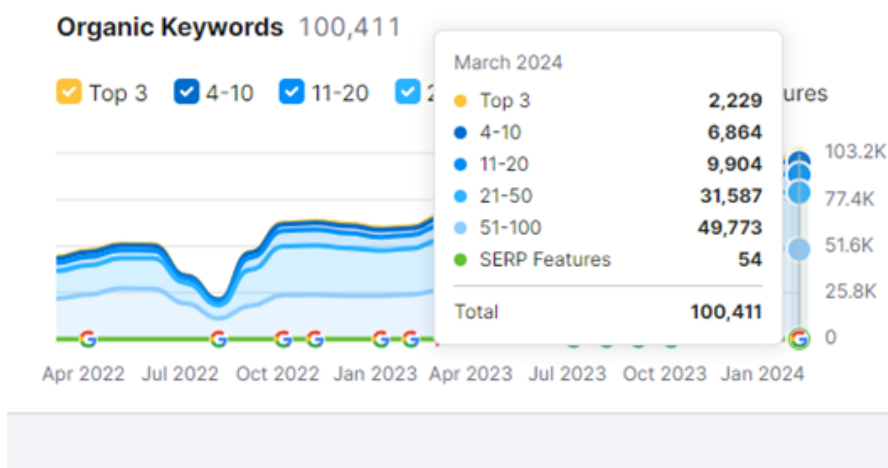


Fig. 3 – Results of organic keyword analysis using SEMrush in March 2024

Overall, the results of the website's organic keyword analysis in March 2024 are very positive. The number of keywords, ranking position, and total impressions all increased.

### - Top Organic Keywords

Top Organic Keywords are the top natural search terms for a website. The number of query keywords appearing in the top 100 Google search results for the website is 100,969, indicating that the website's search engine optimization (SEO) efforts are very effective. The website has many keywords related to user search needs.

Additionally, the website is seen achieving a high position in natural search results for the keyword "phở" (pho), with 74k average monthly searches, ranking 2nd in search results. The website's ranking position for keywords such as "hồ hoàn kiếm" (Hoan Kiem Lake), "hồ gươm" (Sword Lake), "đảo phú quý" (Phu Quy Island) is consistently 3rd, meaning the website consistently ranks in the top 3 search results for these keywords.

Keyword	Position	SF	Traffic	Volume	URL
phở	2	6	9.6K	74K	<a href="https://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/22765">vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/22765</a>
hồ hoàn kiếm	3	6	6.3K	90.5K	<a href="https://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/36431">vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/36431</a>
pho	3	7	5.4K	60.5K	<a href="https://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/22765">vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/22765</a>
hồ gươm	3	5	5.2K	74K	<a href="https://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/36431">vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/36431</a>
đảo phú quý	3	5	4.5K	49.5K	<a href="https://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/37069">vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/37069</a>
vũng tàu	6	6	3.7K	74K	<a href="https://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/36929">vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/36929</a>
đèo mã pí lằng	1	7	3.1K	6.6K	<a href="https://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/18646">vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/18646</a>
núi bà đen	4	6	3K	60.5K	<a href="https://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/37589">vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/37589</a>
tà xùa	4	6	3K	60.5K	<a href="https://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/36183">vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/36183</a>
tràng an	3	7	3K	33.1K	<a href="https://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/29997">vietnamtourism.gov.vn/post/29997</a>

Fig. 4 – Top organic keyword analysis results using SEMrush in March 2024

Tab. 1 – Evaluation table of top organic keywords of Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism

Keywords	Search Volume	Competitive level		KEI	KEI review
		"allintitle:keyword"	Difficult		
phở	74000	838000	high	6534.606205	Excellent Keyword
hồ hoàn kiếm	90500	13000	high	630019.2308	Excellent Keyword
pho	60500	2390000	high	1531.485356	Excellent Keyword
hồ gươm	74000	37700	high	145251.9894	Excellent Keyword
đảo phú quý	49500	19500	high	125653.8462	Excellent Keyword
vũng tàu	74000	1270000	high	4311.811024	Excellent Keyword
đèo mã pí lèng	6600	1060	moderate	41094.33962	Excellent Keyword
núi bà đen	60500	20100	high	182101.99	Excellent Keyword
tà xùa	40500	17000	high	96485.29412	Excellent Keyword
tràng an	33100	60600	high	18079.37294	Excellent Keyword

The analysis results indicate that these are effective keywords (ensuring KEI index). The keywords have a moderate to high difficulty level; therefore, to compete for high rankings, the website needs quality backlinks, optimized content, and a good structure.

### 4.3. OnPage SEO Analysis

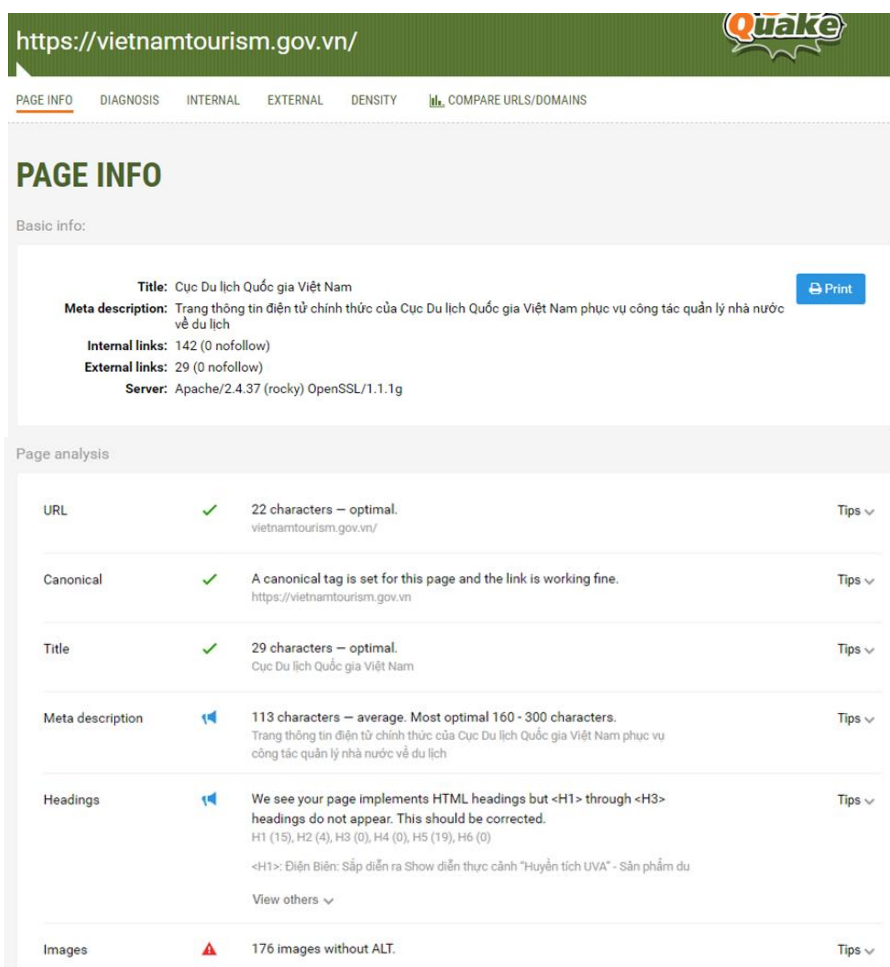


Fig. 5 – OnPage SEO aggregated analysis results using SeoQuake in March 2024

- URL: vietnamtourism.gov.vn/

The URL of the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism website is short and meaningful, considered optimized with 22 characters.

- Title:

The title has an optimal length that is reasonable and concise, right at the search focus, helping data crawling tools to crawl faster and more accurately.

- Heading: The title tags act as signposts, helping users easily track the structure and key points of the content. Without them, users may struggle to grasp the main ideas of the website and navigate effectively.

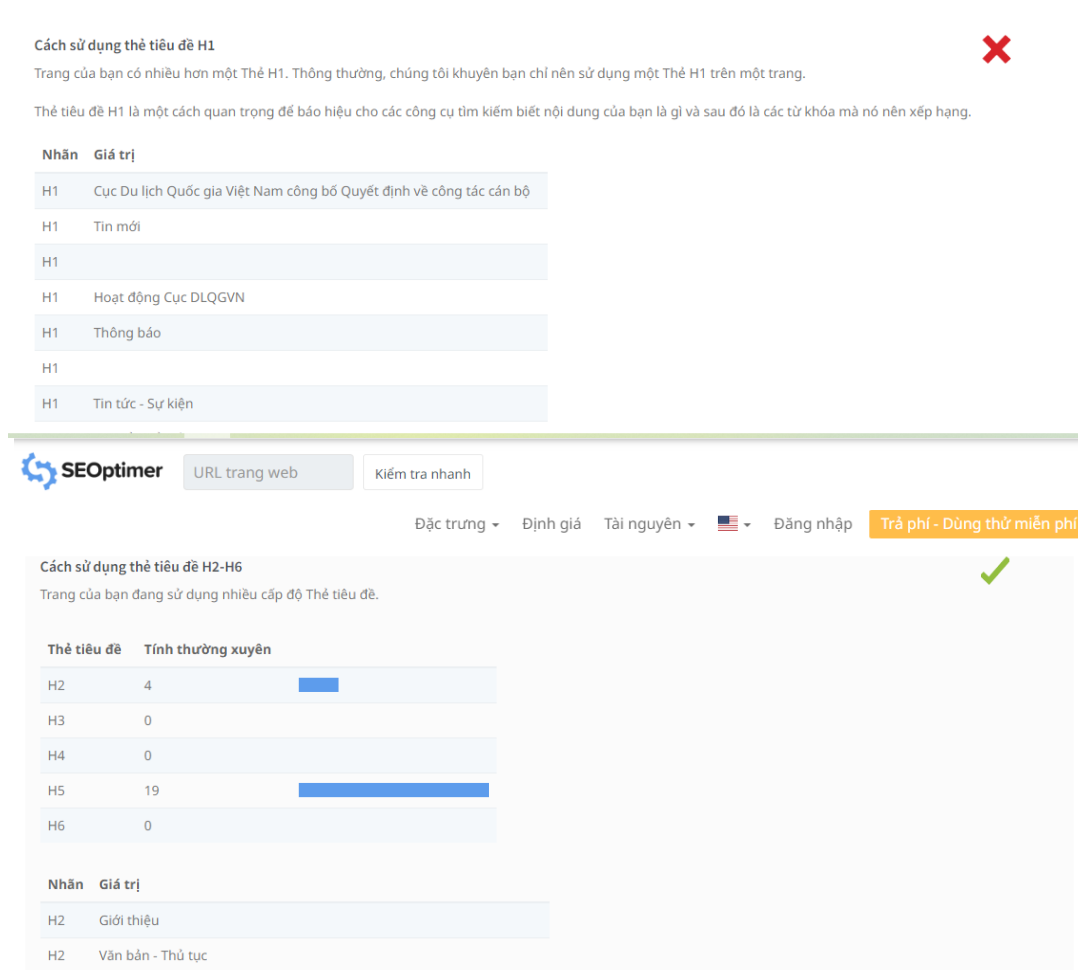


Fig. 6 –Results of title tag analysis using Seoptimer tool in March 2024

The analysis results indicate that the website is using too many H1 tags, which needs adjustment. The H1 tag is the largest tag and should only contain a single heading per page; having multiple H1 tags can confuse Google and affect the ranking of the content.

In addition to H1, the website also uses H2, which helps Google better understand the content of the website. However, the website lacks H3, which will impact SEO. For Heading 2-3, the website should implement Sub-Headings as much as possible.

- Meta Description:

The meta description provides a brief description of the website's content, but its length is not yet optimized (consisting of 113 characters).

- Image: There are 176 images without ALT tags.

- Internal links và Outbound links (External links)

Analysis results from Fig. 5 show that the number of internal links on the website of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism is 142, indicating that the website has a fairly large internal linking network, good structure, and tightly linked content between pages.

The number of external links is 29, which is quite large because according to some SEO experts, the ideal number of external links on a website is from 3 to 5 links, as too many links should not be placed, as this will reduce the value and quality of the website's content. However, the author believes that this number is reasonable because the website of the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism is linking to the official tourism pages of provinces and cities nationwide to create a cooperative network and provide reliable and useful information to users.

#### 4.4. SEO OffPage Analysis

- Link Building is the process of acquiring hyperlinks from other websites to the website of the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism. These hyperlinks direct users to the Administration's website across the internet. With the result of the total backlinks of the website aggregated from SEMRush being 1.5 million - this is a fairly large number, indicating that the website has a high coverage and is linked by many other websites, demonstrating a strong referral power to the website.

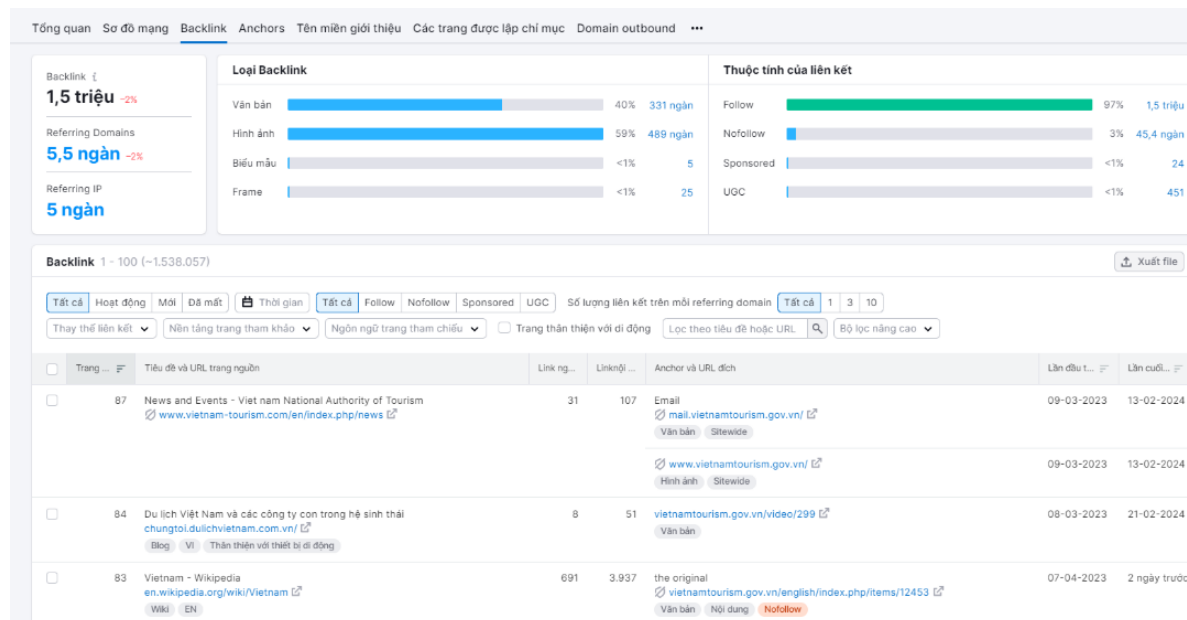


Fig. 7 – Analyze website backlinks using SEMrush in March 2024

While it's difficult to accurately assess the quality of backlinks based solely on quantity, a large number of backlinks can somewhat help improve a website's ranking on search engines. However, if the quality of backlinks is low, the website may face penalties from Google, resulting in a decrease in ranking or even removal from search results. Therefore, the author continues to analyze the origin of backlinks to determine whether the website is receiving backlinks from reputable sources to accurately evaluate the SEO effectiveness of the website.

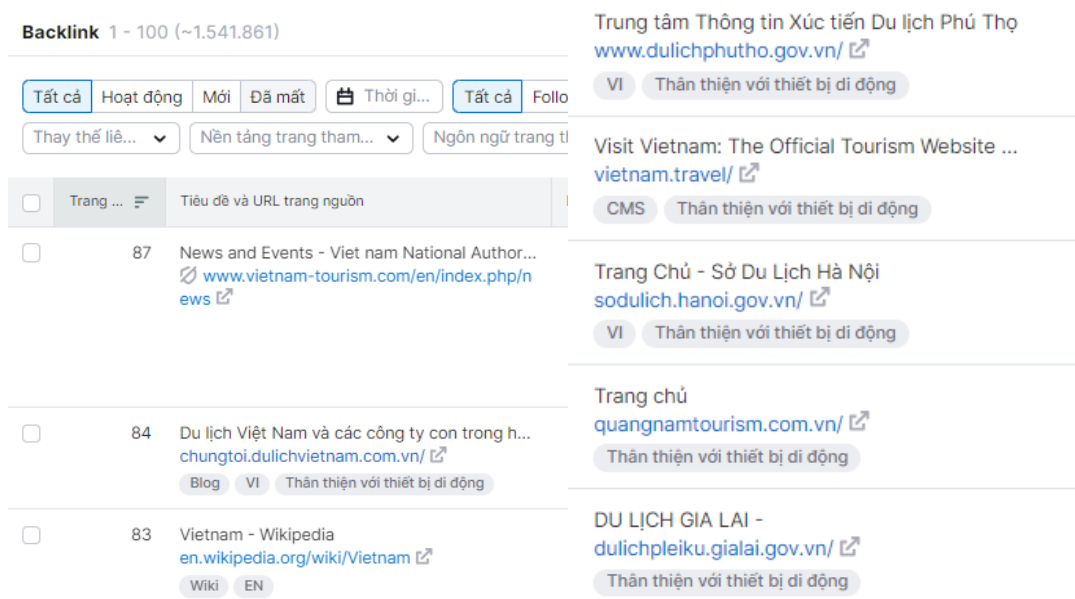


Fig. 8 – The origin of the websites leads backlinks to the website of the Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism

According to information obtained from SEMRush, the majority of backlinks to the website of the Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism originate from high-quality sources, operating on reputable websites such as Wikipedia, the Hanoi Department of Tourism, the Phu Tho Tourism Promotion Center, Tourism in Gia Lai, and others. Having backlinks from reputable websites is an essential part of an effective SEO strategy. This indicates that the website is implementing SEO systematically and professionally.

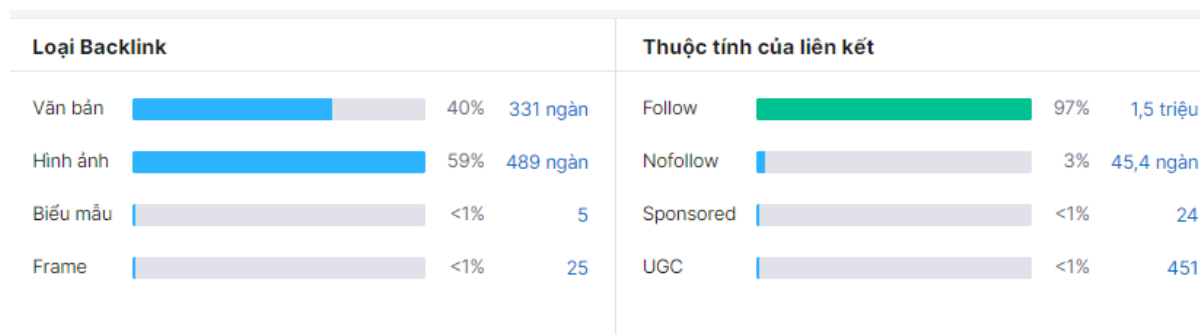


Fig. 9 – Statistics on Backlink data

The majority of backlinks (about 59%) are image backlinks, followed by text backlinks (about 40%). The number of backlinks from forms and frames is very low, less than 1%.

The presence of both image and text backlinks indicates diversification in link building. This can help the website avoid overreliance on a specific type of backlink and increase the chances of attracting traffic from various sources. Image backlinks can be an important part of an SEO strategy, especially if the images are widely shared and relevant to the content of the website.

Additionally, links can have two commonly used attributes: Dofollow and Nofollow, to help Google bots collect and determine the credibility of the linked destination:

+ Dofollow/Follow: Signals to Google bots that the link is valuable and validates the credibility of the website it points to with search engines.

+ Nofollow: Informs Google that you do not endorse the credibility of the linked-to page and do not take responsibility for the quality of the content on that page.

Google will remove low-quality or irrelevant backlinks to avoid impacting Google ranking results. Therefore, backlinks to the website need to be credible, high-quality, and in a Follow state to strengthen the website. Conversely, if a website has a large number of unrelated backlinks, it will violate Google's link spam policy.

Based on data extracted from SEMRush, it can be seen that the website of the Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism has a good backlink configuration with a high percentage of "dofollow" links at 97%. A high dofollow ratio indicates that most links to the website are validated, meaning they transmit credibility signals and help improve search rankings. This is an important factor in SEO.

#### - Social Media Marketing

To optimize SEO activities, the website of the Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism has linked to social media platforms such as Facebook, Youtube, and Zalo.



Fig. 10 – Connection of the Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism website via social networks



+ Facebook: The Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism owns a fanpage with 21,000 followers. On this platform, the National Tourism Administration regularly posts articles, images, videos, and other content related to tourist destinations, events, tourism activities, and useful information for travelers, with a fairly frequent posting frequency (1 post/day, sometimes posting 4-5 posts/day). In each post, the National Tourism Administration attaches a link to specific articles on the website to attract customers to visit the website. However, the interaction received under each post is quite low, ranging from 5 to 20 interactions/post. This indicates that off-page SEO on Facebook is not optimal, and the content of the posts has not achieved high effectiveness.

+ Youtube: The Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism owns the Vietnam Tourism YouTube channel. The channel shares links to the website, Zalo, and the fan page of the Vietnam National Tourism Administration. The channel has 15,300 subscribers and 2,500 uploaded videos. The interface is logically designed, user-friendly, divided into various categories such as Tourism Promotion, Tourism Statistics, and Travel Applications to help customers easily search and share information. The frequency of posting on the channel is quite regular, averaging about 2 days/video, sometimes reaching 5-7 videos/day. The interaction rate and views of the videos are uneven and vary significantly.

+ Zalo: This channel regularly posts news, announcements, images, videos, and other content related to domestic tourism, including introducing tourist destinations, tourism activities, events, and useful information for users. All posts are linked to the website of the Vietnam National Tourism Administration. Additionally, through Zalo, interaction with users is possible by responding to messages, comments, questions, opinions, and feedback from users. This helps to build better relationships with the audience and provide necessary information to users.

## **V. DISCUSSION**

- For On-page SEO activities, website administrators need to pay attention to the following points:

+ Heading: Headings are mandatory tags in a website to explain the issues raised in the article. Their presence helps create content cohesion, making it easier for Google to assess and improve the customer experience on the website, thereby strengthening On-page SEO. The website of the Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism uses headings, but they are not optimized. Specifically, there are too many H1 tags but zero H3 tags. Therefore, for Heading tags, the Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism should only use 1 H1 and supplement with H3.

+ The Meta Description tag is not optimized in length. According to the analysis results above through the SeoQuake tool, the recommended length for optimizing this tag is between 160 to 300 characters.

+ Images: There are too many images without ALT tags. When images lack ALT tags, search engines may struggle to understand the content of the images, affecting the website's performance on search engines and reducing user experience, especially for users who use screen readers or when browsers cannot display images. Additionally, ALT tags support visually impaired users to understand image content through screen reader WCAG, which Google evaluates more favorably according to ADA standards. Thus, regarding images, the author suggests that the Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism should add a content description line containing keywords for the 176 images currently lacking ALT tags.

- For Off-page SEO activities, website administrators need to pay attention to the following points: The analysis above shows that the interaction levels of posts on Facebook and YouTube channels are low. To attract traffic and user interaction, administrators not only need to focus on post content but also need to diversify social media platforms by adding channels like Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest to meet the needs of each social media user group, especially Generation Z. [3]

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

The analysis results of the current status of search engine optimization activities of Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism website have indicated both successful and unsatisfactory points of this activity. Besides performing well in terms of search keywords, URLs, titles, internal and external links, and link building, the website's SEO activities still face some issues related to both On-page SEO (titles, headings, meta descriptions) and Off-page SEO (Social Media Marketing). With some suggestions as mentioned above, the author hopes to contribute to the sustainable development strategy of Vietnam's tourism industry.

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