

Strategic Policy Options for Enhancement of National Park and Local Community Linkage in Tourism Management of Thai National Parks

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ABSTRACT

This policy research is focused on producing policy guidelines to enhance local community involvement in tourism management and services in national parks. The research was carried out by lessons learnt from communities currently involved in tourism within 4 national parks. These were Ban Mae Klang Luang with Doi Inthanon National Park, Ban Khao Lek with Chalerm Rattankosin National Park, Ban Wang Lung in Khao Luang National Park, and Tambon Krung Ching in Khao Luang and Khao Nan National Parks. Data collection and analysis were done by in-depth interview and questionnaires with SWOT and Cluster analysis.

The strengths that made community based tourism (CBT) in national parks successful were compiled into 4 aspects: 1) Local involvement -support from national parks particularly in providing opportunities for local communities in national park tourism, support from outside organizations, local organization in charge of tourism administrative management; 2) national and cultural resources conservation - local awareness in natural resource conservation which likely to come about when local people realized benefit gained from tourism in national parks; 3) social and economics - the willingness of local people to involve in tourism and learn tourism service skills, good social relations amongst local people and strong leadership as well as good contact with tour operators; and 4) tourism experiences - the diverse of tourism experiences for visitors ranging from natural to cultural experiences.

The policy instruments that local communities perceived as important to the success of CBT in national parks were self regulatory, partnerships, institutional arrangement, building of local awareness in conservation, and local skill development in tourism management and services. Four strategies were proposed as follows: 1) the enhancement of opportunities for local involvement in national park tourism by setting up of effective local organization in charge of CBT, strengthening cooperation amongst communities around national parks to attract external supports, and establishing joint management system of CBT in national parks, 2) the improvement of natural resource conservation in national parks by setting up participatory monitoring of tourism impacts, and establishing collaborative conservation actions amongst stakeholders from tourism revenues, 3) enhancement of social and economic development by improving benefits distribution mechanisms from national park tourism to local economy and building up local capacity of needed skills in CBT business, 4) fostering low impact tourism in national parks by developing and disseminating code of conducts for visitors and tour operators, and implementing interpretation programs in national parks.

Key words: national park, local community, tourism, strategic policy

INTRODUCTION

Thailand's national park system was established in 1962 when Khao Yai was designated as the country's first national park. Since then, the system has expanded rapidly to include 103 national parks covering 52,262 sq. km or 10.2 % of the total country area. Recreation opportunities in national parks are high and diverse. Visitors can choose variety of nature tourism activities ranging from sight-seeing, nature education, picnicking, camping, elephant riding, canoeing, scuba diving to more adventurous activities such as cliff climbing, white water rafting, and trekking. The popularity of nature tourism in Thai National Park is reflected by the increased amount of visitor annually during 1995-2000 by 4.9 % with slightly decrease since year 2001 due to entrance fee adjustment and other external factors affecting tourism such as SARS and bird flu (Table 1).

One of the fundamental reasons to consider tourism within the context of national parks is the linkage with communities that either adjacent to or within the park. Tourism development has, as principal objectives, the creation and maintenance of economic opportunity, enhancement of quality of life and protection of a cultural, historic and natural

heritage (Eagles and McCool, 2002). The fact that national parks attract visitors that support local economies is undoubtedly. In national parks, local communities can provide many of the needed goods and services to visitors, and can, if integrated with the management of the natural areas, protect the natural resources of protected areas (Moisey, 2002). Tourism in national parks can play an important role for the enhancement of the local prosperity as it generates supplementary income and expands job opportunities as well as tool for the conservation of natural environment.

Government then should pay attention on how to improve national park and local community linkage in tourism management since it is the fundamental drivers of its interest in protected area management and means to improve local economy. This study was carried out as a policy research to suggest strategies and strategic policy options that can facilitate community-based tourism in national parks so that park management objectives regarding conservation and tourism can be achieved with benefit distribution to local economy.

OBJECTIVES

1. to collect and analyze the good practice

Table 1 Number of visitors in national parks from year 1995-2004.

Year	No. of National park ^{1/}	Number of visitors		
		Terrestrial parks	Marine parks	Total
1995	100	11,527,548	2,388,460	13,916,008
1996	105	13,019,770	2,417,842	15,437,612
1997	115	16,444,826	2,381,287	18,826,113
1998	124	16,830,681	2,666,472	19,497,153
1999	127	15,490,560	2,647,984	18,138,544
2000	131	15,161,766	2,183,148	17,344,914
2001	136	12,021,147	2,563,807	14,584,954
2002	142	13,012,820	2,324,010	15,336,830
2003	144	12,555,453	1,833,134	14,359,943
2004	144	11,242,653	2,190,404	13,433,057

^{1/} Include national parks that have visitor statistics both officially and unofficially declared

Source: Department of National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (2005)

cases of community-based tourism (CBT) in national parks,

2. to formulate strategies and Strategic Policy Options (SPOs) of CBT for facilitating national park management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

National park and tourism

National Park is defined by IUCN (1994) as natural area of land and/or sea, designated to (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations, (b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area, and (c) provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible. Tourism has been an important use in Thai national parks. However, the success in tourism management depends on several factors. Stakeholder participation such as local communities and tour operators is an essential element. The control of tourism impacts within acceptable limits, and distribution of benefits from tourism in national parks to local economy are equally important issues.

Sustainable tourism has been acknowledged as fundamental principle in tourism management in national parks. Tourism management guidelines are normally integrated into park management plan or formulated separately. The main ideas are that the natural and cultural environment within the national parks should form the basis for tourism use in the protected areas and must not be put at risk since protected area tourism depends on high quality of natural environment. The national park management must exist to protect the values for which the area was originally established and manage tourism properly through active management of tourism and tourists, sharing of responsibility for management with tourism operatives, local communities and visitors, and providing potential economic opportunities for tourism. Visitors expect to find facilities, programs,

as well as recreational and learning opportunities within the park, but not all demands can be met, as some of these expectations may be inconsistent with park goals and objectives (WCPA, 2005). There is a linkage of national park, tourism, and local economy that should not be overlooked.

The natural environment is a key element for nature tourism in national parks. National parks in Thailand contain all representative ecosystems appeared in the country with diverse species of fauna and flora. They possess distinct natural features of various interests. Obviously, Thai national parks have very high potential and capacity to be developed and managed for ecotourism and sustainable tourism. Taking into account of the mandate and management objectives of national parks mentioned previously, Thailand is in an excellent position to push ahead its effort to develop ecotourism industry basing on the rich resources found in its national parks.

After 1945, visitors to national parks accelerated due to expanding populations, more affluence and greater availability of parks and protected areas. The similar situation has taken place in Thailand. Averagely about 15.4 million visitors visited Thai national parks during 2000-2003. As a result, pressure on tourism management in national parks has increased. Chettamart (2004) drew together current tourism management situations in Thai national parks as the following:

1) Most national parks have adopted the “ecotourism concepts and principles” as a framework for tourism development and management. They have strictly followed the general direction and administrative oversight of Department of National Park, Wildlife, and Plant Conservation. Tourism development and management in most parks seems to be in line with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Ecotourism Policy and reflecting the current Government policy.

2) Most key national parks (about 40 out of 145) have management plan in place. The park management plan usually contains management zones to guide overall activities for resource and

environmental protection, recreation, and facility development for visitor use. DNP is now contemplating to expand its effort to draw up management plan for all remaining national parks.

3) The park management plan has one major chapter or section devoted to recreation and tourism. It contains lengthy details concerning specific actions related to recreation activities, tourist services, facility development, and education or interpretive program. Such questions as what, where, how and by whom for recreation and tourism programs are normally described in the plan. Some of management plans even determine the number of visitors the park can absorb during certain time period (carrying capacity) without affecting its ecosystem and component parts. Some have visitor impact management schemes (VIM) for enforcement and implementation.

4) Visitor facilities in all parks are designed and developed by DNP through the contractors. Various visitor services are catered by park personnel, including accommodation, foods, recreational equipments, souvenirs, nature interpretation and safety. However, the group tour organized by tour operators normally has its own guide to cater some particular services while in the parks.

5) The use fee is normally charged to the visitors for most services including the entrance fee. The park revenue can then be allocated back to the park to maintain those facilities and to support other management activities pending approval of the central office in Bangkok.

6) Local communities can also offer their services the same as park personnel on the perimeters of the park. And since community-based tourism has been promoted for some time, a number of communities along the parks' boundaries have become viable options for both Thais and foreigners who seek different experience in visiting national parks. It should be noted here that there are at least 50 communities known to date to use 47 national parks as the key destinations for taking their client to. Some of these communities are even allowed to

voice their opinion and suggestion toward the parks' tourism plan and operation (Emphandhu, 2003).

7) Most key national parks, with support of central office in Bangkok, have their own information brochure and variety of booklets available as the tool for tourism marketing. However, several TAT campaigns on different occasions and means help national parks becoming the popular tourist destinations. Such campaigns include, for example, the monthly Tourism Magazine, the Unseen Thailand, and other associated websites. Other promotion and marketing are done through all types of media like newspapers, TVs, radios and most Thai air carriers' on flight magazines, which carry periodic stories and pictures about different national parks.

Tourism policy in national parks

Not much can be said about nature tourism policy in the national parks of Thailand as, in fact, there is none existing in written form. Most tourism development in protected areas to date has primarily revolved around the administrative decisions. Guidelines and recommendations appeared in the units' Management Plan or Master Plan is only a part of such decisions (Chettamart, 2004). In the big picture, it is essential to say that the current government is quite keen on tourism development. H.E. Prime Minister Thaksin Shinnawat, in his official declaration of the government policies to the National Assembly in early 2001, stressed that the tourism industry could very well be the country's substantial income earner and, in turn, could solve its on-going economic illness. He then pledged to increase the diverse forms of tourism and to upgrade the quality standards of all tourism products and services to ensure the long-term competitiveness with other countries. One of his policy statements, published and quoted widely, is that "Increase the diversity of different forms and purposes of tourists, targeting ecotourism, health tourism, and nature tourism. New tourist sites must be developed and promoted. Communities must be able to play a greater role in tourism management..." (Emphandhu, 2003).

Community-based tourism

Community-based ecotourism or tourism (CBE) concept implies that the community has substantial control and involvement in the ecotourism project, and that the majority of benefits remain in the community. Three main types of CBE enterprises have been identified. The purest model suggests that the community owns and manages the enterprise. All community members are employed by the project using a rotation system, and profits are allocated to community projects. The second type of CBE enterprise involves family or group initiatives within communities. This is based on voluntary participation. The third type of CBE is a joint venture between a community or family and an outside business partner (Maclaren, 2002).

The community tourism industry is the collection of businesses that creates and sells a variety of goods and services to visitors. The development of these industries related to protected areas is a growing phenomenon as communities respond to the opportunity of tourism in and around protected areas. Community-based tourism typically has broadly defined goals. First, it should be socially sustainable. This means the tourism activities are developed and operated, for the most part, by local community members, and certainly with their consent and support. The reasonable share of the revenues is enjoyed by the community in one way or another. This may include revenue streams which go to co-ops, joint ventures, community associations, businesses that widely employ local people, or to a range of entrepreneurs starting or operating small- and medium-sized enterprises. Finally community-based tourism implies respect and concern for the natural and cultural heritage (Hatton, 1999).

RESEARCH METHOD

This is a policy research which employed the Participatory Action Research approach (PAR). The research life was 3 years from October 2002 to March 2005 of which the first year was to identify

the research sites and carry out the data collection on three Good Practice Inventories (GPI), the second year was continued with the inventory of an additional GPI and analysis of all GPIs for SPOs development. The final year devoted for SPOs development and revision. The research method and design are presented below.

1. Site selection for Good Practice Inventory (GPI) cases for CBT

The definitions of key concepts and selection criteria were set up by the regional research team from Japan, India, Indonesia, and Thailand during the first research team meeting (November 2002) in Japan. The research team defined community-based tourism by its objectives as “to gain local economic development, reach some forms of participation, give socially and environmentally responsible experience for visitors, and bring positive impact on conservation of natural and/or cultural resources in national parks”. The Good Practice Inventory cases (GPI) were selected using the following criteria and steps:

Step 1: Identify “community-based tourism” in terrestrial national parks

Step 2: Identify “good practice” sites from step 1 using the following criteria:

Participation/ relationship	have participation by local communities
	have co-operation between protected area tourism authorities and communities working in community-based tourism
	support a feeling of local community ownership of community-based tourism ideas, concepts and actions
Nature/ environmental conservation	increase conservation of key resources in and around protected areas
	build upon environmental awareness and others by local communities
	lead to increased environmental

	awareness and improved attitudes by local communities and visitors
Socio-Economic issues	retain significant economic benefits in local communities
	contribute to local social and community development in and around protected areas
Business	be a profitable business for local communities
	promote authentic products that build upon local natural and cultural assets

Step 3: Select “good practice” cases based on applicability to other places and opportunity to learn.

Step 4: Verify the selected cases against the innovative instruments and by consultation to local communities and experts.

With respect to the selection criteria, four GPI sites were selected:

- Ban Mae Klang Luang, Doi Inthanon National Park
- Ban Khao Lek, Chalerm Rattanakosin National Park
- Ban Wang Lung, Khao Luang National Park
- Tambon Krung Ching Tourism Network, Khao Nan National Park

2. Data collection and analysis

1) In-depth interview: The in-depth interview is carried out at the GPI sites in May, August, September, and December 2003 to collect information from key informants on the issues and concerns of CBT as well as their opinion on the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat they perceived from CBT at their site. The required instruments for successful CBT in protected areas are also put into questions. Content analysis was employed to organize the interview data.

2) Questionnaire

• Population and sample size:

Questionnaire was constructed to obtain quantitative

data on the importance of CBT instruments in local people's opinion. The population included local people who were related to CBT such as being served in the tourism committee, being provide tourism service such as guides, food, and accommodation to visitors, etc. and national park superintendents. The total population of the four selected villages was 540 persons. Of which 154 samples involved in tourism management with the national parks were selected by accidental sampling. The number of samples in four representative sites: Ban Mae Klang Luang, Khao Lek, Wang Lung, and Tambon Krung Ching, were 27, 14, 70, and 43, respectively. In addition, 97 samples out of the total of 145 national park superintendents were also collected during the Superintendent meetings at the centre office in Bangkok in December 2003.

• **Sampling technique:** Purposive sampling was employed to get the informants who are knowledgeable of CBT situation in each site.

• **Questionnaire construction and pre-test:** Questionnaire had two objectives: (1) to collect opinion of local people and national park superintendents on existing instruments being used in their CBT and how importance these instruments were in terms of meeting the CBT objectives and (2) to collect opinion of local people and national park superintendents on required instruments for their CBT in order to obtain successful CBT. The pre-test was done to check content validity.

• **Data collection:** Data was collected in October and December 2003 with help from graduate students from Kasetsart University and undergraduate students from Walailak University.

• **Analysis:** Descriptive statistics of percentage, mean, and standard deviation are employed to rank CBT instruments currently used and being needed by local people.

3. Information syndication

The results from in-depth interview are used as main information for suggesting SPOs guidelines. Results from questionnaires are used as supportive

information particularly in ranking analysis of the instruments. CBT situations from all sites were syndicated using SWOT analysis by CBT objectives. Lessons learnt were also analyzed from the GPIs followed by ranking method to show degree of importance of CBT instruments. Finally, the cluster and matrix analysis of instruments by CBT objectives was carried out to obtain insight information for SPOs construction.

4. Strategy and strategic policy options development

Based on the lessons learnt, four strategies and nine strategic policy options were proposed for facilitating CBT in national parks of Thailand. A workshop was then arranged in September 2004 to solicit national park superintendents and high administrators' opinions on the proposed SPOs. As a result, SPOs were revised accordingly.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Good practices inventories

1.1 Summary of good practices

1) Ban Mae Klang Luang tourism alliance

Karen villagers of Ban Mae Klang Luang formed the Alliance. Their occupation is mainly agriculture producing rice for their own consumption as well as temperate fruits, flowers, and vegetables as their sources of income. Surrounded by the hill evergreen forest at altitude of 1000-1800 meters (msl), the villages have been located inside Doi Inthanon National Park for more than a century. In the past, the conflict between the national park officials and the villagers was relatively high as a result of illegal wild animal hunting and forest encroachment. In order to release pressure from consumptive forest use and introduce supplement income for the villagers, in 1999, the national park supported the forming of Ban Mae Klang Luang Tourism Alliance comprising about 89 members from the four villages. Since then the Alliance has operated tourism services such as home-stay, trekking, and local guides thus, provided

supplementary income to the members. The community-based tourism at Ban Mae Klang Luang is now a profitable business for local communities and helps promote authentic local products such as selling temperate fruits and coffee bean to visitor. The result of tourism operation also increases local people concerns about forest conservation in protected areas.

2) Ban Khao Lek in Chalerm Rattanakosin National Park are the Karen ethnic group totaling of 521 people, 98 households. Their occupation is mainly agriculture. The village has been located inside Chalerm Rattana kosin National Park for more than 200 years. In 1999, the Hill tribe Welfare Center of Kanchanaburi helped the villagers setting up ecotourism tourism operation at Ban Khao Lek. The Hill tribe Welfare Center built local-style accommodation for visitors and introducing forest trekking and cave exploration activities. At the beginning, the villagers were only dealt with provision of labor and local guides for visitors. The management was mostly in hands of the officials from the Hill tribe welfare center. In 2000, there was a conflict and misunderstanding between the villagers and the hill tribe welfare officers. The reorganization of the tourism operation was followed by that incident in 2002. Since then, the villagers withhold its ownership and decision power of their tourism operation. The contact with tour operator has been set up to receive visitors. The Government has also had a pilot project with Ban Khao Lek on Joint Resource Management between local community and national park and extended their support to community-based tourism of Ban Khao Lek. The results of tourism operation increase local people concerns about forest conservation in protected areas and reduce conflict between the park and local community.

3) Nature and environmental conservation group of Ban Wang Lung at Khao Luang National Park Villagers nearby Khao Luang National Park formed the Nature and Environmental Conservation Group of Ban Wang Lung since 1988 after the

serious tragedy of land slides caused by big flooding. Because of the destruction of forest on the mountain, the situation went worst. Many lost their family lives and assets by that incident. The villagers since then have changed their behavior to be more concerned about conservation activities. The main activities of the conservation group have been on natural resource conservation such as forest plantation, forest fire control, forest patrol and surveillance. In 1999, villagers decided to start the community-based tourism operation to gain additional income for villagers and forest conservation activities. The Wang Lung Conservation Group receives support from many institutions in tourism management namely Khao Luang National Park, TAT regional office, universities, and local NGOs in capacity building, promotion, and public relation. Tourism activities include trekking to Pha-mee mountain top of Khao Luang National Park, bird watching, waterfall visiting, and learning way of life. The tourism operation brings additional income to villager and supports forest conservation activity that is the main objective of the group.

4) Tambon Krung Ching tourism network

Villages in Tambon Krung Ching are situated near Khao Luang and Khao Nan National Parks where natural tourism resources are abundant such as caves, forest, waterfalls, and rivers. In 1995 Tambon Krung Ching Administration successfully arranged river rafting at Klong Klai which parts of it is Khao Nan National park boundary. The rafting activity has been very popular for both Thai and foreign tourists visiting Nakorn Srithammarat Province and has become supplementary income to villagers especially in Mu 3 village. In 1995 the tourism business was very good that many outsider investors were interested in buying the business from the Tambon. The pressure from the investors was so great and people started to concern about their way of life and other impacts if the land and tourism business had been sold to the outsiders for resort development. As a result, villagers were actively organized the Tambon Tourism Network to formally manage tourism within

the Tambon district. The tourism activities were extended to other villagers in Tambon Krung Ching besides Mu 3 to gain more involvement and support from villagers. Several institutions such as local university, TAT Regional Office 2, and Friend of Khao Luang NGO offered support to the Tamboon District Organization so that sustainable tourism can be obtained. Besides, “Conserve Krung Ching Organization” which is local NGO was also established to take care of natural resources in Krung Ching vicinity. Tourism activities include river rafting, cave exploration, camping in durian orchard, visiting waterfalls, and historical story telling of the area. The tourism brings additional income to villagers and helps protect community integrity.

1.2 SWOT analysis

Table 2 showed SWOT analysis of CBT situation related to national park management. The combined strength and opportunity factors can suggest offensive strategies to facilitate CBT in national parks while strength and threat factors can suggest defensive strategies. Weakness and threat factors can imply improvement strategies are needed. In sum, CBT as related to national park management had its strength on active and willingness participation of local community but weakness on technical know-how to manage tourism for sustainability. Unclear policy of CBT in national park management is also a main external factor that discouraged or nearly prevented CBT to take place in national park. The main opportunity for CBT was that the Thai constitution encouraged participation in natural resource management. CBT can be a tool for environmental conservation as well as community development.

1.3 Relative importance of instruments of CBT

Results from in-depth interviews of community leaders in CBT showed that each instrument may have different importance in terms of CBT success. The importance of the instruments was also varied

Table 2 SWOT analysis of CBT situation in national parks of Thailand.

CBT objectives	Internal factors (community-self)		External factors	
	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
1. Involvement/Empowerment	1. Strong cooperation within communities (WL and KC), 2. Effective local tourism organization and regulations (MKL), 3. Strong cooperation between community and other institutions (networking) (KC, WL, and MKL).	1. Because of poverty, local people are likely to seek short term benefit from tourism than long term benefit and sustainability (MKL, KC), 2. Lack of tourism impact control and monitoring (MKL, KL, WL, KC)	1. GOs and NGOs institutions have policy that supports CBT as a tool for community development (MKL, KL, WL, KC), 2. Thai constitution encourages local rights and local participation in natural resource management (MKL, KL, WL, KC), 3. Park authority supports CBT (MKL, KL, WL, KC).	1. Lack of formal policy / mutual agreement on CBT in protected areas (MKL, KL, WL, KC), 2. Lack of effective / proper communication channel between park authorities and communities (KL, KC).
2. Environmental and cultural resources conservation	1. Conservation awareness of local people (WL, KL) 2. Cooperation in resource conservation when they realize that protected areas can bring them direct and indirect benefit (WL, KC, MKL, KL), 3. Benefit from tourism is distributed to natural resource conservation actions (WL),	1. Weak CBT management (KL), 2. Insufficient benefits, narrowly-distributed (KL, WL).	1. Government supports SMEs (MKL, KL, WL, KC), 2. Steady visitors (MKL, KC), 3. Nature tourism in protected areas is very popular (Doi Inthanon, Khao Luang NPs).	1. Insufficient tourism impact control and mitigation plans by national park authority (Doi Inthanon, Khao Luang, Chalearn Rattanakosin NPs), 2. Over-use of natural resources. Tourism capacity is overused during long holidays (Doi Inthanon, Khao Luang NPs).
3. Social and economic development	1. Willing to learn CBT management (MKL, KC), 2. Strong social bonding within community (KL, WL), 3. Good connection to tour operators (MKL), 4. Strong leadership (MKL, KL, WL, KC), 5. Acceptance from general communities members because part of tourism benefit is distributed to community development fund for the benefit of the whole communities (MKL, KL, WL, KC), 6. Income from tourism distributed in local economy (MKL, KL, WL, KC).	1. Interpretation is either lacking in most CBT in protected areas or not in good quality (MKL, KL, WL, KC), 2. Unable to enforce tourism regulation to visitors (MKL, WL).	1. TAT and other institutions support local capacity building programs such as training in good hosting and services, interpretation, and nature guides (MKL, WL, KC), 2. High potential tourism resources in national parks bring extraordinary experiences to visitors (MKL, KL, WL, KC).	1. Over-developed infrastructures in protected areas (Inthanon NP), 2. Transportation and communication system (KL).
4. Quality of visitor experience	1. CBT gives diverse visitor experiences ranging from nature - based to cultural tourism (MKL, KL, WL, KC).			

Note: MKL = Mae Klang Luang villages, KL = Khao Lek village, WL = Wang Luang village, KC = Tambon Krung Ching

by community sites. Table 3 summarized the output of ranking analysis of relative importance of instruments that supported successful CBT. The instruments that community leaders of all research sites had never mentioned are Regulatory Instrument and Technology Instrument. The relative importance of instruments for CBT ranking from highest to lowest is as follows: self regulatory, partnerships, and institutional arrangement tied with awareness & capacity building.

Table 4 showed results from local people and national park superintendents' opinions on the importance of instruments for CBT in comparison. Most results are relatively consistency with each other. Even though national park superintendents highlighted more on awareness and capacity building and the regulatory instrument to maintain quality visitor experience. The most important instrument for CBT objective of nature conservation was awareness/capacity building (97.2%). For participation

Table 3 Local leaders' opinions on relative importance of instruments of CBT in research sites.

Instruments	GPI sites					Total Score
	Ban Mae Klang Luang		Ban Khao Lek	Ban Wang Lung	Tambon Krung Ching	
1. Regulatory	0	0	0	0	0	0
2. Economic	1	3	0	0	1	5
3. Organization	3	2	2	2	0	7
4. Partnerships	1	2	2	2	3	8
5. Self-regulatory	3	3	3	3	0	9
6. Technology components	0	0	0	0	0	0
7. Awareness/ capacity building	2	0	3	3	2	7
8. Design and Planning	1	0	0	0	3	4

Note: High = 3; Medium = 2; Low = 1; None = 0

Table 4 Number and percentage of local people's opinion (n= 154) and National park superintendents' opinions (n = 97) on importance of instruments upon CBT's objectives.

Instruments	GPI sites												Units: %	
	Nature/environmental conservation			Participation			Local economic development			Visitor experience				
	LP	NP	Ave	LP	NP	Ave	LP	NP	Ave	LP	NP	Ave		
Regulatory	0	0	0	70.8	80.4	74.5	0	0	0	0	81.4	31.5		
Economic	0	0	0	0	0	0	87	93.8	89.6	0	0	0		
Organization	0	0	0	89.6	93.8	91.2	0	0	0	81.8	93.8	86.5		
Partnerships	89.6	67.0	62.4	89	99.0	92.8	81.8	92.8	86.1	87	97.9	91.2		
Self-regulatory	83.8	58.8	74.1	92.2	84.5	89.2	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Technology components	79.9	63.9	73.7	0	0	0	73.4	71.1	72.5	0	0	0		
Awareness/ capacity building	95.5	100.0	97.2	0	0	0	76	79.4	77.3	89	96.9	92.0		
Design and Planning	0	0	0	85.1	58.8	74.9	0	0	0	79.2	99.0	86.9		

Note: LP = Local people's opinion, NP = National park superintendents' opinions; Ave = mean score

objective, the most important instruments were partnerships (92.8%) and organization (91.2%). For local economic development, the most important instrument was economic (89.6%). And for visitor experience, the instruments were awareness/capacity building (92.0%) and partnerships (91.2%), respectively. These instruments should be considered when constructing the SPOs in later stage.

2. Description of strategic policy options

From SWOT analysis and feedback from the workshop in September 2004, nine SPOs under four CBT strategies were developed in order to facilitate national park and local community linkage in tourism management.

STRATEGY 1: Enhance local involvement in national park tourism

SPO 1: Set up an effective local organization in charge of CBT

Rationale: Establishment of local organization is part of institutional development that local community members can empower themselves and generate the knowledge base and enthusiasm necessary for community-based. This decision-making body is seen as a crucial part of community-based tourism. Effective local organizations identified in good practice inventory include tourism alliance of Ban Mae Klang Luang, ecotourism group of Ban Kha Lek, nature conservation group of Ban Wang Lung and Krung Ching ecotourism network. Several committees are set up under these organizations.

Instruments:

Organizational arrangements: Set up formal and informal local organization;

Self-regulation: Set up local regulation related to tourism;

Design and planning: Formulate participatory community-based tourism plan.

SPO 2: Strengthen cooperation amongst communities around national parks to attract external resources and support

Rationale: “Friends of Khao Luang Range” shows that a local network organized to conserve nature of Khao Luang range can attract external interest and support. Tambon Krung Ching Ecotourism is also another example of how communities networking within Tambon can increase local participation in tourism management and gain external support. Partnership with NGOs provides diagnostics, feasibility studies, and support from planning to implementation, and to evaluation. They ensure that CBT projects will sustain within local community capacity.

Instrument:

Organizational arrangements: create an organization such as “friends of national parks” or “local tourism networking”;

Partnership: form collaboration between local tourism networking and external organizations,

Awareness/capacity building: raise awareness of communities and building capacity regarding roles of communities in “friends of national parks” or “local tourism networking”.

SPO 3: Establish joint-management system of CBT in national parks

Rationale: Effectiveness of national park management is a key role in facilitating community-based tourism to achieve national park management objectives such as natural resource protection, socio-economic development for local economy as well as good experiences for visitors. Good governance for protected areas can bring about effectiveness of national park management. Based on United Nation (1997), characteristics of good governance were proposed by Institute on Governance and Parks Canada (2002) described as legitimacy and voice, accountability, performance, fairness, and direction.

One way that protected area governance can be described is through the degree of collaborative management involved in governance. This approach reflects the evolution governance of protected areas and allows distinction in the range of traditional and innovative approaches. A continuum of options is

outlined from Government Sole Management, Government Consultative Management, Government Cooperative Management, Joint Management, Delegated Management, and Private Owner Management (Institute on Governance and Parks Canada, 2002).

The joint management system is introduced here to enhance good governance in tourism management in national parks especially for local community and other stakeholders' collaboration/participation. Elements of joint management system are identified as partnership structure, planning, and good functions of all stakeholders that can answer to the principles of sound governance identified by the UN. To be effective, joint management system would need an input such as legal system to backup joint management, strong commitment and cooperation from all stakeholders and management resource

Instruments:

Design, planning and management: conduct need assessment and feasibility study for co-management;

Organizational arrangements: Form a multi-stakeholders committee;

Partnership: Foster transparency, fairness, and participation of stakeholder;

Regulatory instrument: Develop legal system for co-management of tourism in protected areas.

STRATEGY 2: Improve natural resources conservation in national parks

SPO 4: Set up participatory monitoring of tourism impacts

Rationale: Tourism is expected to increase rapidly in economic importance. Thus, to maintain resource integrity, monitoring of tourism impacts is needed. Ban Wang Lung and local NGOs cooperate with park authority monitored such impacts along trekking trails. Thus, it helps retain visitor enjoyment and viable tourism. Monitoring also gives information to communities for decision making regarding tourism issues.

Instruments:

Design and planning: Design participatory monitoring plan;

Self regulation: Set up voluntary monitoring program for nature guides;

Partnership: Get technical support in monitoring techniques from capable organizations.

SPO 5: Establish collaborative conservation actions amongst stakeholders from tourism revenues

Rationale: Conservation action that fosters the direct link between community conservation practices and revenue generation / economic compensation are essential to community-based tourism. Revenue that is returned to local communities and national parks provides a means for and encourages sustainable environmental conservation practices. CBT goal of Ban Wang Lung is to use tourism revenues for forest conservation activities such as forest nursery construction and ecosystem rehabilitation. Revenues from tourism in the park should also be distributed back to the national park for conservation activities, impact management or interpretation program.

Instruments:

Regulatory: Set up park regulation on tourism revenue distribution;

Self regulation: Set up conservation actions using tourism revenues from CBT.

STRATEGY 3: Enhance social and economic development

SPO 6: Improve benefits distribution mechanisms from national park tourism to local economy

Rationale: The economic relationship between national parks and communities is multi-dimensional (Eagles and McCool, 2002). The first linkage is the influence of visitor expenditure to the economic viability of the local community. The second linkage involves the national parks and its landscape which serve as a scenic backdrop to adjacent communities. The scenic value serves as a component of local

area's quality of life as well as economic viability to those local communities such as resort town of Ban Mu Si before the Khao Yai National Park entrance gate. Third linkage, the expenditures of the national parks itself serve as part of the economic base for community when funding for national park management and development activities comes from fee revenue or central governmental appropriation. The national park management may purchase goods and service needed for management within local community. Finally, the employees of the national parks and private tourism business reside in the community and spend their salaries and wages on needed goods and services within communities. Because of these linkages, communities often have a very strong interest in how national park is managed and the consequences of management actions not only to the local tourism industry but the entire community itself.

Two aspects of economic benefits from the national parks are related to tourism. One is direct impact and the other is indirect impact for local economics. This SPO suggests viable instruments that can enhance direct and indirect benefit from national parks to local economy as well as instruments that can reduce economic leakage from local economy.

Facilitating alternatives for the local community members to get income from community-based tourism activities such as conducting nature guides, preparing accommodation or transports, and providing local or cultural programs will be effective way to give them the idea to understand importance of national park management. This will cause a direct economic impact for local economy. On the other hand, it is hoped that this facilitation will reduce tendency of the natural resource dependency and land encroachment by local community members in and around national parks.

Instruments:

Design and management: Design and implement benefit distribution mechanisms from national parks toward local communities;

Organizational arrangement: Create private protected areas in buffer zones outside the national parks;

Economic instrument: Give economic advantage to local tourism business

SPO 7: Build local capacity of needed skills in CBT business

Rationale: Skills related to tourism service and management such as interpretation, financial management, food and accommodation, and certain recreation activities such as rafting and trekking are needed to be properly trained so that quality of services and safety can be ensured as well as viable business. Tourism skill training is most needed in CBT especially for communities that have never involved in tourism sector before. The accessibility and frequency of tourism skill training to improve their services and management is important factor for successful CBT as shown in Ban Khao Lek, Mae Klang Luang, and Krung Ching.

Instruments:

Design and planning: Formulate action plan to support capacity building of local people and continuously perform skill assessment;

Capacity Building: Perform needed tourism service skill trainings.

STRATEGY 4: Foster low impact tourism in national parks

SPO 8: Develop and disseminate tourism code of conducts for visitors and tour operators

Rationale: The IV World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas recommended that protected area agencies and the tourism industry cooperate to adopt codes of practice, guidelines and techniques that are compatible with long term protected area management plans, enhance visitor experience and that are consistent with and reinforce conservation objectives of the protected areas (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). Code of conducts is then suggested here as a self regulation along with normal legal regulations. It is hoped that when code

of conducts is well accepted and practiced, the legal regulation enforcement may be less necessary. In protected areas, emphasis must be given to the adoption of code of conducts by visitors and tour operators since some practices or conducts are not mandatory or required by laws such as tourist behaviour on water and energy consumption.

Code of conducts must be successfully distributed to visitors and tour operators. It can be printed on brochures, exhibited on signage where it is easily seen, and/or through verbal communication from protected area staff or local guides to visitors. Code of conducts for visitors is most useful when made available on site. If visitors can view the impacts or experience the fragility of the protected area resources immediately after reading code of conducts, the do's and don't will come to life. Awareness and knowledgeable of their behaviour consequences can induce visitors to adopt code of conducts to prevent impacts and/or take part in conservation. In addition, social and economic incentives can be effective instruments to encourage voluntarily adoption of code of conducts.

Instruments:

Design, planning and management: Developing Code of conducts for protected area tourism;

Organizational arrangement: Endorse protected area management on code of conducts implementation;

Awareness raise: Disseminate code of conducts to enhance knowledge and raise awareness of visitors and tour operators on tourism impacts;

Economic instrument: Give privilege to "good conduct" tour operators

SPO 9: Implement interpretation programs in national parks

Rationale: Interpretive services can be viewed as a fundamental component of the national park experience. Many people come to national parks with little understanding or no understanding of it - the national park system, conservation, and tourism development constraints. Through interpretative programs, national parks management can

communicate these messages to visitors. Not only can it increase visitors' understanding and appreciation of what they are experiencing but also it may increase commitment to the natural resource conservation. The implementation of interpretation will also increase the quality of the tourism products and services. It can enhance visitor experiences while visiting the national parks. Tilden (1957) conveyed his idea or so called the well-known philosophy of interpretation that through interpretation is understanding, through understanding is appreciation, and through appreciation is protection.

Based on the philosophy above, the objectives of interpretation services in national parks then can be but not limit to four-folds: to make visitors better informed, educated, stimulated, and inspired, to appreciate the uniqueness of the site and its environments, to make visitors prevent undesired visitors' behavior which may cause tourism impacts to protected areas, and to be used as an effective communication tool and public relation tool between national park management and visitors.

Instruments:

Design, planning and management: Develop interpretive programs and facilities planning;

Awareness/ capacity building: Create interpretive themes emphasizing the protected area significance;

Partnerships: Involve friends of national park association, private sector, or communities in providing interpretation programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations from this research are the followings:

- 1) From the study, the awareness/ capacity building was the most important instrument to achieve CBT objectives especially in nature conservation and visitor experience. Thus, any CBT development by both national park authority and local communities should consider awareness raising programs in their future operation such as interpretation,

and nature education so that sustainable tourism can be accomplished. Awareness must be raised to make sure that local people and other stakeholders in tourism not only “understand” the tourism impacts but “aware” of its consequences and to be conscious about environmental conservation while performing tourism operation in the parks.

2) The partnership instrument was also viewed by both local people and park superintendents as a useful instrument to achieve all objectives of CBT. It is recommended that it should be considered in CBT plan especially to improve participation, good quality of visitor experience as well as to gain local economic development. The SPO on co-management system was suggested accordingly to this instrument.

3) Local organization should be strengthening so that CBT can be operated successfully.

4) Evaluation during the implementation of the suggested SPOs should be carried out.

5) The GPI study should be done in other sites to produce more lessons learnt on CBT in national parks.

CONCLUSION

This study developed strategy and strategic policy options for enhancement of national park and local community linkage in tourism management based on information from good practice inventories mainly from Thailand. The strategic policy options proposed here recognized the importance of sustainable tourism principles which emphasizes on quality and continuity of environment, local livelihood, and visitor experiences as well as the balance in participation from all stakeholders. All goals and objectives of national park establishment were also taken into consideration while developing the SPOs. It is hoped that community-based tourism introduced into park management system will be a tool, among others, to achieve park management objectives as well local socio-economic development.

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