

ABSTRACT

Name of Project: The Development of Local Authority's Potentiality in Sustainable Tourism Management at the Maekok Basin, Chiang Rai Province, Thailand: Phase I

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This study is the first phase of the development of local authority's potentiality in sustainable tourism management at the Maekok basin, Chiang Rai province, Thailand. The study aims to examine the context of tourism, the local authority's roles and potentiality in developing tourism as well as the locals' expectations upon the local authority in sustainable tourism management. The cases study included 22 villages in Doi Hang and Mae Yao Tambon Administrative Organizations (TAO).

The methodologies adopted for data collection included qualitative and quantitative approaches in combination with secondary data collection. Purposive sampling was employed to tourism stakeholders to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data. 400 Questionnaires were employed to tourism stakeholders to obtain their expectations upon tourism development issues. Moreover, 98 evaluation forms were directed to TAO's members to evaluate the potentials of local authority in tourism management. Content analysis and descriptive statistics were employed to the qualitative data. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyze the data from questionnaire survey. Percentage distribution, mean and standard deviation were employed to report data.

The study revealed that tourism at the Maekok basin has been supported by private and public sectors and NGOs. However, the most benefits from tourism are in hands of private sectors due to their ability in services and marketing. Therefore, tourism there faced with problems of management aspect and seems to be increasing without resolution. Thus, the local authority is expected to be more involved in tourism development in aspects of attraction, access, amenity and ancillary services. In addition, guidelines for tourism development shall be established as well as formulation of people participation in tourism development process.

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However, lacking knowledge and skills on sustainable tourism development and its operation among the local authority's members is an obstacle in tourism management in the area. Therefore, this study suggests that to achieve sustainability, the local authority's potentiality in sustainable tourism management shall be developed according to stakeholders' expectation and the local context. These include issues of sustainable tourism planning and its operation, management of ecotourism and cultural tourism, tourism marketing and English for tourism.