

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (2000) explained that tourism is a prime generator of national revenue in the form of tourism dollars, which represent foreign exchange earnings for Thailand. In recent years, tourism growth has created employment opportunities across all tourism and travel-related industry sectors. It has also led to a more widespread distribution of income. As a result, the tourism sector continues to grow steadily. It affects the lives of many Thais and has become an integral part of Thai life.

In provinces with high tourism potential, the development of tourism infrastructures and the provision of public utilities and a welfare service have raised the overall standards of living. In what were once rural communities without roads, electricity or tap water, tourism development has contributed to a better quality of life. Tourism also plays an important role in promoting educational opportunities for Thai youth and the general public. (TAT, 2000)

Tourism growth and development has contributed to an increasing level of awareness and appreciation of the Kingdom's natural and cultural treasures, the value of which far exceeds their financial value. Representing a national heritage carefully nurtured and handed down from generation to generation, these tourism assets are unique and irreplaceable. (TAT, 2000)

Tourism (TAT, 2000) has thus become the vehicle prompting a call to protect and preserve Thailand's natural tourism resources. A better understanding of tourism itself raises environmental consciousness and leads to greater commitment to undertake conservation measures needed to achieve sustainable tourism.

The National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2003) promoted the conservation and revived the arts, culture and tourism resource alongside the environment by placing priority on the quality of sustainable tourism development to enable it to cater to the long-term increase of visitors while retaining the national identity and heritage. One of the main objectives of the 9th National Tourism Development Plan (2002-2006) was to position the Thai tourism industry as a “Quality Destination”. Specifically, it was to develop Changwat Chiangmai and Changwat Phuket to be international World Class Destinations.

However, Chaisawat (2003), as well, stated that Changwat Phuket has the potential to develop as a quality tourism destination and develop sustainability. There are however some obstacles for tourism development which are, **firstly**, the Local Administration Organization (LAO) does not work in the same direction which is hard to follow and achieve the current objective, of Changwat administration organization. Some of them lack the skills and ability concerned with sustainable tourism development. **Secondly**, tourism stakeholders have a different understanding and perception of sustainable tourism development. **Thirdly**, Phuket has no governing organization to take responsibility for carrying capacity control of tourism destination.

To develop tourism, the 1997 constitution of Thailand significantly increased the spread of authority to LAOs and the private business sector. The central government encourages citizens to participate in preserving, maintaining and utilizing natural resources equally. For a tourism destination like Changwat Phuket, Chaisawat (2003) suggested that “to develop tourism in Changwat Phuket, central government must encourage LAOs, especially the Tambon Administration Organization (TAO), to seriously take charge in maintaining the social and natural environment, preserving local resources, and creating a potentiality of local residents and community.

The vision of Changwat Phuket administration organization in the year 2006-2008 (The website Phuketcity, 2006) was **“Phuket wants to be a world class tourism destination with the beauty of nature and the good quality of life for the community”**, the TAO must have a well-planned and management for sustainable tourism to follow the direction of Changwat administration organization.

Therefore, the researcher decided to select the Tambon Paklok at Changwat Phuket as a case study of proposed guidelines and indicator for sustainable tourism development. The reason to select Tambon Paklok is that Tambon Paklok has strong resident participation and collaboration in many community activities. It is rich in natural resources, but they are not popular as a tourist destination yet. The tourism sites of Tambon Paklok still need to be planned and managed for sustainable development.

Generally, Tambon Paklok is only a bypass for tourists to go to Aow Por Port for visiting other islands nearby. There are not many tourists that visit Tambon Paklok directly. Moreover, the tourism businesses, such as hotels, real estate and resorts, are in the early stage of their development for new incoming tourists to Changwat Phuket. Therefore, TPLAO has to play an important role to ensure that their natural resources are be used properly. There are some questions for this research as follows:

- 1) Can Tambon Paklok be developed as sustainable tourism?
- 2) Is the 3 year-local development plan (3LDP) developed in the consonance of sustainable tourism development guideline?
- 3) Do local residents benefit from 3LDP?
- 4) Do local residents benefit from tourism at Tambon Paklok?
- 5) Have TPLAO Had the proper indicators for tourism development at Tambon Paklok?

1.2 Research Objectives

- 1) To create the guidelines on how to develop a sustainable tourism planning and management (STPM) at Tambon Paklok
- 2) To propose the sustainable tourism indicators for tourism development at Tambon Paklok Local Administration Organization (TPLAO)

1.3 Research Benefits

The result of the research will be useful to the LAOs in Changwat Phuket, which guides the ways to develop and

achieve a sustainable tourism planning and management (STPM) in the Tambon. Nevertheless, the LAOs can use the proposed guidelines and indicators to eliminate the negative impacts on socio-cultural, economic and natural environments by tourism industry.

1.4 Research Limitations

There are some limitations of the research, which are mentioned as follows:

1. The research area is taken place only at Tambon Paklok which is located at the Northeast part of Changwat Phuket.

2. The research populations cover only some major tourism stakeholders in Tambon Paklok, including: 1) Local resident households (LRH) of Tambon Paklok, and 2) the officers of TPLAO.

3. The research content covers only some specific aspects of sustainable tourism development including:

- The planning and management of 3 year-Local Development Plan (3LDP) by TPLAO
- Current tourism situation at Tambon Paklok
- Tourism resources of Tambon Paklok
- The proper STPM for Tambon Paklok
- The participation of the major tourism stakeholders in sustainable tourism development
- Sustainable tourism indicators

4. The research time was conducted during December, 2005 to May, 2006.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Sustainable tourism is defined as it generates a good quality of life, employment for local residents and an economic flow to community. It also aims to maintain, protect and preserve the natural and cultural resources or decrease harm to resources of the destination. World Tourism Organization (2004) stated that sustainable tourism development meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing the opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as

leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled, while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, and biological diversity and life support systems.

Sustainable tourism indicator is defined as it is information sets which are formally selected to be used on a regular basis to measure changes that is of importance for tourism development and management. The usages of indicator can lead to actions to anticipate and prevent undesirable or unsustainable situation at destination (WTO 2004).

Tourism planning is defined it is the process of anticipating future occurrences and problems, exploring their probable impact, and detailing policies, goals, objectives, and strategies to solve the problems. This often includes preparing options documents, considering alternatives, and issuing final plans (Bureau of Justice Assistance website, 1984).

Tourism management is defined as it is the action of creating a plan which includes directing and controlling people and managing the resources following a set plan, especially timing, accessing, utilization of resources. Middleton (1994) notes that tourism management is strategies and action programs using and co-coordinating available techniques to control and influence tourism supply and visitor demand in order to achieve defined policy goals”.

Public participation is defined as it is the involvement of citizens in governmental decision-making processes. Participation ranges from being given notice of public hearings to being actively included in decisions that affect communities. Community collaboration is a dynamic, ongoing process of working together, whereby the community is engaged as a partner in public health action (The National

Association of County and City Health Officials or NACCO, 1988).

Local administration organization (LAO) is defined as it is the local administration organization which gets authority from central government to manage the social development in a specific area. This is to encourage local people to have the authority to share perspectives in social development as they are local people and know well what they want. As the process of social development is complex, the central government decentralizes authority to local people by established LAO. LAO are composed of the Changwat administration organization, municipal government (city, town, and sub-district municipalities), sanitary district, and the TAO (Choowong, 1996).

3 year-local development plan is defined as it is a local economic and social development plan which is in the consonance with a development strategic plan. It is composed of a detailed plan of establishing the development project per annual budget. It is continuous and progress for all 3 years. The revision is required annually. The benefits of the plan are to help the LAO to make decisions to establish the process method for local management resources (TPLAO, 2005).

Tambon Paklok, Amphur Thalang, Changwat Phuket is the research area of the study. Tambon Paklok is one of sub-districts of Thalang District in Phuket Province. Therefore, the definitions of Tambon, Amphur, and Changwat are defined as follows:

- Tambon means Sub-District.
- Amphur means District
- Changwat means Province