

2.3 Tourism Resource

Natural resources and environment in SLB are in fair conditions to be developed and promoted as tourism resources in the Basin, provided that they are well managed within a sustainability framework. Tourism resources in SLB can be divided into 2 main categories: Ecotourism and Cultural tourism. Issues which need attention are: (1) Potentials of principle tourism sites in SLB and their carrying capacities, (2) Key problems of tourism activities in SLB and (3) Guideline for tourism management.

2.3.1 Potentials of Principal Tourism Sites in SLB and Their Carrying Capacities

Analyses were carried out in this study to assess potentials and their carrying capacity of, as well as the risk of impact arisen from, ecotourism resources in SLB. Tourism resources of interest include: mountains, waterfalls, beaches, wetlands and islands in SLB. The results classified tourism resources, according to levels of their potentials and risks of impact, as follows:

- (1) **High Potential – High Risk Group:** Five sites have been identified. These are: Samila beach, Toan Nga Chang Waterfall, Ko Si - Ko Ha, Thale Noi Waterfowl Sanctuary and Khao Pu - Khao Ya National Park. Tourism sites in this group are considered unique with high ecological value, high ecological significance and biodiversity. They are therefore fragile and sensitive (high risk) to any types of intrusion, including tourism activities.
- (2) **High Potential – Medium Risk Group:** Nine sites have been identified. These are: Ko Yor, Tinasulanonda Bridges, Songkhla Zoo, Ko Yai, Thale Sab Non-hunting area, Toan Plieo Waterfall, Khao Namkhang National Park, Saen Suk Lam Pam Beach and Hot-Cold Spring. Most of tourism sites in this group are principal tourism sites in SLB, and which have continually been promoted. These sites possess unique characteristics for attracting tourists, are easily accessible, and have moderate supporting infrastructures to cater for large number of tourists, thus vulnerable to be affected by tourism.
- (3) **Medium Potential – Medium Risk Group:** Twenty-four sites have been identified. These are: Khao Tang Guan, Kao Seng Beach, Son-on Beach, Sai Kaew Beach, Muang Ngam Beach, Maha Raj Beach, Laem Po, Hat Yai Municipality Park, Pha Dam Forest, Oak Thalu Hill, Ko Mak, Ban Khao Chan, Ban Ao Ta Yang, Tamode Waterfall (Mhom Jui Waterfall), Hu Rae Waterfall, Kaeng Hu Rae, Ban Rai Nue Waterfall, Nok Ram Waterfall, Prai Wan Waterfall, Manorah Waterfall, Laad Tuey Waterfall, Kha Chan Waterfall, Khao Khram

Waterfall and Ban Toan Waterfall. Tourism sites in this group are community-level, or secondary sites in SLB. They can be developed and promoted to be primary tourism sites in SLB.

- (4) **Medium Potential – Low Risk Group:** Nine sites have been identified. They are Ko Nu Ko Maew, Khao Kao Saeng, Pa Prem Park, Ao Thung Bua, Herb Garden, Laem Kwai Raab, Sadao Reservoir, Ta-chiad Irrigation Reservoir and Laem Jong Tanon. Tourism sites in this group are local level, as are Group (3). Most of them are in their natural states with hardly any special additional modification. Disturbance from tourism activities is therefore at low level.

Similar analyses were carried out to assess potentials and carrying capacities of, as well as the risk of impact from, cultural tourism resources in SLB. Only religious sites were assessed. The results classified tourism resources, according to levels of their potentials and risks of impact, as follows:

- (1) **High Potential – High Risk Group:** Two sites have been identified. These are Wat Suwan Kiri and Wat Pa Kho.
- (2) **High Potential – Medium Risk Group:** Three sites have been identified. These are: Wat Machimawas Worawiharn, Wat Kok Samankoon and Wat Kien Bang Kaew
- (3) **Medium Potential – High Risk Group:** Three sites have been identified. These are: Wat Laem Jaag, Wat Soong Ko Yai and Wat Jedi Ngam.
- (4) **Medium Potential – Medium Risk Group:** Seven sites have been identified. These are: Wat Tai Yo, Wat Ja Ting Pra, Wat Klong Plei, Wat Khao Changloon, Wat Kuan Prong, Wat Pa Lilai and Wat Wang

In sum, tourism resources which need attentions, as well as urgent development and promotion measures, are those in the High Potential – High Risk Group, such as Samila Beach, Toan Nga Chang Waterfall, Ko Si - Ko Ha, Thale Noi Waterfowl Park, Khao Pu - Khao Ya National Park, Wat Suwan Kiri and Wat Pa Kho

2.3.2 Key Problems of Tourism Activities in SLB

Tourism activities in the SLB at present are facing certain key problems. These are:

- (1) There is no proper zoning in tourism resource use;
- (2) Tourism sites of secondary level and local level are mostly in deteriorated conditions;
- (3) There are no measures and guidelines for surveillance, so as to prevent further deterioration;
- (4) There is not good enough collaboration between government agencies and communities; and
- (5) There is insufficient information, nor knowledge network, for use in establishing management system.

2.3.3 Guideline for Tourism Management

The guideline should emphasize various issues in:

- (1) Preventing and reducing tourism impact upon ecological system and biodiversity, to maintain their beauty and natural value; ways and means to prevent and reduce impacts to historical and archaeological remains, cultures, traditions and ways-of-life, so as to maintain originality, identity and historical values.
- (2) Educating and instilling senses of awareness into communities, tour operators and tourist regarding values of natural resources, artifacts, historical and archaeological remains, cultures, traditions and ways-of-life.
- (3) Promoting public participation in tourism activities and benefits accruing from tourism which should belong to communities where tourism sites are located.
- (4) Establishing of inter-community networks for tourism activities.