THE MECHANISMS OF TOURISM MANAGEMENT IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS): THE CASE OF PHULOMLO AND CONNECTED AREAS, THAILAND

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Abstract

Sustainable tourism has been a mainstream issue of concern, with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development released in 2015. This agenda acknowledged 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that contain a blueprint of urgent action for peace and prosperity for the people and the planet. This paper focuses on the mechanisms of tourism management that work toward achieving the SDGs. There are two mechanisms, a supportive mechanism and an operational mechanism, that address the question of how to achieve the SDGs by employing tourism as a tool, the Phulomlo of Thailand was selected as a case study. Data were collected from local stakeholders through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and documentation. The results show that there is a concrete operational mechanism at the local level. However, to attain growth toward sustainability, more thorough promotion of supportive mechanisms should be considered, with a more explicit strategy to facilitate improvement in achieving the SDGs in all areas connected to Phulomlo.

Suggestions to enhance the achievement of SDGs in the case of Phulomlo and the connected areas are proposed, as it is important to formulate a practical strategy to accomplish the SDGs via the local network. Furthermore, additional features comprising of consistency in practice, coherence of policies at the national and local level, and collaboration among tourism stakeholders should also be considered.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, Phulomlo, sustainable development goals, tourism management

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INTRODUCTION

"Without sustainability, there cannot be development that generates benefits to all stakeholders, solves serious and urgent problems such as extreme poverty, and preserves the precious natural and man-made resources on which human prosperity is based." (UNWTO, 2005, iii)

Sustainability issues have been a challenge for tourism management for decades. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) introduced the principle of delivering sustainable tourism through a practical guide for policymakers in 2005. It includes 12 agendas to be accomplished in various areas. It is concerned not only with economic growth, but also with preserving natural resources while providing tourist satisfaction (UNWTO, 2005).

A decade later, in 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was released and adopted by all United Nations member states. It outlined 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The year 2017 was then declared the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. To achieve the SDGs in the tourism sector, collaboration is required among stakeholders from the national and local levels, including the owners of tourist destinations (UNWTO and UNDP, 2017). This ensures a smooth pathway to achieving the SDGs utilizing tourism as a tool.

Worldwide, sustainability has been set as the ultimate goal for tourism development, but different countries have achieved different levels of success. One of the important factors for facilitating improvement is support from the government at a policy level. This is reflected in the guidelines of various global organizations regarding tourism management which target governments and policymakers, as seen in the report entitled "Sustainable Tourism for Development Guidebook - Enhancing capacities for Sustainable Tourism for development in developing countries" which also presented methods to assess the level of sustainable tourism by looking at tourism policies and governance (UNWTO, 2013). To accomplish the global goals through a sustainable tourism sector, a well-functioning mechanism of stakeholder cooperation should be carefully considered.

Phulomlo as a Case Study

Due to the significance of governmental factors in facilitating sustainable tourism, this article aims to focus on collaboration in the management of the local tourism community to achieve the global trend of development, the SDGs.

Phulomlo was selected as a case study as it is a trendy tourism destination in Thailand. Phulomlo is a huge area of almost 400 acres covering parts of three provinces:

Loei, Phetchabun, and Phitsanulok. This area is under the control of the Phuhinrongkla National Park and is well-known historically as a destination for the Communist Party during the 1970s. Phulomlo has become a popular spot for its stunning scenic view of the highlands in northeastern Thailand and the wild Himalayan cherry, also known as the "Cherry Blossom of Thailand", with a blooming season running from January to February (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014).

A preliminary survey in the research area collected data via means of informal interviews with local people and representatives from the government sector in 2017. From this, it can be concluded that during the initial stage of tourism destination development in 2014, conflicts arose in the area due to the tourism management which suffered from the poor organization of various stakeholders with no common regulations and unfair benefit distribution due to a lack of mutual understanding. Before the recent acknowledgment as "Phulomlo," the local people in Rongkla Village in Phitsanulok, mostly belonging to hill tribes, obtained government permission to live in this area from 1982 and started to cultivate and nurture the wild Himalayan cherry in 2005. In 2008, this community began to operate travel activities. However, Phulomlo is under the control of Phuhinrongkla National Park which monitors the area following the law to ensure safety and environmental preservation. After becoming a potential tourist destination, the organization promoting tourism at the provincial level began to offer travel activities considered harmful for the environment. The massive influx of tourists with low concern for the preservation of the environment added to the problems in the area. The abovementioned factors have contributed to the problem of managerial failure, reflected by traffic congestion, car accidents, pollution, and the incapacity of the destination, which led to more complicated conflicts among local stakeholders.

Recently, the problems concerning the collaboration between the public and private sectors have been alleviated through the consultation of academic institutions. Stakeholders in the Phulomlo tourism area are working together, sharing responsibilities, and following shared regulations to maintain the area's status as a tourist destination. This article intends to reflect on the experiences of Phulomlo in tourism management through its approach of collaboration between the public and private sectors. This addresses the partnership aspect of the 17 SDGs. The introduction to this paper is followed by the objectives of the article, literature review, materials and methods, results, and discussion, in both supportive and operative mechanisms, followed by the conclusion and suggestions in the final part of the article regarding how to achieve the SDGs by employing tourism as a tool.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

This article's objectives are twofold. Firstly, the article aims to delineate the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in Phulomlo and the connected areas as an operative mechanism of tourism management for sustainability. Secondly, it aims to examine the supportive mechanism of the Thai government which contributes to the 2030 Agenda for SDGs in the tourism sector, together with the international supportive mechanism of the UNDP and UNWTO.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The sustainability issue has been addressed in many aspects of research. Official publications from global organizations also offer guidelines for tourism development. For instance, the United Nations Environment Programme and World Tourism Organization publication (2005) which offer guidelines for policymakers to make tourism more sustainable, identify the policy implications of a sustainable tourism agenda in twelve aims: economic viability, local prosperity, employment quality, social equity, visitor fulfillment, local control, community wellbeing, cultural richness, physical integrity, biological diversity, resource efficiency, and environmental purity.

To enhance the capacity of sustainable development in developing countries, the "Sustainable Tourism for Development Guidebook" was released. This publication by UNWTO positions the concept of sustainable tourism as a development tool and presents a methodology involving five pillars for executing interventions. This paper mainly focuses on the first pillar: tourism policy and governance (UNWTO, 2013).

In September 2015, all United Nations member states committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a shared blueprint of development for peace and prosperity for people and the planet. The agenda imagines member countries walking together along a sustainable pathway with 17 SDGs that highlight balancing the three aspects of sustainability—economic, social, and environmental—, through collaboration and participation, with no country left behind. The 17 SDGs and the 169 associated targets encourage action that covers important aspects for humanity: people, the planet, propensity, peace, and partnership at a global level (United Nations, 2015).

The latest assessment from the 2019 Sustainable Development Report Dashboard shows that Thailand was ranked 40th of 162 countries in the SDG global rankings, 11.1% higher than the regional average. Achievements are categorized into five stages: SDG achieved, challenges remain, significant challenges remain, major challenges remain, and information unavailable, for the current state of action. Thailand's ratings included

"SDG achieved" for only one SDG, namely SDG 1 (No poverty), and was evaluated as being on track for meeting the 2030 Agenda for three SDGs, namely SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitization), and SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) as shown in Figure 1.

Through the linkage of the tourism sector and the 2030 Agenda for SDGs, UNWTO also published a practical guideline that applies the SDGs to tourism and states the basic assumption that "well-designed and managed tourism can help preserve the natural and cultural heritage assets upon which it depends, empower host communities, generate trade opportunities, and foster peace and intercultural understanding" (UNWTO and UNDP, 2017, p.10).

Additionally, sustainable development in the tourism sector can contribute to achieving the SDGs in sustainable economic growth, social inclusiveness in terms of employment and poverty indicators, environmental protection and climate change, cultural values, and mutual understanding in peace and security. The year 2017 was named International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development to encourage all stakeholders to embrace and contribute to the sustainability principle of the SDGs in the context of tourism development. They are to meet 5 core targets: achieving sustainable economic growth, reducing unemployment and poverty, addressing environmental concerns, upholding cultural values, and nurturing mutual understanding for

Figure 1. The 2019 Sustainable Development Report Dashboard, Thailand
Source: Sachs, J., Schmidt-Traub, G., Kroll, C., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G. (2019)

peace and security. To accomplish these goals, the main activities must relate to generating knowledge, empowering stakeholders, and inspiring action (UNWTO and UNDP, 2017). These changes must rely on governmental support at the policy level and start by ensuring mutual understanding of the SDGs. This involves preparing the capacity of stakeholders in tourist destinations to accomplish similar sustainable tourism development goals at the global, national, and local levels.

Previous Studies on Sustainable Tourism Development

Tourism management requires the gathering of various stakeholders, from the global to local level, as numerous factors affect the effectiveness of achieving sustainable development. Tourism management is defined by three main aspects: the role and responsibilities of the government, the concerns of the stakeholders, and the factors that support sustainable tourism development.

Regarding the roles and responsibilities of the government, Kapera (2018) mentioned the conflict among stakeholders in a case study in Poland. The research concluded that the barriers of sustainable tourism development are a result of dissimilar goals, a lack of local government officers' understanding of the concept of sustainable development, and the necessity to improve collaborative networks. Batra (2006) proposed the additional roles of government in facilitating sustainable tourism marketing and bringing greater awareness to sustainable tourism. Creating a policy framework that draws upon sustainability concepts at the local policy level supports sustainable development (Lopez and Bhaktikul, 2018).

Tourism management involves various stakeholders, working with different agents from different backgrounds, and is often challenging. Stakeholder issues have been studied from a variety of perspectives. Stakeholder participation is however an essential element in sustainable tourism development. As Phanumat (2015) pointed out a top-down tourism development policy helps to speed up development and multi-stakeholder participatory models are most appropriate for community-based tourism development.

Thailand has established a public organization to encourage tourism management in more sustainable ways. Kampetch and Jitpakdee (2019) defined the potential keys to community-based tourism sustainability as leading tourism management, community participation, and generating a tourism network. A partnership should incorporate governments for budgetary support, private sector businesses as marketing promoters, and academic institutions as knowledge supporters. At the implementation level in sustainable tourism, two major groups of stakeholders are experts: tourism

organizations and governments at any level, and suppliers at the local level. Understanding each stakeholder's goals and point of view is important (Dabphet, 2006).

It is also crucial to examine factors that facilitate sustainable tourism development. In a case study of Thailand, Polnyotee (2014) summarized a lesson in tourism development on Patong Beach as bridging sustainability through political, environmental, social, cultural, and economic development. Sriarkarin and Lee (2018) determined the challenges of tourism development in Khao Yai National Park. Balancing the concept of nature preservation with recreational services, a wildlife conservation program, tourist control, and a public transport system, are activities that serve sustainability goals. Support from the government, as an organization with resource capacity, is considered the key to sustainable tourism development (Kampetch and Jitpakdee, 2019; Churugsa et al., 2007).

However, research on tourism aspects at Phulomlo area is limited, only two focal research papers can be found in the Thai Digital Collection database (ThaiLIS). Phohirun and Wiriyasumon (2014) studied the marketing aspects of the development of Phulomlo as an agricultural tourism area pointing out the importance of strengthening and sustaining the collaboration network and mainly focused on tourism destination development. Chancheu (2004) applied a quantitative approach and utilized the ecotourism concept as a method of tourism management for sustainability, creating a model of ecotourism management for other tourism destinations. Suggestions for future research were mentioned regarding the participation of local people and the study of sustainable approaches to tourism management in areas governed by local governments.

Hence, appropriate mechanisms to accomplish the 2030 Agenda for SDGs are considered as an important element. The tourism sector also requires the assembling of various stakeholders, and collaboration remains the key factor to enable effective implementation for achievement of the SDGs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To explain the mechanisms in various levels that enable progress with respect to the 2030 agenda for the SDGs, a qualitative approach was employed regarding the examination of in-depth information concerning the operational mechanisms of tourism management in Phulomlo and the connected areas regarding how to organize and collaborate in working for sustainable tourism development. Furthermore, supportive mechanisms at both international and national levels were examined to assess the coherence of practices in pursuing the SDGs.

Data Collection and Analysis

Field research was performed in Phulomlo between 2016 and 2017. To

answer the key question on how to accomplish the SDGs, this study consists of face-to-face interviews with semi-structured questions, focus group discussions and documentary evidence.

Data was collected from 1) *Semi-structured interviews* with key informants selected using a snowball sampling technique. The Tourist Authority of Thailand Phitsanulok office was chosen as the first place. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eighteen participants, who were representatives from public organizations (Phuhinrongkla National Park, the Tourist Authority of Thailand Phitsanulok office, and the Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism - DASTA), representatives from private organizations (Tourism Business Association of Phitsanulok, Loei, and Pechabun, and travel operators, accommodation, tour guides, or restaurants), and local organizations in Phulomlo and the connected areas (Rongkla Tourism Association, Koksaton Tourism Association, a communityenterprisein

Phutabburg, and local community organizations in the connected areas). The questions consisted of the roles and responsibilities in tourism management in Phulomlo and the connected areas. This process was designed to define the key players in the network at the local level. 2) *Focus group discussion* with various stakeholders from the public and private sectors (as in Figure 2). The questions drew upon the current situation of tourism management and the managerial problems in Phulomlo. These processes led to framing of the mechanisms that facilitate sustainable tourism management. 3) *Documentary evidence*, consisting of additional data regarding the supportive mechanisms at national and international levels, which were collected through Thai government papers on tourism development, policy papers, and websites and publications of the United Nations which related to guidelines for proceeding on the pathway to the SDGs

Figure 2. Focus group discussion with stakeholders at Phulomlo

Qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions was conducted under permission from each participant. Data analysis followed the sequential steps of multiple analysis. Data were organized and the general ideas of participants sought out before coding and arranging the data into categories to define categories and issues. This was followed by generating detailed descriptions of the information about people and events (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Documentary data were collected and categorized to describe the attributes of supportive mechanisms at both national and international levels. All qualitative data from multiple sources were analyzed and presented in a narrative manner.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To incorporate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with tourism development in each country, applying only the concrete and practical guidelines released by international organizations might not the best way to ensure achieving the SDGs. Mechanisms for driving the tourism development scheme are considered as key factors. This section consists of discussion on the Supportive Mechanisms which operate at the national level, and the Operational Mechanisms of tourism management at the local level, toward the achievement of the SDGs, with the association of these mechanisms in driving Phulomlo's tourism wheel.

Supportive Mechanisms at the National Level

Since UNDP and UNWTO have gathered forces on sustainable development in the tourism sector with the remarkable International Year for Sustainable Tourism to the advancement of the 2030 Agenda, tourism sectors can affect three of the SDGs: SDG 4 (Life Below Water), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Employment), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) (UNWTO and UNDP, 2017).

Not only responsible for delivering knowledge about the Global Goals and empowering tourism stakeholders around the world, but also in monitoring the activities offered to ensure that progress is on track. To follow-up on the progress toward the SDGs, Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) were introduced as a channel to sharing experiences, challenges and lessons learned, with the aim of empowering governments in policy formulation and implementation, in addition to the partnerships in multi-stakeholder organizations (United Nations, n.d.). Tourism is mentioned in 41 of the 64 VNRs which mostly relate to SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), and SDG17 (Partnerships for the goals). Sustainable tourism is also perceived as an accelerator to the 2030 Agenda for the SDGs (UNWTO and UNDP, 2017).

Thailand has been part of the Voluntary National Review of the high-level political forum on sustainable development since 2017. Recently, in Thailand's VNRs for 2019, tourism related activity was stated in the implementation of SDG 1 (No poverty) via means of community-based tourism; SDG 8 (Decent work and Economic growth) through promotion of creativity and innovation to add value in high-potential industries, where medical tourism was also highlighted; SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure) which links tourism to online marketing, and SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities) which proposed the diminution of social inequality through local tourist attractions which can boost the grassroots economy. The National Committee on Sustainable Development (CSD) was established in response to the mission of development toward the global goals (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, n.d.). This can be highlighted in the government's efforts to achieve the SDGs by manipulating tourism as a vehicle to development (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, 2019). Additionally, the UN organizations are working alongside as a supporter.

At the domestic policy level, the Department of Tourism released the 2018 - 2021 tourism development strategic plan. This policy aims to facilitate greater partnership between the public sector, the private sector, and the community. Its focus is on developing the quality of the value chain in every aspect, developing the competency of the personnel in the tourism sector, and creating an organizational mechanism using technology to help Thailand become a world-class tourist destination through a balanced and sustainable approach. Thailand had no government organization dedicated to tourism until 2003 when the public organization Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism (DASTA) was established in response to a tourism development policy, to increase and distribute income to local communities. DASTA is the central unit in formulating policies and strategic plans in tourism development. It does so by employing a new management approach to achieve sustainability goals through the unity of stakeholders in local destinations. This approach defines "sustainable tourism" as the arrangement of tourism activities to serve economic, social, cultural, and aesthetic needs through the reasonable use of resources and to protect the natural and cultural identity for sustainable use (The Royal Decree on the establishment of the Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism as Public Organization B.E. 2546 (2003)), and is proof of Thailand's readiness on the road to tourism sustainability.

Documented data shows the supportive mechanisms at the policy level, and recognizes the importance of sustainable tourism development through organizations like DASTA to contribute to changes in the community. The establishment of

DASTA was followed by the introduction of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) standard, which serves to develop a prototype community and to establish the "Association of Tourism promotion by community" as a central space for villagers to work together and share responsibilities using their expertise. DASTA (Loei Provincial Office) established two community associations in Phulomlo, located in Koksaton village and Plaba village. These associations were top in the DASTA list for the development of effective tourism management. They could serve as prototypes and supervisors for the nearby communities that want to make their tourism management sustainable. However, managing tourism destinations by the provincial border might not be appropriate for benefit sharing under a collaborative approach. This is the situation for Phulomlo which can be accessed by two routes located in different provinces, namely Loei and Phitsanulok; nevertheless, Koksaton village in Loei Province can shed more light on tourism promotion.

Operational Mechanism in the Phulomlo Area

As mentioned above, Phulomlo is a large area that spans three provinces. The Phulomlo area in Phitsanulok Province, also covers part of a national park, which means that any activities undertaken in this area are under the control of the Phuhinrongkla National Park Office.

After becoming a famous tourist destination, Phulomlo faced many difficulties, for example, poor infrastructure, car accidents caused by unprofessional tour guides, and limited lavatories due to the fact that construction was prohibited in the area controlled by the National Park, resulting in various problems from a tourism managerial perspective (personal communication with local people, 2016).

Previously, tourism activities had been provided without long-term plans. With the restrictions of the national park regulations, Phulomlo had no adequate way to manage the flow of tourists and to preserve the local nature until the collaboration with academics began. Chancheu (2004) conducted a pioneering research on tourism management for sustainable tourism development in Phuhinrongkla and found a high level of capability for managing ecotourism with a concrete network that consisted of government authorities, tourists, and communities in the National Park area.

Since the establishment of DASTA and the participation of an academic institution as a consultant for issues of tourism management, tourism management in Phulomlo has been working toward sustainability through participation among stakeholders. Mutual understanding of the benefits of development under the SDG principles is the first requirement for achieving this. Past data from the Phulomlo area, recorded before setting up the DASTA, shows the complicated structure of

management due to various stakeholders' backgrounds, inadequate communication, and lack of understanding of stakeholder roles and responsibilities in Phulomlo. As a result, conflicts arose and were reflected in the problems at Phulomlo, caused by poor tourism management.

Analysis on How to Achieve Sustainable Tourism Development at Phulomlo

The findings from focus group discussions with stakeholders in various sectors, on how to achieve sustainable tourism development in Phulomlo, can be explained in four parts. These are tourism management, operational network development, establishing a community tourism association, and tourism services.

1.Tourism management is split into four sectors of operation: rules and regulation monitoring agents, marketing and public relations agents, supportive agents who liaise between stakeholders, and operational sector agents who provide tourism activities and implement the concept of a sustainable environment.

2. Operational network development: simply sharing similar goals might not be enough to reach a goal, with limited management resources or knowledge, working together may be key. Each organization was to take its role by dividing their responsibilities under a flat structure and sharing resources to meet the goals with a fair distribution of the benefits of tourism. The core component for creating policy at any level should be self-regulation in tourism management based on the resources available and with the participation of the villagers, as the owners of the community.

3. Establishing a Community Tourism Association: this is considered as a good channel for learning about tourism management naturally, as management concepts can be introduced to the villagers. For instance, a basic idea of tourism management is to achieve goals and finish tasks by planning and considering the methods required to proceed. This community tourism association is the closest unit to the tourists. The participation from this sector is required in the policy-making process, from problem identification to evaluation. This process helps strengthen the foundation of sustainable development at tourist destinations. In fact, community tourism associations do not participate in policymaking for the whole process.

4. Tourism services: to tackle the uncontrolled flow of tourists and infrastructure that are harmful to the environment, a new pattern of services was analyzed and tested. Tour guides must be members of the community tourism association. Safety regulations for vehicle and tour guide standards were provided alongside the drivers' vehicle registration. The flow of tourists is therefore managed by limiting the number of tourists and vehicles gaining access at one time. Time allowances for sightseeing in each spot were also defined, to give a sufficient time for aesthetic

experiences. Tour guides can maintain sustainable environment reservations through this service. A quota system is also employed to assure tourist satisfaction and to prevent wasted time in traffic, as well as to achieve effective management at the tourist destination.

The approach to tourism management in Phulomlo has been improved with the cooperation of various sectors. Management concepts have been put in place to sustain the cycle of tourism. In addition, the concept of environmental concern has been adopted. The community tourism association utilizes the "7 greens" concept (Tourism Authority of Thailand, n.d.) consisting of 1) Green Heart, offering a green route to environmental preservation; 2) Green Logistics, allowing access only to the vehicles provided by the community, and decreasing the number of outside vehicles by 60 percent; 3) Green Attraction: located in the reservation area under the control of the Phuhinrongkla National Park Office; 4) Green Community, related to Green Attraction and involving community learning of preservation concepts alongside the National Park Office; 5) Green Activity, consisting of a scenic route and homestay, and providing activities for experiencing the local identity and how to live with nature; 6) Green Services, namely garbage control measures; and 7) Green Plus, which refers to social and environmental responsibilities in the tourism area with seasonal tourism services to avoid harming nature.

Currently, Phulomlo and connected areas make up a well-managed tourist destination under the collaboration of public and private sector organizations, with a strong network and operational mechanism, functioning through the community tourism association. As international organizations have provided a guideline for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development regarding the building of structures for working together, developing interrelated national strategies, and developing sustainable tourism policies and actions at the local level (UNWTO and UNDP, 2018), in the case of Phulomlo, the local network functions under a co-management concept (Carlsson and Berkers, 2005), which is considered as an active driver in sustainable development in many aspects due to the richness of nature and the strong network of the community tourism association. A supportive mechanism at the national level also provides adequate support. The organizational structure of stakeholders at Pholomlo is shown in figure 3.

The mechanism of tourism management in Phulomlo is constructed by the coordination of four sectors, namely 1) Marketing and Public Relations organizations: TAT's Loei and Phitsanulok offices, the Chamber of Commerce, The Federation of Thai Industries, and the Provincial Tourism Association; 2) The Supportive units that control the standards of service and tourist destination development: TAT's Loei

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┌─────────────────────────┐
│ 1.Marketing and Public  │ ⇒   ┌──────────────────┐      ┌──────────┐
│ Relations organizations │     │ 3.Tourism services│ ⇒   │ Tourists │
└─────────────────────────┘     │   provider at     │     └──────────┘
                                │   Phulomlo area   │
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│ 2.Supportive Units that │ ⇒         ⇑                  ⇑
│ control the standards of│
│ tourism services and    │
│ tourist destination     │
│ development             │
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│ 4.Public Organizations that monitor the rules and regulations for the  │
│   safety of tourists                                                   │
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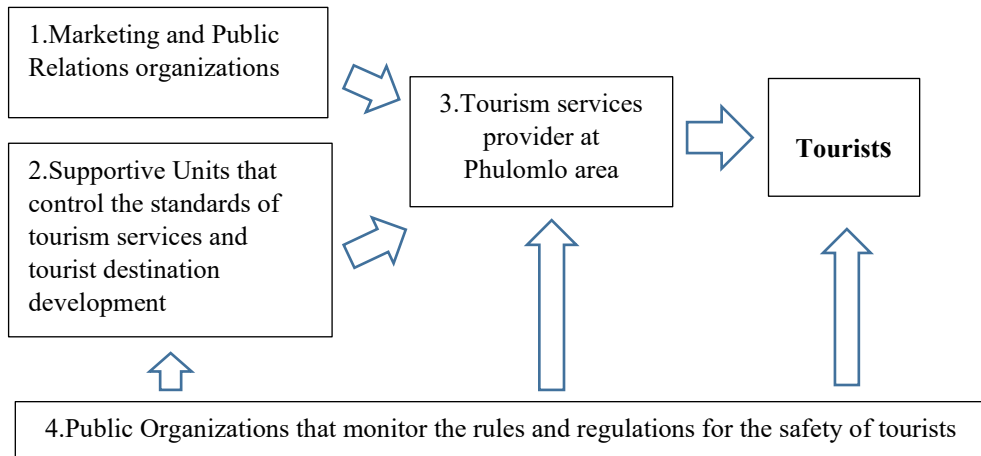
Figure 3. The mechanism of tourism management in Phulomlo

and Phitsanulok offices, DASTA, and the Phuhinrongkla National Park Office; 3) Tourism service providers in Phulomlo: Tourism Promotion Association of Koksaton and Baanmairongkla, and the Phuhinrongkla National Park Office; and 4) Public Organizations who monitor the rules and regulations in regard to assuring fairness and safety while traveling in Phulomlo: the Phuhinrongkla National Park Office, and related Subdistrict Administrative Organizations in Phulomlo and the connected areas.

The interests of different stakeholders can conflict, Kapera (2018) concluded that conflicts among stakeholders have arisen by dissimilar goals as also happened in Phulomlo in the first stage of tourism management. Additionally, due to Phulomlo being located in a National Park Area, tourism promotion and environmental protection must be considered as two sides of the same coin. At present, the Thai government spends more effort on development toward the SDGs through long-term policies. However, by examining the 2018–2021 tourism development strategic plan, a partnership among stakeholders in various sectors can be considered as a key driver for tourism development. Nowadays Phulomlo has adopted a co-management approach, resulting in fewer conflicts in the community, and better management in terms of controlling the number of vehicles and tourists at Pholomlo. Moreover, the tourism network and community participation are potential keys to community-based tourism sustainability (Kampetch and Jitpakdee, 2019). The results of this study also stressed the same factors; these are present in the informal organizational chart, indicating the different functions of each stakeholder and how they are working together towards similar goals in sustainable tourism development and tourist satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Since 2015 the "Sustainable Development Goals" have been the central agenda for the development of all United Nations Member States, with an aim for these goals to be achieved by 2030. For the case of Phulomlo in Thailand, this paper examines the mechanism used by each stakeholder in the Phulomlo area, to offer appropriate ways to reach the global goals – SDGs.

Achieving the SDGs is possible, according to consistent national level policies as a supportive mechanism, appearing in Thailand's VNRs which have been conducted since 2017, and the tourism strategic plan 2018-2021, along with the consolidation of stakeholders in the tourism sector as an operational mechanism. Besides this, DASTA operates as an organization which 'joins' the national and local levels, supporting sustainable tourism development in practice. It can be concluded that Phulomlo area is well-arranged and ready to install the process in tourism development, followed by the SDGs. The Community Association for tourism promotion, especially, plays crucial roles in sustainable tourism development in Phulomlo and the connected areas.

SUGGESTIONS

There are various policy implications for obtaining the SDGs through tourism. As UNWTO and UNDP (2017) recommends there are three main components: building a structure for working together, interrelated national strategies, and developing a sustainable tourism strategy. For the case of tourism development in Phulomlo and connected areas, it can be said that this tourism destination is organized following the abovementioned crucial components, along with a coherent dialogue between stakeholders.

In the initial stage, mutual understanding between stakeholders is important on the roadmap to achieving the SDGs. The tourism management mechanism in Phulomlo has been constructed with the collaboration of various stakeholders. Strategy to accomplish the goals through a local network is also needed. For Phulomlo and the connected areas, as a potential destination, early plans can be made for achieving SDG 8 (using tourism as a tool to sustain the local economy) and SDG 11 (Sustainable cities), with regard to local capital and the readiness of a local network.

The collaboration of a Supportive Mechanism and Operational Mechanism is a strength of tourism management in Phulomlo, with the addition of environmental protection via the 7 Greens concept. However, it is also suggested that a practical strategy to achieve the SDGs should be prepared by the local network. Additional features for supporting the acceleration of the 2030 Agenda for SDGs are also suggested, as the compilation of the consistency in practice, coherence of policies at the national and local level, with collaboration among tourism stakeholders.

Furthermore, a comparative study on the mechanism of tourism management and appropriate strategies for sustainable tourism development toward the SDGs in the Thai context are suggested for future research.

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