10 Steps Towards Successful Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Supply Chain Partnerships

The Thailand Community-Based Tourism Institute (CBT-I)

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- Community-Based Tourism Supply Chain Management
- Thailand Community-based Tourism

Overview of paper:

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) aims to be a tool for sustainable community development. However, any kind of tourism can bring both benefits and negative impacts to local communities and the environment. The final balance of benefits and impacts will be influenced very significantly by the types and volumes of tourists which a community hosts. Therefore, how CBT projects are marketed, to who, and in what volumes, plays a crucial role in deciding whether CBT actually contributes towards or undermines the sustainable development of a destination. It is necessary to identify appropriate markets, marketing tools and partners in order to ensure that CBT realises its potential as a sustainable development tool.

This paper presents lessons learned by the Thailand Community-based Tourism Institute (CBT-I), working to facilitate partnerships between community-based tourism projects in Thailand and selected, ‘Responsible Tourism’ (RT) Operators’.

The paper begins with an introduction to CBT in the Thai context and consumer demand for CBT, focusing on Europe. Next, the paper considers the importance of identifying an appropriate marketing model for CBT. Following this, the paper presents the advantages of linking CBT with tour operators with a commitment to Responsible Tourism. The remainder of the paper presents ‘10 Steps Towards Successful Partnerships’, summarised from the direct experience of CBT-I.

CBT-I hope that following or adapting these steps can help CBT projects and tour operators to work together successfully; supporting the potential of CBT to be an enjoyable, safe, educational experience for guests, as well as an effective tool for local community development and sustainable natural resource management.
1. Community-based Tourism in Thailand

Community Based Tourism is tourism that takes environmental, social and cultural sustainability into account. It is managed and owned by the community, for the community, with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community and local ways of life.” The Responsible, Ecological, Social Tours Project (REST), 1997

In Thailand, more than 70 local communities have now developed Community Based Tourism (CBT). CBT programs are developed based around special elements of local lifestyle, culture, people and nature that community members feel proud of and choose to share with guests.

Guests have an opportunity to experience and learn about the community and their environment through fun, ‘hands-on’ activities, such as jungle trekking, traditional fishing, natural dying and learning to cook local dishes. Guests usually stay with a host family in a ‘homestay’, or sometimes in a community-run lodge or campsite.

CBT services and activities are planned and managed by local community members, working together in a ‘CBT Group.’ Activities are lead by community guides and host family members. In addition to being a fun and educational experience for guests, CBT programs are specifically designed to build the skills of local people, support social and environmental projects, and distribute benefits and opportunities fairly.

Even small volumes of tourists can make a valuable economic contribution to local community members. However, increasing income is only one of the goals of CBT. Communities which choose to develop CBT consider a broader question: “How can we harness tourism to support sustainable development in our community?”

Communities which choose to develop CBT require several steps of preparation to develop the necessary knowledge and skills which enable them to welcome guests and work with the tourism industry. This training includes planning, organisational development, management, operation, marketing and monitoring. Communities also learn about mechanisms such as rotation, queues and Community Funds which can help to distribute the benefits of tourism within and beyond CBT service providers.

Tourism as a tool for community development?

Some benefits of Community-based Tourism to Community & Environment...

Northern ‘hilltribe’ people gradually developed impressive communication skills from their role as community guides. This assisted them to present their farming practices to the outside world, cooperate with National Park authorities and continue to live and work on their lands.

From 2005 to 2009, Leeled CBT group, Surrathani has welcomed guests of the Australian company, Intrepid Travel. In 2005, Leeled earned 104,000 Baht (1,507 GBP), and in 2006, 176,000 (2,550 GBP). 10% of income contributed towards community funds. Leeled CBT Group’s conservation efforts lead to an amazing 1000 hectares of new mangrove growth.

In 2004, Koh Yao Noi CBT Group, Phang Nga province, southern Thailand, earned 900,000 Baht (13,043 GBP), representing a 10% increase in the income of participating families. In 2005, despite a bad year, Koh Yao Noi still earned 232,874 Baht (3,375 GBP). Media attention helped Koh Yao Noi to protect fish stocks, coral, sea grass and mangroves.
2. Demand for Community-Based Tourism

Several different markets offer opportunities for the types of services and experiences which are being offered by these communities. Visitors who have enjoyed CBT, and whose visits have been appreciated by community members, include a wide range of independent and group travelers, foreign and domestic travelers, ‘cultural tourists’ looking for an authentic local experience, as well as educators and other professionals seeking locations for research or study trips.

Among the most important potential markets for CBT projects are tourists from western countries, in particular from Western Europe, North America and Australia.

Few tourists from these countries are actively requesting ‘CBT’ products. However, research, as well as CBT-I’s direct experience confirm growing demand among several segments of these markets for enjoyable, interactive, ‘authentic,’ ethical experiences of local community, culture and nature. Meanwhile, it’s also clear from research and media that tourists from these countries are becoming more informed and concerned about the impacts of their holidays on people and the environment in destinations. These trends offer opportunities for community based tourism:

- The marketing report: “EU market for community-based tourism” published by the Department for the Promotion of Exports from Developing Counties, The Netherlands (CBI – www.cbi.eu) states that:
  - The Western market for community-based tourism is growing... as a result of a growing long-haul tourism market, awareness of sustainability and the need for an ‘authentic experience’ on holiday. Most European travelers who take up CBT-initiatives come from England, the Netherlands and Germany;
  - One expert gave a very rough estimation of a 2-5% market share for CBT in Europe for basic initiatives, such as a home stay with the local community;
  - Most important target groups are highly educated people, often with double incomes, aged 30-50 years, and backpackers. An upcoming target group is parents with children in the age of 8 years and older. They have a high income, are well educated and they want their children to learn something about another culture and/or country during their holiday;
- At the WTM 2007, London, UK, The International Center for Responsible Tourism (ICRT) reported over 1 million responsible holidays taken in 2006;
- Between January and June 2008, as economic gloom and soaring fuel prices depressed the UK travel industry, the UK’s pioneering web-based travel agent, ‘Responsible Travel.Com’ reported an astonishing growth rate of 37%.1
- The 2005 TIES report, ‘Consumer demand and operator support for socially and environmentally responsible tourism’2, states that “a majority of [US, European, and Australian] tourists are interested in the social, cultural and environmental issues relevant to the destinations they visit.”
- In a 2004 “Had Enough” market survey, Responsible Travel. Com also reported that 88% of respondents stated: “Tour operators should be more responsible to the environment and culture and benefit local people.”
- Mori research from 2002 showed that public support for responsible travel has been growing some time: 71% of the respondents stated they wanted “their holiday to benefit local people”; 85% felt that “it is important their holiday does not damage the environment” while 77% wished to “experience local cultures.” (Source: The Travel Foundation, UK).

1 Travel Daily, UK, Wednesday 16th July 2008
2 The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) and Center on Ecotourism and Sustainable Development (CESD), Prepared by Zoe Chafe, Edited by Martha Honey, 2005
10 Steps Towards Successful Community-Based Tourism Supply Chain Partnerships, Thailand Community-based Tourism Institute, Asia Pacific Regional Ecotourism Conference, Sri Lanka, 2009.
3. The Challenge of marketing Community Based Tourism

Marketing is...

“The whole business seen from the point of view of its final result, that is from the customer’s point of view.” Drucker (1969)

“Identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably.” The Chartered Institute of Marketing (UK)

Source: Horner and Swarbrook, 2005

When considering how to market CBT, there are good reasons to be cautious. Marketing prioritizes customer satisfaction and profit. However, CBT in Thailand is typically regarded as a useful source of additional income and as a tool to support social and environmental work, rather than as a serious commercial enterprise.

When marketing CBT, it’s important to consider more than simply ‘how to identify, anticipate and satisfy tourists’ needs?’ We must recognise and respond to the fact that too many or inappropriate types of tourists can create serious negative impacts and undermine the viability of CBT as a tool for sustainable development.

Tourists and tourism services use shared, limited resources such as water, forest and land. Local people rely on these resources directly in their main occupations as fishers and farmers. Too many tourists can impact natural resource security, which has a most profound impact on the poorest people in the community.

Further, ‘cultural exchange’ occurs in private spaces. The ‘CBT host-guest relationship’ goes beyond the boundaries of ‘professional service provider and customer’, entering people’s homes, religious and cultural sites. Insensitive behaviour can offend community members, and even lead to conflict.

Nevertheless, where communities have been able to access appropriate types and numbers of guests, CBT has been a mutually valuable experience.

The challenge is to find a model of ‘appropriate marketing,’ which enables CBT projects to access respectful guests, interested in sharing local life, in volumes which are within the capacity of the community and environment to manage.

Further, in order to ensure that marketing genuinely supports sustainability, local people must not lose control of marketing. Community members must be able to influence how they are marketed, to who, and in what volumes. Local community members must understand and participate in the marketing of their CBT programs.
4. Opportunities: linking CBT with responsible tour operators

Based on demand, and motivated by pressure to prove their commitment to sustainability, tour operators, particularly in Europe, Australia and North America are currently searching for quality sustainable tourism products to offer to their guests.

Many tour operators are promoting themselves as ‘responsible tourism’ specialists, with social and environmental goals at the heart of their company culture. These tour operators can be excellent partners for CBT projects, for a variety of reason, such as:

- The CBT product meets demand from their guests – authentic, ‘hands-on’ experience with a tangible contribution to local people and the environment;
- The CBT group can plan and develop a mutually agreed program together with the tour operator who then markets the program and finds the tourists;
- A single relationship with a tour operator can lead to consistent guests;
- Targeted promotion by ‘Responsible Tourism’ operators can help attract tourists with appropriate expectations and genuine interest in local culture;
- Tour operators can give information to tourists before they arrive in the community, and help to manage their expectations: e.g. the type of food and accommodation available in the community, local codes of conduct, etc;
- Tour operators often their book trips in advance (sometimes many months), which helps community members to plan and prepare for tourists’ arrival;
- Tour operators often send groups of tourists, which generates good income for the community and lowers costs, which can be shared among the guests;
- Tour guides working for Thai operators can help translate Thai to English;
- If tourists are impolite or upset the CBT group can follow up with their partner.
- Tour operators can train their staff, for example sales staff and tour guides, to understand CBT, and how to work together effectively with the CBT group.

What is Responsible Tourism?

What is Responsible Tourism? What does it mean? According to The Responsible Travel Handbook, published in 2006 by Transitions Abroad, Responsible Tourism:

- generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities, improves working conditions and access to the industry;
- involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances;
- makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, to the maintenance of the world’s diversity;
- provides more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues;
- minimizes negative economic, environmental, and social impacts; and
- is culturally sensitive, engenders respect between tourists and hosts, and builds local pride and confidence.

What is World Responsible Tourism Day?

"Making the difference is what World Responsible Tourism Day is about. Standing above other industries, taking your share of the responsibility that must be an essential part of our legacy. We have a responsibility to help local people wherever they might be, provide them with shelter, jobs, clean water, food and education. Protect them from exploitation, corruption and deceit. Offer the right to a decent and dignified standard of living where the next generation can flourish in the knowledge that those before them have taken a sensible, responsible and meaningful approach to the world in which we live."

5. 10 Steps towards successful supply chain partnerships:

In previous sections, we discussed market demand, and how integrating CBT programs into the itineraries of ‘responsible tour operators’ can be a good way to attract visitors to communities. However, despite opportunities, it remains challenging to link the distant worlds of rural villages and commercial businesses successfully.

The 10 steps presented below have been summarised from the experience of CBT-I, helping CBT projects to link with responsible tour operators since the 1990’s. This is not an exhaustive check-list, or a ‘complete process.’ However, CBT-I are confident that following these steps can help to build informed and committed partnerships, with an improved chance of being successful for hosts, guests and tour operators.

As the voice and power of tour operators and local communities are rarely equal, the processes below are significantly assisted by a facilitator, such as a specialist NGO or a CBT Network, which understands and can work to bridge the different roles, needs, expectations and limitations of tour operators and local communities.

1. Assessing - is the community ready for marketing?
2. Finding responsible tour partners
3. Information for CBT projects and tour operators
4. Cooperation in program design and scheduling
5. Fair pricing
6. Responsible promotion
7. Information, coordination, communication
8. Training professional tour guides and leaders
9. Backstopping during operation
10. Feedback, monitoring, evaluating, planning forward

Following the steps presented below will help to build TRUST between CBT projects and tour operators, and build strong foundations for successful cooperation…

CBT-I welcome feedback on these lessons learned. Please contact Peter@cbt-i.org
5.1. Assessing - Is the community ready for marketing?

Why is this step important?

There are many different markets, with a variety of expectations and needs. If a community is ‘ready’ for one type of tourists, it does not mean that it will satisfy the expectations of another. Nevertheless, CBT projects need to meet minimum requirements, or tourists will be unhappy and business relationships will not succeed:

What needs to be done?

- **Well defined products (Safety, Meaning, Service); fixed prices**, Services should be safe and hygienic and guests also need to feel safe. Activities and services must be clearly defined and attractive to target markets. Guests need opportunities to experience and learn about local life and nature, and to meet and talk with local people. Local guides / resource people should have the necessary knowledge and skills to interpret local life and culture in an engaging way. Services should be delivered according to the program, well paced, with a balance between activity and relaxation, interaction and some free time. Prices must be fixed, rational and overall good value for money.

- **Information, do’s & don’ts for guests**: Information should be available which includes the tour program; the goals and history of the CBT project; and other interesting information about local livelihoods, culture, environment and development work which is supported by CBT. There should be written guidelines for appropriate behaviour in the community – concerning both culture and environment. All of this information should be available in English.

- **Well managed, trained staff with clear roles**: The CBT program should be well managed, and staff such as homestay hosts, local community guides, and transport providers should be trained and should know their roles.

- **Coordinator, communication equipment, booking system**: There must be a named, reliable coordinator, who can be contacted easily. There must be some communication equipment. There must be an effective booking system, to secure bookings, avoid double-bookings and keep volume manageable. The coordinator needs to know how to work with tour tour operators.

- **Participation, clear goals, benefit sharing, link with development**: This is the top of the development workers’ list! For CBT to be effective as a sustainable development activity, CBT must be managed by local people; benefits of tourism must be shared in and outside the CBT group; and the program must be designed to support community and environmental work.

- **Located ‘on the way’ makes marketing much easier**: CBT projects which are located ‘on the way’ between tourism destinations are easier to link with tour operators. If a CBT project is not ‘on the way’, then it is better to focus on markets such as government study trips, school and university programs, etc.

If a CBT project can’t satisfy these requirements, then more assistance and training is needed before linking with a tour operator. Or the project should partner with a patient operator, who is happy to be involved in the early stages of development.
5.2. **Finding ‘Responsible Tour’ partners;**

**Why is this step important?**

Responsible tourism is in trend at the moment. However, in reality, only some tour operators put the necessary time, effort and funds behind their public promises.

Committed tour operators will put the necessary time and effort into CBT during the cycle of product development, marketing, tour operation and monitoring. On the other hand, tour operators which are not genuinely committed to responsible travel will not invest this time. Thus, efforts to work together are very likely to fail. Therefore, in order to use time most effectively; it will benefit CBT projects to focus on strategic partnerships and to be selective about which tour operators they chose to work with.

**What needs to be done?**

The following simple criteria were developed by CBT-I, and can help CBT projects, or the facilitators which are assisting them, to identify promising tour operator partners:

**Core criteria (mandatory):**

1) Promotional materials, policy (or equivalent document) show that the tour operator is clearly committed to responsible tourism;

2) The tour operator makes clear efforts to operate tours which benefit and have minimum impacts on local communities and environment;

3) The operator conducts training to increase staffs’ knowledge and skills to operate tours with minimum impact on local communities and environment;

4) The tour operator is prepared to cooperate with communities to develop, market, operate and monitor CBT programs;

**Specific Criteria (mandatory):**

5) The operator is prepared to use local community staff (e.g. local guides)

6) The tour operator is prepared to pay a fair price to the community for their services

7) The tour operator is prepared to inform tourists about local codes of conduct

**Specific Criteria (advantageous)**

8) The tour operator is experienced at operating rural tours in villages

9) The operator is a specialist in an area relevant to CBT sites.

10) The operator has a good reputation / profile (e.g. awards, a pioneer, etc).

This information can be discovered by studying the tour operators’ website and promotion materials, by sending a quick survey or interviewing tour operators over the phone, or by asking people who have worked with the tour operator.
5.3. **Information for CBT projects and tour operators;**

**Why is this step important?**

In order for the CBT project and tour operator to be able to decide if they are interested to develop a program together, they will both need information.

**What needs to be done?**

5.3.1. **CBT group must learn about the tour operator’s profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the community needs to know about a tour operator</th>
<th>Why they need to know it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Style and concept of tour operator</td>
<td>To know the background, style and concept of the operator, and to decide if they sound like an appropriate partner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Target tourists (reason for travel, main expectations from village tour, age, nationality, group or independent)</td>
<td>To know the main target tourists of the tour operator, and decide if they are appropriate for the local CBT program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Experience of working in rural tourism / scale</td>
<td>To assess how much experience the operator has working with communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  How can the TO be considered a ‘responsible partner?’ (e.g. policy, trip design, staff training, awards, support for social / environmental work, etc)</td>
<td>To learn how the tour operator puts their commitment into action and to be confident that they are genuinely committed to responsible tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Are they prepared to work together with CBT group?</td>
<td>To be confident that the TO is prepared to work with local CBT group and staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Do they operate themselves or sub-contract their operations to a local agent?</td>
<td>Many tour operators do not operate their own trips. Therefore, they aren’t the people which the CBT project will actually have to deal and work with. If the TO sub-contracts, then the CBT group needs to know the same information as described above about the sub-contracted local operator, in order to be able to decide if they are likely to be an appropriate partner.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.2. **CBT group must know the operator’s trip development needs**

The tour operator will either be interested to develop a particular trip for a specific target group, or to offer a standard CBT program to several different groups. Either way, it is very important that the CBT groups request the information below, so that they know what types and numbers of tourists the operator wants to target, and can decide if it is possible / appropriate for the CBT group to accommodate these needs:
### 10 Steps Towards Successful Community-Based Tourism Supply Chain Partnerships, Thailand

Community-based Tourism Institute, Asia Pacific Regional Ecotourism Conference, Sri Lanka, 2009.

*If the tour operator requests to present the CBT program to several different markets, rather than develop one specific trip, the CBT group must be particularly strict about how much prior notice the tour operator must give the CBT group.

### 5.3.3. What the tour operator must know about the CBT community:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the community needs to know about a proposed trip</th>
<th>Why they need to know it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Exactly what kinds of experiences are your guests searching for in our community?</td>
<td>To decide if the proposed trip is possible and appropriate for the CBT group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. For what kinds of tourists (families, seniors, students, volunteers, etc) with what expectations?</td>
<td>To decide if the CBT group wishes and is able to welcome these types of guests, with these expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What group sizes, (how many tourists)?*</td>
<td>To decide if the community has the capacity to accommodate the guests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How many days? How often? How many total departures? When is the first departure planned?</td>
<td>To decide if the community has the capacity to accommodate the guests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What is your deadline for developing the trip?</td>
<td>To know how much time is available for product development / discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What is your budget?</td>
<td>To know if the proposed trip is possible, or what is possible within the budget</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the tour operator needs to know about a CBT project</th>
<th>Why they need to know it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Why CBT – goals, background, team?</td>
<td>So that they understand the CBT project and will be able to assess how to best promote it, and who to target.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Activities, program, prices</td>
<td>To assess if they’re feasible for their guests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Scale: booking system and carrying capacity: How many guests can CBT services manage, how often? Prior commitments? Any months when the community prefers not to host tourists, (e.g. agriculture, ceremony) or when weather is very bad (storms, fires, etc)</td>
<td>To assess if the carrying capacity of the community is appropriate for the size and frequency of their groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Information that the CBT group wants to communicate with guests.</td>
<td>To communicate sensitive information during promotion &amp; guests’ orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The CBT Club’s preferred types of tourists / and styles of trip that the CBT group prefer to host (if any)</td>
<td>If applicable. Some groups are mostly older / younger people, etc and better suited for specific types of guests.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4. Cooperating in program design and scheduling;

Why is this step important?

*It is important that the community participate fully in program design, and the tour operator allows sufficient time for community members to discuss and input. It is also an advantage for the tour operator to work closely with the CBT group, so that they can adapt the standard program to the specific needs of their guests.*

What needs to be done?

Ideally, the tour operator (or their ground partner if they sub-contract) should visit the community, meet the CBT group and survey the CBT services and activities. This gives both parties an opportunity to meet face to face, and guarantees that the tour operator has a realistic impression of the activities and level of service.

**Recommended Process for Survey:**

1. Introductions between the CBT Group and tour operator
2. Tour Operator surveys the CBT community / program / services
3. Tour operator and CBT group discuss the program. The CBT group listen to feedback, answer questions, and clarify program & prices
4. Discuss bookings system and prior commitments
5. Discuss information (Code of Conduct, promotion, orientation)
6. Clarify roles TO and CBT staff (especially local and staff guides)
7. Plan and confirm next steps

**Note:** A survey is more likely to succeed and result in product development if a TO staff member with decision making power attends the survey trip.

5.5. Negotiating fair pricing;

Why is this step important?

*In Thailand, CBT is competing in an undervalued market full of cheap, less sustainable rural tourism products. It’s necessary to find a price which is fair for the community, and also realistic and sellable for the tour operator.*

What needs to be done?

- Negotiation process: fair to both parties, reasonable, transparent.
- Include some additional costs for rises in the cost of living (petrol, etc)
- Make a written record (Contract or at least a report of the meeting)
- Local commitment to agreed prices is very important… don’t be greedy
- Limitations: CBT is often simply more expensive – this is reality…
- It’s good to find incentives for tour operators and their ground operators to support CBT, especially if it’s more expensive than their usual rural tourism products – this could be special prices / rights, image, etc
5.6. Responsible promotion;

Why is this step important?

Promotion needs to be carefully managed in order to avoid incorrect expectations which can easily result in disappointment of either guests or hosts. In the long-term, disappointment caused by mis-managed expectations will undermine the motivation of the CBT group, and lead to fewer word-of-mouth referrals for the tour operator.

What needs to be done?

- CBT groups need to communicate what information they expect their guests to receive at the point of sale and before arrival. What type of expectations are they prepared to accommodate from tourists? What are their limits?
- CBT groups should explicitly request tour operators’ assistance to communicate this information to tourists clearly and honestly;
- Product managers need to inform their marketing departments, so that too much ‘colour’ is not added to the program;
- CBT staff should check web, dossier, brochure as soon as possible
- The CBT group should listen to feedback. Tour operators know how to sell.

5.7. Information, Coordination, Communication;

Why is this step important?

Between promotion and the arrival of tourists, information should be produced for the guests. Good follow-up communication and regular updates will help build effective cooperation. This will also help the community to remain aware of all commitments. In addition, it is essential that the community informs the operator of any dynamic situations in the community which could effect the published, brochured program.

What needs to be done?

- 1 page project description
- Code of conduct for guests
- Community Handbook
- Language sheet
- Regular, personal follow up communication
- Check trip numbers
- Close to the time – exchange names and phone numbers of tour guides & leaders
5.8. **Training professional tour guides / leaders;**

*Why is this step important?*

Professional tour guides and tour leaders employed by tour operators will be used to running their tours solo. They are highly independent and usually responsible for everything from cooking meals to driving and providing all information to guests.

CBT requires professional guides to share the spotlight and to release some responsibility into the hands of local community members, who they may not have confidence in. Further, they receive tips based on how well they look after their guests and inform them, so they can regard CBT staff as competition or obstacles.

*After all the work to develop a program, in the field, the professional tour guides’ understanding of CBT, and their commitment to make it work are essential.*

*What needs to be done?*

Appropriate staff guides of the tour operator need to be selected and trained to understand CBT, and to re-define their role as a *facilitator guide* – working to help the local community members and their guests to communicate, to deliver the program safely and according to plan, and to back up the community as necessary.

*Example of training program:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1: CBT-I Office / Travel to Mae Kampong</th>
<th>Objective of training:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome / introduction to CBT-I</td>
<td>Develop professional tour leaders’ understanding about CBT;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review experience and expectations of participants</td>
<td>Give professional tour leaders and local community guides an opportunity to exchange their experience and expectations;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview: the role of professional tour leaders and tour guides to make responsible tourism a reality on the ground</td>
<td>Develop the necessary field skills for professional tour leaders to work effectively with local guides to meet the needs of hosts and guests.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morning</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Sharing Impressions: How is CBT different from regular village tours? What are the needs of guests and hosts during a CBT program? How can professional TL / guides help to ensure these needs are met?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>Roles of local community guides and facilitator guides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>Professional guides advice for community guides and homestay hosts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Day 3 | |
| Breakfast | Morning | Professional leaders and community guides practice working together |
| Lunch | Afternoon | The big picture: Why sustainable rural tourism and CBT will be part of the future for professional tour leaders and tour guides. Return to Chiang Mai |

10 Steps Towards Successful Community-Based Tourism Supply Chain Partnerships, Thailand Community-based Tourism Institute, Asia Pacific Regional Ecotourism Conference, Sri Lanka, 2009.
5.9. ‘Backstopping’ during operation,

Why is this step important?

*Backstopping is the art of the facilitator guide - letting the community do their best to deliver the program, but assisting if and when necessary.*

Despite training, delivering CBT programs is a process of ‘learning by doing.’ Local people have not had the opportunity of a sophisticated education or tourism industry experience. Local organization is not completely professional or perfect. Sometimes service can be slow, or different to guests’ expectations.

What needs to be done?

Without the space to learn by doing and even the space to make mistakes, it’s impossible for the community members to improve. During tour operation, the tour leaders who are working with the CBT group and staff need to be flexible, understanding, give space to local people and be prepared to help as necessary.

Good team-work and clear division of roles and responsibilities between different staff who share responsibility for the safety and satisfaction of hosts and guests is essential for CBT projects to be successful. This must be done in advance.

If possible, CBT guides and tour operator staff guides should plan together:

1. Before the tour begins, so professional guide can be briefed;
2. When the guests have arrived – to assess the guests together;
3. 2 or 3 days before arrival, so the CBT guides can update professional guides and they can help each other to plan how to manage the guests.

The professional guide needs to know the details of the program and roles of local community members, so that he / she can help as effectively as possible.

5.10. Feedback, monitoring, evaluating, moving forward

Why is this step important?

*The tour operator and the CBT group should have the chance to give each other direct feedback. This will help them to identify strengths and weaknesses and develop a program and coordination system which is most responsive to their needs.*

What needs to be done?

It’s best if a staff member from the tour operator takes the time to visit the community in person. An evaluation session can be completed in around half a day:

Tour operator shares feedback from their guests / guides, for example:

- Food, drink, accommodation, transport?
- Homestay hosts, community guides?
- Activities: well-paced, enjoyable, safe?
- Management / information?
The CBT group shares feedback with the Tour Operator, for example:

- Coordination and communication with group;
- Knowledge, skills, attitude of tour leaders;
- Preparing tourists in advance, arriving on time;
- Speed and ease of payment; price changes

To conduct an evaluation, it's essential to have collected feedback, as below:

**Feedback from a sample of 200 Intrepid Travel Guests, May to October 2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback issue</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Accommodation, comfortable, clean, safe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Food sufficient portions, tasty, clean, well prepared</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Bathroom / toilet - comfortable, safe, clean</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Program, safe, enjoyable, varied, interesting</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Recycling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Waste separation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Safety</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Information / Learning with family</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Communication in family &amp; club</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Welcoming, friendly, enthusiastic, service mind</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A Responsible Tourism Partnership: Intrepid Travel and Leeled**

Leeled Community, Surathani province, is a good example of CBT project and Tour Operator **participatory product development, marketing and monitoring. Intrepid Travel**, Australia, began working with Leeled Community in 2005. Between May and October, Intrepid sends groups of approximately 9-12 passengers per week to Leeled— or a total of around 250-300 tourists per year.

The process, facilitated by the CBT-I team, begun by assisting negotiation between Leeled CBT Club and Intrepid to adapt the group’s standard 3 day program into a 2 day program that met Intrepid’s needs, while also including highlights that the group wanted their guests to experience. Andy Teague, Intrepid Operations Manager has since traveled down to Leeled every year to evaluate the trips with the CBT group – monitoring both the satisfaction of Intrepid’s guests with the communities program and services (food, accommodation, transport, and guides) and also the satisfaction of the CBT Group with Intrepid’s leaders and their passengers. At the end of the meetings, new commitments, programs and prices have been agreed. 2009 is the 5th year.
6. **What is the Thailand Community-Based Tourism Institute?**

The vision of The Thailand Community-Based Tourism Institute (CBT-I) is to: "Provide support and facilitate cooperation among stakeholders from grassroots to international levels, in order to strengthen the capacity of Thai communities to manage tourism sustainably." To achieve this, CBT-I works with local communities, the Thai government, NGO’s, academics and selected tour operators with a proven commitment to sustainable and responsible tourism.

CBT-I was established in 2006, under the umbrella of the Thailand Research Fund (TRF) Regional Office, based in Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand. CBT-I unites the knowledge, skills and experience of two organizations which have worked for over 10 years supporting Thai communities to develop and promote their own small scale, sustainable tourism programs, appropriate to their cultural and natural contexts:

**The Responsible Ecological Social Tours Project (REST)** worked for 12 years supporting communities to plan, develop, manage, market and monitor CBT. The **Thailand Research Fund Regional Office CBT team** worked for 5 years assisting community members to undertake simple “community-based research” projects, which allowed them to explore appropriate models of local tourism development.

This work has built the knowledge, skills, and self-confidence of community members across the country. It has celebrated traditional cultures; supported local rights; contributed towards sustainable natural resource management, and lead to the development of Thailand’s largest network of over 70 CBT communities. CBT-I aims to move this work forwards, by catalyzing support for CBT among stakeholders in Thai tourism and inviting them to contribute towards a higher quality Thai tourism industry which values learning, sharing and mutual respect, and which allows local people greater participation and more benefit from local tourism development.

7. **Thank-you**

Many thanks to the Thailand Research Fund (TRF); the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT); the Office of Tourism Development, Thai Ministry of Sports and Tourism; The Travel Foundation (UK); the EU; The Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation and all partner CBT communities and tour operators for your support and the opportunity to develop, and to present the lessons learned contained in this paper.

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