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# STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVE ON COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM PARTICIPATION IN PHONSIM AND THAT INGHANG VILLAGES KAYSONE PHOMVIHANE CITY, SAVANNAKHET PROVINCE, LAOS

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## ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of ecotourism can generate more jobs and income for local people. Also, ecotourism development still helps to improve and develop the infrastructure. In recent years, the government has had policies to promote and plan for ecotourism development. In Kaysone Phomvihane City, there are many tourist attractions and ecotourism attractions as potential and good opportunities for tourism development. In contrast, this city still faces challenges which include: the lack of facilities development and diversity in services and activities, inconvenient to access destinations. This study aimed to explore and assess the participation in Ecotourism of the stakeholder that includes: 1) exploring the interest of the tourists in Ecotourism; 2) assessing the perspective of the local community on ecotourism development; 3) exploring the opinion of the local operator and the government; 4) purposing the guideline and recommendation for sustainable ecotourism development. This study was mixed research and was selected the respondents by four groups in different sampling sizes, including 1) tourist group (100 respondents); 2) The local community group (50 households); 3) Local tour operator group (10 respondents); and 4) the Central and local government official group (10 respondents). Furthermore, for community location selection, the villages selected by three villages that ecotourism places are in such as 1) That Inghang village, and 2) Phonsim villages which are the locations of four famous attractions. The data collection of this study was going to gather from the questionnaire by observation and interview the stakeholders. The findings showed the perspective in each stakeholder on ecotourism participation.

**Keywords:** Ecotourism stakeholder, Ecotourism principle, Ecotourism guideline, Ecotourism participation, Sustainable ecotourism development, Community Involvement.

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## 1. Introduction

The tourism industry sector of Laos is one of the fastest-growing tourism destinations of the country's development in recent years, especially ecotourism is becoming very popular nowadays. The Lao government has continued to promote and encourage policies in the historical, cultural, and natural sources development. Also, the ministry of information, culture, and tourism of Laos has planned to develop tourism projects in the government sector. In recent years, the government has invested in the construction of infrastructure and facilities. Besides, promoted international business, opportunities for foreign countries to invest, expand tourism business, promote tourism and ecotourism products such as development and improvement of cultural, natural, and historical tourism sites, improved facilities such as hotel, homestay, restaurant.

The governments have cooperated with various related sectors (both internal & external private sectors) to follow the local order to prioritize each place to focus on development, protection, and investment in these sites. The objective of the above efforts helps to enhance and develop tourism into an industrial sector that generates exchange income for the country and provides jobs, encourages culture preservation, and maintains the beauty of national norms and traditions (LTS, 2006-2020).

When comparing Kaysone Phomvihane city with other districts in Savannakhet Province, Kaysone is the city that attracts the most tourists. There are many tourist attractions in the city, including cultural-historical, natural attractions. However, this city still faces challenges due to the impact of tourism. The main factors which influenced the decrease were lack of facilities development and variety in services and activities. Also, the attractions were still an inconvenience to access and are not widely known.

Moreover, the development of human resources and work systems is also a problem.

There are three main objectives of this thesis:

- a) To explore the tourists' interest in ecotourism in Phonsim and That Inghang Villages.
- b) To assess the local communities' perspective on ecotourism development in the villages.
- c) To explore the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in ecotourism of the local operators and the governments' opinion.
- d) To propose guidelines and recommendations for sustainable tourism development.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Stakeholder

According to Orgaz Agüera (2013), "Stakeholders" are all players who have received benefits or might be affected by the ecotourism activities in the destination, such as the government sector, local people, the company, protected area administrators, non-government organizations, etc. For stakeholder groups that must be paid attention to as special stakeholders are "local communities."

Ecotourism stakeholders are impacted positively and negatively by tourism, meaning all individuals, groups, or organizations affected by others' decisions and actions can resolve the problems. In the tourism sector, all stakeholders are those who are interested in or affected by tourism. These include tourists, tourism companies, the governments, and local communities (Jamal and Getz, 1995).

### 2.2 Ecotourism Guidelines

Based on (Laddawan et al, 2018), The Thai Ecotourism and Adventure Tourism Association have established the ecotourism site criteria as follows:

- a) It is a natural tourist attraction with a complete ecosystem.
- b) Availability of management services offers basic facilities such as counters, news service, toilet service, food, and beverage corner.
- c) Some signs convey meaning on the nature study route from time to time to educate tourists.
- d) There is a map and a guidebook to educate tourists.
- e) The number of tourists per time per day is set for each route and in tourist attractions.
- f) There are local guides with knowledge of nature and culture to explain local stories and folk wisdom.
- g) There is area management and service with the cooperation among the local community, Government organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the local administrative organizations.
- h) There is a policy to preserve the environment and local wisdom. Such as waste management.
- i) Wastewater management, pollution management.
- j) There is a plan to develop personnel and services to the international standard.
- k) If an attraction has accommodation, it must be an Ecologde.

### 2.3 Elements for Ecotourism in Community

The fundamental objective of ecotourism is to conserve and implement the sustainability of natural resources. Also, help develop the economy of the local people. However, achieving ecotourism goals will depend on whether these are environmentally and ecologically sustainable. Besides, cooperative tourism planning is needed to achieve these goals. The Figure below shows the elements needed to ensure the community is involved in ecotourism development (Drumm & Moore, 2005).



Figure 1. Community ecotourism elements

Source: Drumm and Moore, 2005

### 2.4 Ecotourism Activities

Based on (Laddawan et al, 2018), Ecotourism activities come in many forms, depending on the individual groups, as follows:

- a) The forest ecosystem group focuses on activities that rely on recreational resources such as forestry, wildlife, and water bodies, such as reservoirs, lakes, and waterfalls.
- b) The group is focused on the historical, archaeological, antiquities, and culture of the traditional communities.
- c) Coastal island ecosystems are often attracted to marine resources that remain intact, such as corals, beautiful fish, and beautiful beaches.
- d) Forest and water sources, the popular ecotourism activity is bird watching and rare exotic birds.

Furthermore, ecotourism activity is divided into two categories:

- a) The main activities, including trekking, nature study activity, bird watching activity, cave studying or exploring activity, sky and astronomy studies, nature study boat, diving activity, boat cruise, and boating activity.
- b) Extra activities include natural scenery activity (relaxing), cycling activity, mountain climbing activity, picnic activity, waterfall studying, and exploring.

### 3. Research Method

#### 3.1 Data Collection Method

This research is Mixed-method. Data collection of this study is going to be gathered by both primary and secondary data. Primary data was gathered from questionnaires obtained from interviews with the stakeholders. The secondary data was gathered from research papers, statistical reports, electronic articles, websites, and general information about tourism from the provincial tourism department.

For community location selection, the villages will be selected by three villages that ecotourism places are in, such as 1) Inghang village, and 2) Phonsim village in Kayson Phomvihane.

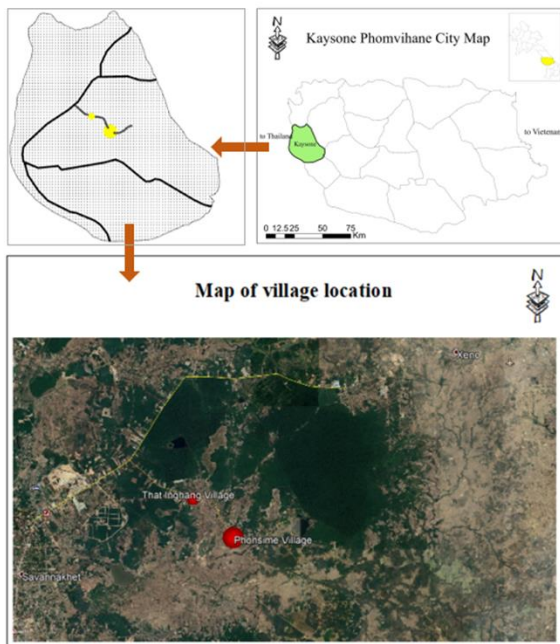


Figure 2. Location of villages

Source: Google Earth and ArcMap Analysis 2021

#### 3.2 Method of Data Collection and Analysis

In this study, data collection methods were used in different approaches depending on the specifics of each group of studies, both qualitative and quantitative methods. Therefore, the research method in each step is following in Table 1.

Table 1. Show Stakeholder, sample size, and sampling method.

Content	Population	Sample Size	Sampling Method
<b>Stakeholder</b>			
1. Tourist	All domestic tourists	100	Convenient sampling
2. Local community	1. Inghang village 2. Phonsim village	50	Convenient sampling
3. Local tour operator	1. Accommodation Operators 2. Tourism guiders 3. Restaurant Owners 4. handicraft makers	10	Purpose or judgment sampling
4. Central and Local government official	1. Central Staff of the DICT 2. Local Staff.	10	Purpose or judgment sampling
<b>Total</b>		<b>170</b>	

#### 3.3 Data Analysis Method

This research used two methods: the SPSS analysis method, and the SWOT analysis method.

SPSS was used for data analysis that obtains questionnaires of the local community and tourist groups, including their general characteristics, interest in ecotourism, and their opinion and suggestions on ecotourism development.

SWOT analysis method involves external interest factors, compared with internal factors applied to the analyzes in their discussion about the ability and coping with problems. Also, strength both inside and outside is used in the comparative analysis for understanding and suggest recommendations from this study to propose strategic actions and recommendations on ecotourism development in Kaysone Phomvihane City to stakeholders.

### 4. Ecotourism Participation in Phonsim and That Inghang

#### 4.1 Ecotourism Attraction in the Villages

Phonsim and That Inghang villages are located of four attractions, includes 1) Dong Natad Provincial Protected area, 2) Inghang Stupa, 3) Turtle Lake and 4) Ancient ruins. This is the reason that why this location was chosen as a study location.





Figure 3. Map of tourist attraction of Phonsim village and That Inghang village

Source: Google Earth 2021

Table 2. Ecotourism Attractions in Phonsim and That Inghang Villages

Attraction	Activity	Picture
1) Dong Natad Protected Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trekking</li> <li>Bird Watching</li> <li>Cycling Activity</li> <li>Natural Study and Exploration</li> </ul>	<p>Source: <a href="https://www.pbase.com/travelgame/ecotrck">https://www.pbase.com/travelgame/ecotrck</a>, 2018</p>
2) Inghang Stupa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worship the Buddha.</li> <li>Traditional Festival</li> <li>Community Visiting</li> </ul>	<p>Source: <a href="http://201.130.151.203.sta.inet.co.th/43484/">http://201.130.151.203.sta.inet.co.th/43484/</a>, 2018</p>

Attraction	Activity	Picture
3) Nongtao Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Picnic (Recreation)</li> <li>• Paddling</li> <li>• Nature viewing (relaxation)</li> <li>• Cycling Activity</li> </ul>	 <p>Picture by: Ounheuan, 2020</p>
4) Ancient Ruins and old Phonsim village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical study</li> <li>• Archaeological Exploration</li> <li>• Basi ceremony activity</li> <li>• old village Visiting</li> </ul>	 <p><a href="https://tourism4svk.la/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Phonsim-Village-1-947x540.png">https://tourism4svk.la/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Phonsim-Village-1-947x540.png</a></p>

## 4.2 Tourism Development Programs and Projects for 2020-2025 of Savannakhet Province

Table 3. Practice Development Work Plan

No	Activity/Content	Responsible organization
1	Project: Allocation and development of Inghang stupa tourism service area to become cultural tourism related to integrated services and outstanding services.	DICT of Savannakhet Province and ICTO of Kaysone
2	Project: Explore and study the possibilities of old Phonsim village to develop into a historical tourist site linked to community-based ecotourism.	Phomvihane City
3	Project: Community-based ecotourism improvement and development in Dong Natad Protected Area to connect with Nongtao lake of Phonsim village.	
4	Project: Allocation and development of Nongtao area to become a natural tourist destination related to agricultural tourism in Phonsim village.	•DICT and ICTO of DAF of the City

## 5. Findings and Discussion

### 5.1 Tourists' interest in ecotourism in Kaysone Phomvihane City

According to the results obtained from the interview with the tourists can be seen that the motivation that attracts tourists to visit the city are the natural abundance, cultural diversity, the welcoming and friendly of local people, the atmosphere of an old town, the identity of traditions, and local lifestyle. For the most popular tourist attractions, the first was Inghang Stupa and Turtle Lake. In each area, still a lake of activity diversity for the tourists. The most popular tourist activities are cultural activities (49%), such as paying respect to Buddha, followed by ecotourism activities (51%), such as trekking, natural study, bird watching, nature boating, nature viewing (relaxation), and cycling activities, etc. Due to the lack of activities diversity and the places most visitors choose to stay, about 85% spent more than or equal to \$100. The most famous activity tourists engage in these villages is ecotourism, such as bird watching and rare exotic birds, relying on recreational resources such as forestry, wildlife, and water bodies, such as reservoirs, lakes, and waterfalls.

Table 4. Tourists' attention

Indicator	Number	Percentage (%)
1. What was your stimulus for visiting this city?		
a) Culture-History	41	41
b) Nature	45	45
c) Ecotourism	9	9
d) visit friends	4	4
e) Others	1	1
2. How many places did you visit?		
a) Nongtao	64	64
b) Buengva Lake	70	70
c) Dong Natad	38	38
d) Inghang stupa	97	97
3. What activities did you like to do when you were traveling?		
a) Trekking	25	25
b) Cycling	16	16
c) Paddling	10	10
d) Others	49	49
4. How much did you spend on your trip?		
a) < \$50	42	42
b) \$51-100	43	43
c) \$101-200	11	11
d) > \$200	4	4
5. Where would you like to stay when you were traveling?		
a) Their Accommodation	54	54
b) Homestay	9	9
c) Hotel	23	23
d) Local People' Home	11	11
e) Others	3	3
6. How did you access tourism places?		
a) Vans and buses for rent	18	18
b) Car	39	39
c) Motorbike	38	38
d) Bike	1	1
e) Others	4	4

Besides, they still were interested in various activities such as the culture of the traditional communities. Therefore, these activities still make sense with ecotourism activity (Laddawan et al, 2018). From tourists' opinions about their preferences for the city attraction types can be seen that the Man-made attractions and Cultural and lifestyle sites (culture-history site), and while natural tourism sites (adventure and nature) were only (16%). Therefore, it can be shown that the type of attraction that they like the most is culture-history attraction.

For this study, all respondents were domestic tourists. Thus, the highest percentage of tourists who would like to stay in their accommodation was (54%) and followed by hotels and homestay (32%). While only (11%) were in local people's homes. Moreover, for the vehicles that tourists used to reach the attractions. The first choice about 39% using their car, motorbike using was (38%). While only 1% using a bike, and 4% by other alternatives.

Furthermore, although there are many attractive places in the area, tourists were still facing many problems. Those problems include garbage problems that cause a lack of

elegance and pollutes the environment and tourists, and infrastructure and facility problems that have not developed as expected. Besides, the food is still high prices in some attractions, lack of activities diversity makes it impossible to attract tourists, and Inadequate services such as no rental vehicles to travel, etc.

The respondents have comments and suggestions differently, but that suggestion can be summarized as follows: the first should restore and maintain infrastructure, preserve natural attractions, promote a wide variety of organized activities, encourage more public transport, environment preservation from waste problems, improving service quality, and continuing to existing attractions development. The suggestion and comments from the tourists can be supported with the Tourism Strategy Plan and Promotion of Savannakhet Province because the government has plans and policies to promote the development of natural, historical, and cultural tourism sites with participation by local communities. Besides, they plan to improve tourist facilities and increase infrastructure development, routes, and access to tourist attractions more conveniently (DICT-Savanakhet, 2019).

**5.2 Communities' Perspective on Ecotourism Development**

**Table 5.** Communities' perspective on ecotourism

Indicator	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither disagree nor agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Mean	SD
Local communities' perspective on ecotourism in Kaysone Phomvihane City							
1. you like to work in the Ecotourism field	12	56	20	8	4%	3.64	0.942
2. Ecotourism is good for your community	10	58	20	6	6	3.60	0.969
3. You have participated in tour planning	8	22	36	32	2	3.02	0.979
4. you benefit from participating in tourism activities	8	22	46	24	-	3.14	0.881
Social and cultural perspectives of ecotourism							
5. Ecotourism contributes to the preservation and promote culture and lifestyles	18	46	28	8	-	3.74	0.853
6. Ecotourism helps to improve your community.	16	36	36	10	2	3.54	0.952
7. Ecotourism improves and develops better public facilities in your community	10	44	38	6	2	3.54	0.838
Economic Impacts of Ecotourism							
8. Ecotourism helps local communities to have more business	12	44	38	6	-	3.62	0.780
9. Ecotourism generates new jobs for local communities	14	30	44	12	-	3.46	0.885
10. Are the benefits of ecotourism mostly to outsiders?	20	36	28	14	2	3.58	1.032

The local community was interested in working in the ecotourism field; about 68% agreed and strongly agreed, while 12% disagreed and strongly disagreed. Also, approximately 68% thought ecotourism development is helpful for their community. On the other hand, the local people only 30% participated in ecotourism planning, while 34% did not participate anymore. Besides, only 30% agree that they benefit from participating in tourism activities, while 24% disagree. They thought ecotourism help to preserve and promote the culture and lifestyles. Also, they agreed that ecotourism help improves their community by 52% while disagreeing with 12%.

Moreover, they agree that ecotourism could improve and develop better public facilities in the community by 54%, while only 8% disagree and strongly disagree.

For the economic impact, the local communities benefit

more from ecotourism which is 56% agree and strongly agree, while only 6% still disagree. Moreover, 44% agree that ecotourism also generates new jobs for the local communities, and only 12% disagree. On the other hand, about 56% of respondents say that tourism benefits are still more profitable to outsiders. (Local business operator). However, people in the local community have also said ecotourism that they benefit from participation in ecotourism activities nowadays is still low (56%). On the other hand, the results show that they were willing to participate in ecotourism activities up to 60%.

Therefore, they request the government to provide budget support for the maintenance of the facilities. Besides, offer training courses to residents to educate them on community development practices and should make the local community more involved and contribute ideas to travel planning. From the local communities' request to the government, it is possible to develop in the same direction because the government also has the policies to establish ecotourism in local communities to generate income and bring jobs for local communities. Also, attention on encouraging tourism-related businesses to participate in the development and promotion of tourism in disseminating tourism laws and regulations on business units' management aimed at accuracy and consistency. Moreover, there is a training project on tourism planning

and development for government officials and local communities (DICT-Savanakhet, 2019).

**5.3 Local Tour Operator and Government' Opinion**

**A. Local tour operators' opinion**

Savannakhet Province has natural, cultural, and historical diversity, including the beautiful and unique cultural traditions of 4-kablam or local songs (the locals and the province's uniqueness). The fascinating historical traces such as historical ruins. Moreover, the facility infrastructure is convenient, including hotels, guesthouses, and travel companies, offering unique textile products. Also, an added advantage is that there are many tourist attractions nearby. Kaysone Phomvihane City also has many weaknesses that need to be improved urgently. For

example, road infrastructure access to attractions is still undeveloped, and the service and facilities quality is not up to standard. Also, the information provided on tourism services is not clear as expected, and the business of local tour operators is not strong because of inexperience and personnel with this specialty. Besides, the environmental impacts such as waste problems in tourist spots and cities are not as clean as expected.

Local operators' opinion can be found that the communities were facing many problems: Lack of organization, unclear defining land use, and the higher living cost and insufficient utilities. In addition, they have suggestions to the government that should allow the local tour operator to provide recommendations, plan, and solve the problem. Besides, should appoint the responsible agency to conserve tourism attractions and natural resources, ecotourism planning, and organization.

Their opinions are directly in line with tourism development programs and projects for 2020-2025. There will be many programs related to their communities, such as training tour operators at central and local levels and training programs on tourism management at the provincial, district, and village levels.

Furthermore, the suggestions found were consistent with the tourism development policy of Savannakhet Province, such as developing and improving the facility and foundation infrastructure, emphasizing personnel development to have knowledge and ability to meet the needs of the new era. Besides, encourage tourism-related businesses to participate in the development and promotion of tourism.

### **B. The governments' opinion**

In addition to external factors obtained from the local tour operator still get internal obtained from the interview with the government. The Lao PDR government has the policy to open the development and promotion of tourism for both public and business investment, especially in 2018, launched the Lao Tourism Year to promote Laos tourism to tour around the world. At the same time, receive a grant from an international organization to provide academic assistance for tourism development and promotion. Nowadays, Nature tourism and ecotourism are popular among foreign tourists. Moreover, the high-speed rail construction in Laos also has the potential to bring tourists easier.

In this situation, the epidemic (Covid-19) is the main factor that causes tourists to decline. Also, rising global oil prices have pushed up transportation and service costs. Besides, Kaysone Phomvihane is only a transit point to a third destination, and the attractions are not yet known to tourists. The last factor is development budgets are insufficient.

The findings on the government's perspective at least hint that the involvement of local people in ecotourism development is a significant sector. Also, currently, they have the potential for ecotourism. The finding from their opinions can be analyzed that they have both the conflict opinion and the same opinion, as followed:

### **The opinions make sense with the actual condition:**

- a) Natural and environmental conditions are still abundant.
- b) Still can preserve the beautiful culture and the identity of the local lifestyle.

**Consistent opinion:** 1) The government and tourist groups agree that tourism activities are inappropriate; 2) Ecotourism development must be involved and cooperated from many sectors, including the local community, local operator, and the government; 3) The local communities and local operators were still facing the same problem, includes management problems, inappropriate activities problems, and service quality problems. 4) Ecotourism generate income for the local community and local operator

**Inconsistent opinion:** 1) The government's statement "there are many sectors that can reach the development budget", but the view of tourist groups still lacks development in many sectors.

## **5.4 Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism Development**

The overall situation of tourism development is the expectation of the goal or the desired development outcome to achieve sustainable tourism development by focusing support the needs of market demand and human needs by allowing local people to participate in tourism development. Also, allowing local people involved more in environmental conservation.

An ecotourism development approach is to create quality tourism that is the environmental management without affecting the environment and raising awareness in the conservation of natural resources and the environment by the participation of local people who can rely on it. Besides, to achieve sustainable tourism development. Therefore, the ecotourism development approach includes:

### **Arrangement of appropriate activities**

Based on the assessment of opinion and recommendations from 100 respondents about ecotourism activity development can summarize:

The development of tourism sites should bring the areas' strengths to develop in conjunction with various contexts. The key components consist of partnership, community, activity.

These results showed that the development of this creative tourism activity should include the diversity of activities that tourists can choose according to their preferences and suitability. The principles of tourism activities for these two communities should focus on activities that are related to natural and cultural activities, including learning about the way of life and community culture (paying respect to Buddha), and a study of the natural path such as trekking), paddling, cycling, etc. These activities can help to preserve nature, forests, and lakes. Also, help to promote beautiful culture and the identity of local communities.

The concept of organizing tourism activities like this is in line with the report of Tanya and Narumon (2015) studied "Factors Affecting Tourist Experience of Eco, Culture, and Wellness Tourism in the Upper Northern Provincial Cluster 1 of Thailand: Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Mae Hong Son."

#### **Tourism and environmental resource management**

- a) Preserve, maintain, restore the ecosystem and ecological tourism resources to maintain their integrity as long as possible or forever.
- b) If there is environmental management, it is necessary to manage tourism resources at the same time to prevent problems and reduce the causes that may cause pollution.
- c) Must receive cooperation from all stakeholders such as the host and all involved in conservation, preservation, non-destruction, or damage to resources and the environment.

#### **Infrastructure and services Management**

Infrastructure development and tourism services should pay attention to environmental protection and must not affect the tourism resources and environment and are in harmony with the environment, including transportation routes to the attractions, nature trails, accommodation service, and foodservice.

#### **The local people participation**

- a) Allow local people to participate more in tourism development, contribute to moderation, and benefit more from tourism.
- b) Encourage the community to develop itself as a link between the government agency and the community. Between the community and the private sector related to ecotourism such as accommodation and restaurant development, cultural and traditional promotion can attract tourists.

#### **Marketing promotion and tour services**

- a) Balance the city of the area and the number of tourists because ecotourism is a sensitive resource, can be easily affected if there are too many tourists.
- b) Focus on promoting the development of a quality market, not just increasing the number of tourists.
- c) Provide tour and guide services to educate tourists and control the behavior of tourists in the framework of ecotourism.

#### **Investment promotion**

The Central government and state agencies must make active contributions in the development of infrastructure and services, considering the conservation of natural resources and the environment for ecotourism to distribute income to the local area.

### **6. Conclusion, Limitation, and Recommendation**

This research focused on two main points 1) Aimed to assessing and exploring tourists and local communities' interests and perspectives in ecotourism development.

Also, analyzed their suggestions and recommendations; 2) Analyzed the opinion and recommendation of local operators and the government; 3) Proposed guidelines in ecotourism development for sustainability.

### **6.1 Conclusion**

#### **A. Tourists**

The tourists suggest that communities in the area should be involved and benefited more from ecotourism activities to help ecotourism poverty alleviation in the local communities.

Based on these suggestions and comments can be seen that it can be supported with the Tourism Strategy Plan and Promotion of Savannakhet Province because the government already has plans and policies to promote the development of natural, historical, and cultural tourism sites with participation by local communities. Also, plan to improve tourist facilities and increase infrastructure development, routes, and access to tourist attractions.

#### **B. Local communities**

Because the tourism development policy of the province focuses on creating ecotourism in local communities to generate income and bring jobs for local communities. Also, there will be a training project on tourism planning and development for government officials and local communities. Thus, these opinions and recommendations from local people can be supported by the tourism development policy of the province from 2020-2025. On the others hand, their opinion still conflicts with the policy such as facility development.

#### **C. Local tour operators**

The strengths in the two villages are ecosystem abundant, beautiful culture. The weaknesses are poor quality attractions improvement, poor infrastructure development, and poor waste management. Therefore, they have recommendations that the local tour operators should be participating more in the plan for solving problems. Besides, there should be a natural resource and environmental conservation association in the community to help conserve and restore natural resources and the environment.

However, their opinions and suggestions were still followed by the Tourism Development Programs and Projects of Savannakhet Province, such as there will be projects for training tour operators on tourism management. Besides, there will be programs for developing and improving the facility and foundation infrastructure. Moreover, there will be a program personnel development, and encourage tourism-related businesses to participate in the development and promotion of tourism.

#### **D. Central and local governments**

A good opportunity in tourism development in the city is reaching the development budget and there will be a project to develop infrastructure and facilities. However, there are some threats, including management problems

are still a lack of coordination between relevant departments, appropriate activities problems, service that has not been managed appropriately yet, including accommodation and public transportation.

Even the location is still facing many problems, some problems might not be the problem that to be solved because if those problems were solved, it might be conflicting with the ecotourism development principle.

Since sustainable development of ecotourism should be considered under many sectors such as appropriate development and the development principles. Thus, based on stakeholders' suggestions and the tourism development policy of the province, the writer has both perspectives agreed and disagreed with, those perspective are as follow:

### 1) Consistent opinion

- a) Local communities should be more involved in the planning and management of ecotourism because they know more about their places than outsiders.
- b) There should be training to educate the local community to create an understanding of the development of ecotourism.
- c) Governments should be more aware of environmental protection than business development.

### 2) Conflict opinion and suggestion

Even the writer has agreed with the stakeholder opinion on ecotourism development, the writer still has a conflict with their opinion and policy. Those opinions are as follow:

- a) Should be careful in infrastructure development, should consider more on the way development for sustainable ecotourism development.
- b) The planning for ecotourism activities should more consider that each activity is appropriate with ecotourism development.

## 6.2 Limitation

Although this research is a broad topic like the Stakeholders' perspective on Community-based Ecotourism Participation in two villages, a researcher cannot study every problem and every aspect. The main limitation includes: 1) The Covid-19 situation has a direct impact on field surveys. Also, there is a limit to select the samples for the interview (Small sample size); 2) Access to information (secondary data) such as statistics of the number of tourists, various relevant development reports are still limited, cannot be accessed online. These inconvenient situations lead to delays in the operation and have some defects.

## 6.3 Recommendation

### A. Recommendation for government

- a) Must have an environmental management plan along with tourist attraction development planning.
- b) Should allow local communities, citizens, and private sectors to participate in tourism development planning. Also, participate in environmental protection and maintenance.

- c) Should appoint an agency responsible for tourist attractions.
- d) There should be a clear land-use plan to prevent invasion of the attraction, specially protected area.
- e) There should be proper development, including applying local wisdom to the conservation and restoration of arts, culture, and archeology sites.

### B. Recommendation for future research

For the recommendation for the future researcher, a writer has the following recommendation as below:

- a) Other factors that expect to affect the sustainable development of ecotourism should be studied, such as strategic planning and knowledge management.
- b) There should be in-depth interviews on the sustainable development of ecotourism.
- c) For more effective management opportunities, the researcher should conduct more about the study of neighborhood management.

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