Community Based Tourism Partnerships

Handbook for Tour Operators

Thailand Community Based Tourism Network Coordination Center (CBT-N-CC) and Thailand Community Based Tourism Institute (CBT-I)

Potjana Suansri and Peter Richards
Acknowledgements

This handbook was produced with the financial support of the Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries of the Netherlands (CBI). CBT-I and the Thailand CBT Network Coordination Center would like to thank CBI, and in particular Ms. Ester Kruk, Senior Programme Manager Asia and Eastern Europe, and Mr. Naut Kusters, CBI Tourism Expert, for your kind support.

The lessons learned within this book would not have been possible without the hard work of more than 60 Thai communities, and 40 tour operators, including Intrepid Travel, Exotissimo, Thailande Autrement, and the management and members of the Thai Ecotourism and Adventure Travel Association (TEATA).

We also owe a large debt of gratitude to past projects, supported by the EU, FAO, ILO, Travel Foundation and UNESCO, as well as close cooperation with Thai government organizations, in particular the Department of Tourism, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand; the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and Thailand’s Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Management (DASTA).
Partner tour operators visit Muang Paem and Muang Pon villages, in Mae Hong Son province, under the United Nations Joint Programme, Community based Ecotourism development in Mae Hong Son project.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Quick overview of the CBT Partnerships Handbook for Tour Operators</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Background</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 What is Community Based Tourism (CBT)?</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Key message: invest in partnerships for exceptional products.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 What is the Thailand CBT Network Coordination Center?</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Where do the lessons presented in this handbook come from?</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Our services and value: why invest time and money in technical support?</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What actions can tour operators take to support successful CBT?</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Be prepared for working with local communities</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Survey the community, build trust and fine tune CBT</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Train your key staff</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Responsible, value added marketing</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Operation and cooperation in the field</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Monitoring and improving CBT</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Thai CBT Standard: a tool to develop community based tourism</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Service and safety standards</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Sustainability standards</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Case Studies: lessons learned from successful partnerships</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Leeled CBT for coastal resource conservation club, in partnership with Intrepid Travel.</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Hua Tung CBT Club, in partnership with Peak Adventure Travel.</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Ja Bor CBT Club, in partnership with Exotissimo Travel.</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Pha Mon CBT Club, in partnership with Thailande Autrement.</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Codes of Conduct for the CBT-Network Coordination Center and partners

6.1 What is this section of the handbook? 89
6.2 Definitions of partners 89
6.3 The roles and services of the CBT-N Coordinating Center 92
6.4 CBT service and sustainability standards: ‘Ready for Market’ 94
6.5 Benefits which member communities and partner tour operators are entitled to after they have registered and paid registration fees 95
6.6 Additional, paid services offered by the CBT-N Coordination Center to partner tour operators 98
6.7 The marketing role of the CBT-N Coordination Center 99
6.8 Contributions and commissions 100
6.9 Code of Conduct for the CBT-N Coordination Center 104
6.10 Code of Conduct for partner tour operators 106
6.11 Code of conduct for member communities 108
6.12 Formal Agreements between the CBT-N Coordination Center and Partner Tour Operators 109
6.13 Booking permission system 110
6.14 Cancelling membership and partnership status 111
6.15 Revoking Partnership Status 111

7. Contact information 112
Introduction... and invitation

The Thailand Community Based Tourism Network Coordination Center, based in Chiang Mai, exists to promote Thai community based tourism, help responsible tour operators to identify appropriate communities for their trip styles and clients, and support partnerships between communities and tour operators to succeed.

For us, ‘success’ means that tourists, CBT communities and tour operators are all satisfied, and CBT creates real benefits for local people and the environment.

Tour operators can contact the coordination center for information about CBT across Thailand. Tour operators can also contact communities directly. Most communities have standard packages which can be brought by tour operators.

For a small fee, you can become a CBT Tour Operator Partner. You will then receive support from our team, and recognition for your efforts to support CBT.

Beyond ‘off the shelf’ packages, our team believe that CBT offers the greatest value when tour operators ‘see the people behind the product’ and invest time and energy working as a team with local community members to craft really unique experiences: tailoring ‘standard programs’ to your own style and clients.

However, successful CBT is a complex challenge, requiring a balance of tourism and community development skills. This handbook draws on 20 years of field experience developing CBT, and working with tour operators. It summarizes simple, step by step lessons learned, which will help you to build trust with community members and work together towards successful partnerships.

For tour operators which are too busy to spend time in field, the CBT Network Coordination Center also offers paid services to assist and support partnerships.

We look forward to working alongside you to realize the promise of community based tourism, for your guests, local communities and our shared planet.

1. Quick overview: the CBT Partnerships Handbook for Tour Operators

This handbook shares step by step recommendations for working with local communities, to deliver fun, inspiring, responsible experiences for your guests.

The first section, ‘Recommendations for Tour Operators,’ presents simple, concrete actions which tour operators can take during the cycle of:

i) Surveying and fine-tuning CBT products to meet your needs;
ii) Training key tour operator staff (tour guides and sales staff);
iii) Marketing CBT effectively, responsibly and with added value;
iv) Back-stopping CBT operations with effective teamwork;
v) Monitoring and improving CBT for guests and community members.

The second section introduces the ‘Thai CBT Standard,’ developed by Thailand Community Based Tourism Institute (CBT-I) between 2005 and 2014, with input from several hundred Thai tourism stakeholders, including 40 tour operators, 60 local Thai communities, tourism associations, government, NGO’s and academics.

The standard is a useful resource for working with communities. Criteria can be used to assess important aspects of CBT, and identify priorities for improvement.

The third section presents four case studies of successful CBT-tour operator partnerships, by Intrepid Travel and Peak Adventure Travel Group, Exotissimo Travel and Thailand Autrement. Each case highlights specific lessons learned.

The final section, ‘Working with the Thailand CBT Network Coordination Center (CBT-N CC)’ defines the commonly agreed roles and responsibilities of members (communities) and partners (tour operators) of the Thailand CBT Network. Roles and responsibilities of the CBT Network Coordination Center are also defined.
2. Background

2.1 What is Community Based Tourism (CBT)?

Around Thailand and Asia, hundreds of community based tourism (CBT) programs have been developed by local communities, with support from governments, tour operators and NGOs. CBT aims to offer inspiring, authentic experiences of local life and culture, while generating income and other benefits for local people, community development and nature conservation.

CBT offers tourists opportunities to meet local people and experience their lives, livelihoods, arts, cultures and fascinating relationships with the natural world.

CBT is managed and operated by community members, working together in a CBT group or club, sometimes in partnership with a tour operator or NGO.

Successful CBT celebrates local cultures and ways of life; inspires tourists; nurtures cross-cultural understanding and respect; creates new skills, jobs and income for community members; and funds grassroots environmental and social initiatives.

CBT services could include exploring a village and the surrounding area with local guides; a crafts or cookery workshop; staying overnight in a homestay or community lodge; meals and transport. Guests could join fishers casting a net, trek into the forest with expert woodsmen, or learn to cook a local dish. They receive information about the community and advice about ‘do’s and don’ts.’

A percentage of income from CBT is donated to a fund, paying for community development and conservation activities. Working as a team makes it easier for local people to tackle challenging issues which affect the whole community, such as natural resource management and preserving cultural practices.
2.2 Key message: invest in partnerships for exceptional products.

Many Thai communities have developed high-quality, one, two and three day CBT programs. Tour operators can contact communities directly, discuss and reach an agreement on offering these standard CBT programs to your guests.

“Beyond ‘off the shelf’ packages, our team believe that CBT offers the greatest value when tour operators ‘see the people behind the product’ and invest time and energy working as a team with local community members to craft really unique experiences: tailoring ‘standard programs’ to your own style and clients.”

Above: tailor made CBT programs designed for seniors, volunteers and students.

By investing the time to work as a team with local people, you can combine your tourism expertise with the community members’ deep knowledge of local life and the environment. Together, you can craft outstanding experiences. E.g.:

- Family programs, where parents and children can share special time, learning how to make an original work of art from local craftspeople;
- Volunteer programs, based on real local needs, alongside local people;
- Student programs, which empower local people to interpret their own lives, livelihoods, histories, and community development successes;
- Gentle programs for seniors, which dig deep into culture and beliefs.
2.3 What is the Thailand CBT Network Coordination Center (CBT-N-CC)?

Thailand Community Based Tourism Network Coordination Center was established in 2010, in Chiang Mai, under the umbrella of Thailand Community Based Tourism Institute (CBT-I). The center provides information about CBT programs across Thailand. It helps communities to promote their CBT programs; to work as a team with responsible tour operators and other partners; and to reach visitors who are interested in a fun, authentic experience of local Thai life.

Since 2010, the coordination center has worked to link CBT communities with responsible tour operators and support partnerships, through services including:

- A website with information about CBT programs across Thailand;
- Listening to tour operators’ current product development needs and suggesting appropriate CBT communities to meet these needs;
- Summarizing information about tour operators and their product development needs in Thai and sending this to CBT communities;
- Organising FAM trips and field surveys for tour operators to meet community members and test their CBT products and services;
- Working with CBT-I to train tour operators’ professional tour guides;
- Backstopping communication and supporting partnerships to succeed;
- Organizing follow-up meetings for CBT communities and tour operators to share feedback, agree on improvements and plan forward.

For more information, please see: [www.cbtnetwork.org](http://www.cbtnetwork.org)

Information about CBT is provided for free. Tour operators can pay a modest, annual subscription fee and become ‘CBT Tour Operator Partners.’ They are then able to consult with the coordination center. Other services, which require a significant investment of staff time are provided for a modest, professional fee. This income sustains the center, enabling it to exist and continue supporting CBT partnerships.
2.4 Where do the lessons presented in this handbook come from?

During the past two decades, some CBT programs have succeeded, while others have failed. A common reason for failure is low capacity among rural community members to market their CBT programs and to reach tourists. A key success factor has been working in partnership with responsible tour operators.

However, local community members rarely have the skills and contacts needed to approach and work with tour operators. Even when communities have developed standard CBT programs, additional product development may be needed to make their products suitable for specific types of tourists and trips.

Meanwhile, tour operators are very busy. Even with good intentions, it is very difficult for tour operators to be able to invest sufficient time in the important details of working with community members, face to face, in the field. Many community development skills are outside the product development toolbox.

To help bridge this gap, the Thailand Community Based Tourism Institute (CBT-I) and Thailand CBT Network Coordination Center (CBT-N-CC) have summarized lessons learned from two decades of supporting CBT partnerships in Thailand.

These lessons will help you to work smoothly with local community members.

We have been careful to learn from failures as well as successes. Along the way, we have conferred with over 60 communities and 40 tour operators, to identify concrete actions which can form the foundations of successful partnerships.

These actions were first summarized in preparation for a CBI Netherlands funded workshop (2012): “Designing CBT-N-CC systems, to optimize market access and win-win partnerships between communities and responsible tour operators.”

At this workshop, community and tour operator representatives discussed and shared recommendations on best practices for successful partnerships. They studied draft versions of this handbook and provided feedback. They also agreed on important roles and responsibilities. This work was followed up in 2012 and 2013, through a 12 month process of field visits and telephone interviews.

This handbook represents a significant step towards understanding how tour operators and communities can work as partners to deliver outstanding CBT.
The handbook was written for Thai tour operators which are working with the CBT Network Coordination Center. However, much of the content in the handbook will be relevant and useful to other stakeholders (e.g. governments, NGO’s and academics) and other countries in Asia which have an emerging CBT sector.

Note: This handbook focuses on communities which have already developed a successful CBT program. It does not cover how to establish a new CBT program.

Above: community based tourism partner tour operators discuss their roles and responsibilities and share ideas and advice with local communities. (July 2012)
2.5 **Our services and value:**  
*Why invest time and money in technical support?*

Many tour operators appreciate CBT experiences, but do not fully appreciate the amount of work and resources which go into successful CBT.

Developing CBT is more complex than regular product development. It requires significant investments of time and money to mobilize and educate local people, plan CBT, and build local capacity to deliver high-quality, safe, fun, inspiring experiences with concrete local benefits.

This investment builds local capacity and commitment, which are essential ingredients of better experiences for tourists and benefits for people and planet. However, in the past, these investments have usually been made by outside organizations on behalf of communities and tour operators. The real investment needed to develop CBT has rarely been known or considered when pricing CBT.

External funding for CBT development will not go on forever. In the future, if tour operators want to offer CBT to their guests, they will either need to build ‘community development’ skills among their product development and operations staff, or work as a team with community development professionals.

In addition to providing information and suggestions about CBT, the Community Based Tourism Network Coordination Center offers paid services, including organizing FAM survey trips, supporting tour operators to develop products with communities, training professional tour guides to work with community members, backstopping coordination with communities and monitoring the results of CBT.

Income from these services supports the coordination center to exist and continue to play an important role linking CBT to markets. We welcome your company to join hands with us to develop successful, viable CBT which is a positive experience for your guests, host communities and our shared planet.
3. What actions can tour operators take to support successful CBT?

3.1 Be prepared for working with local communities

A few words of advice to help prepare tour operators for successful CBT:

I. Tourists share limited, precious, natural and cultural resources which are essential to support local livelihoods and the survival of local families. The poorest people in the community rely directly on natural resources, when they farm, fish or forage for food, herbal medicines, natural dyes, etc. Poorly managed tourism can lead to resource scarcity and conflict, which affects the poorest people first and most seriously. Natural resource management is often achieved through cultural and religious practices, such as preserving sacred forest or breeding grounds. Please learn about the relationships between local culture, livelihoods and natural resources and actively support community members’ efforts to protect them.

II. Tourism is probably not the main occupation of the villagers. Tourism is usually an additional occupation for local community members who operate CBT programs. These people usually live a simple, seasonal life, juggling the demands of farming, fishing, family and faith alongside tourism. They often have important work to do at the same time as a tour, such as planting or harvesting. Weddings, births, funerals or festivals may require the whole village to participate. You benefit from communicating often with the CBT group*, so that you know how current village activities may impact your program, and you can work together to find a solution.

*The CBT-N Coordination Center can assist you to do this, on request.
III. CBT is designed to support socio-economic and environmental objectives. CBT aims at more than creating income through work as guides, drivers, homestay hosts, etc. Community members do wish to earn money from tourism. However, they often do not focus on income as the only goal. Please take the time to learn why the community developed CBT. They could be motivated by nature conservation, re-connecting local youth with traditional culture, or sharing community development successes.

IV. Community members build capacity gradually, through experience. Community members offering CBT are usually farmers and fishers. It takes time to build enough skills and experience to be able to offer professional services. Communities also try to spread opportunities through queues and rotation systems. CBT standards are in place. However, local people also need opportunities to learn, and even to make mistakes, or they simply cannot improve. You can help, by managing your guests’ expectations and training your staff to understand and support CBT.

V. Local people are used to their environment. Therefore, they may have a different perspective on safety to you and your clients. Please help community to identify risks and dangers, especially if you are working with youth, senior travelers, etc who may have special needs.

VI. Community members often need time to discuss before making decisions. Collaborative decision making can take time. However, in such cases, group decisions are essential ingredients of ownership and responsibility, which will ensure that your guests receive the best possible services.
The sections below share recommended actions which can be taken by tour operators during the cycle of 1) surveying and fine-tuning CBT products, 2) training key tour operator staff, 3) marketing, 4) operations and 5) monitoring.

### 3.2 Survey the community, build trust and fine tune CBT

**Survey for success...** It is a worthwhile investment of your time to visit the village in person, meet the people who have developed CBT and survey their program.

This will give you an accurate understanding of safety, services and the skills of community members. The information which you collect during the survey will help you to promote the community accurately and to prepare your tour guides and sales staff. You will also be able to discuss the specific needs of your clients.

#### 3.2.1 Advance preparation for a site survey

I) Study information about the community in advance; including the location and nearby attractions which could be visited en route;

II) Contact the local CBT coordinator in advance to arrange a site visit. Explain that you want to survey their CBT services and activities;

III) Give local people prior notice (5-10 days) to prepare for your visit;

IV) Request to meet a variety of the community members who are involved in CBT (e.g. homestay hosts, guides, transport providers and coordinators). This is more effective, and will give you more useful insights, than meeting a single village chief or coordinator;

V) Schedule sufficient time in the community to explore, discuss, clarify and reach a clear understanding for future cooperation;

VI) Clarify any costs which you need to pay for the services which you have requested during the site survey (e.g.: food, transport, etc);

VII) Prepare some media to introduce your tour operator and target tourists, e.g. pamphlets, information and photos from your website.
3.2.2 Suggested process for a field survey

Step 1) Quick introductions between the CBT Group and the tour operator;
Step 2) Clarify your expectations for the field visit. What exactly do you want to see, do and learn about during the field survey? How much time do you have?
Step 3) To get orientated, it’s best to start with a brief presentation by the CBT group about their community and the background of CBT in the village.

Useful Tip:

Ask why the community set up CBT and learn about the results. CBT projects can have a range of objectives, including earning additional income, conservation, promoting local culture, or giving youth a chance to learn a new language.

You can use this information to develop information for your guests, to prepare your office staff and guides, and to improve your promotion of the community.

E.g.: In several provinces of Thailand, community members have developed CBT to support nature conservation and natural resource management. Guests learn about special conservation activities such as ‘forest ordination.’ This turns trees into sacred monks, which can then no longer be cut down. This practice helps to conserve the forest.
Step 4) The tour operator surveys the CBT program / services / staff. E.g.:

- Meet and clarify the roles and responsibilities of CBT team members;
- Try out ‘highlight’ activities. Confirm how long activities take and what time of day they should be scheduled (consider tides, seasons, etc);
- Ask local guides to present two or three of the highlights of the tour, so that you can assess their local knowledge and interpretation skills;
- Visit accommodations (homestay, community lodge, campsite, etc);
- Taste two or three local dishes and confirm what else is available;
- Are there any ‘comfort foods’ available (omelet, fried chicken, etc)?
- Survey / try out local transport and check any safety equipment;
- Confirm service capacity. E.g.: total numbers of homestays / vehicles / guides; and the maximum numbers of guests per homestay / vehicle / guide. Is this constant, or does it depend on the month or season?
- Enquire about rotation or queue systems for homestays, vehicles, etc;
- Ask about do’s and don’ts for the community and environment.

Step 5) Introduce your business style and typical target tourists, and explain your expectations for safety, experience, service, etc on a community-based tour.
Ben Lefetey, Thailand Autrement planning with Pha Mon CBT Group, Chiang Mai

Meet the People (UK) and Phu Piang Tours (Thailand) survey Huay Kee Lek Akha village with local guides
Step 6) Give an idea of the number of tourists which you plan to send per group / year. If this is impossible, then make it clear to reduce future misunderstandings.

Step 7) Provide feedback on how the community’s services are appropriate (or not) to your actual target guests, and explain what may need to be adapted. E.g. levels of physical challenge, length of activities, spiciness of local foods, etc;

Step 8) Clarify the feasibility of additional requests which would be necessary to service your target groups, and confirm any additional costs for these services;

Step 9) Clarify understanding and confirm your agreements with the CBT group:

- Confirm the agreed program, and record your agreements in writing;
- Confirm the roles of CBT and tour operator staff (e.g. local / staff guides);
- Confirm prices, and contributions to community / environment funds;
- Confirm how to book. Check prior commitments with other operators. Will these impact the community’s ability to accommodate your guests?
- Discuss payment (who pays the community / how / when?) and cancellation terms:
  - How to pay?
  - Bank transfer or direct to the community in cash, on arrival?
  - When to pay? How many days in advance?
  - Deposits and terms if the tour is cancelled?
- Confirm the names and phone numbers of the CBT Coordinator(s) who can take bookings and no. days notice required to book your program;
- Confirm information for do’s and don’ts, your promotion, trip notes, etc;
- If it is not possible to confirm, discuss how / when to confirm agreements.
Useful Tip

Being a ‘CBT Facilitator Guide’ is a real art.

Professional tour guides are often good at assisting local community tour guides to interpret important places by faithfully translating their message. However, their role is more than just direct translation.

Sometimes, the lives of community members and their guests are so different that local guides may not understand tourists questions clearly. Sometimes local guides interpretation or their answers may simply assume that tourists understand the local environment, religion or history. But, tourists may not understand.

Good ‘FT-Guides’ let community guides be the ‘local hero.’ However, they also add just enough extra information to help local guides and visitors to understand the context of their different ways of life.
3.3 Train your key staff

You will benefit from educating your team about CBT: why and how it is a different and special experience. We recommend that product development and operations staff visit the community while the program is being discussed and developed. However, after the program has been agreed, the two key team members who will need training are tour guides and sales teams.

3.3.1 Professional tour guides

1) Professional Guides should be trained to work as a team with the CBT group and local guides.

Professional guides will be used to taking responsibility for most interpretation and services. In the case of CBT, however, local guides have been trained to take the lead interpreting local life. Other local people also play important roles offering homestay, transport, etc. This situation can feel counter-intuitive (and even uncomfortable) for professional guides. Therefore, cooperation between local and professional guides must be managed sensitively, to avoid conflict.

Encourage professional tour guides to see their role as mentors. They should encourage local community members to do as much as possible, but remain ultimately responsible for clients’ safety, and should step in to assist if necessary.
Training in the community is an excellent way for professional and local guides to practice working together as a team. They can discuss their roles and responsibilities, and decide how to divide overlapping roles in areas such as:

- **Safety**: ask community members to identify risks in their CBT programs and learn how local people have prepared to manage risks: i) before visitors arrive, ii) before visitors begin activities (orientation) and iii) during CBT activities. Discuss how local community and staff guides should divide roles and responsibilities, and what actions will be taken in the case of an emergency.

- **Meaning and interpretation**: ask what special aspects of local life and culture that community members are particularly keen for their guests to learn about. Encourage your staff guides to support local guides with accurate translation from Thai to English, French, etc.

- **Service**: find out which community members are responsible for providing food, accommodation, transport, etc and check in advance with CBT coordinators or community guides that these people have been informed, and are prepared to welcome guests.
2) Partner tour operators should instruct staff guides to follow agreements made with CBT groups, and support and encourage local community staff.
3.3.2 Front line sales teams

Sometimes, after months of hard work, CBT programs are promoted into an ocean of products, without a special effort to differentiate why they are special.

Your position, facing the market, allows you to add value and increase sales by training your front-line sales staff. Train your sales team to understand CBT: what your guests do in the community, how CBT is different from regular excursions, why it is special, and how it benefits local people and the environment. E.g.:

- You experience special aspects of local life which local community members feel proud and comfortable to share with you. You cannot experience these insights on a regular tour;
- Interpretation is rich with local knowledge, lead by local guides and families, working as a team with your expert tour guides;
- Cultural exchange with diverse people in the community gives you a deeper, more authentic insight into local life, culture and the fascinating relationships between local people and nature;
- Local projects benefiting local people and the environment.
Above: training sales teams about CBT

A better experience...
More authentic
More interactive
More meaningful
More fun!
3.4 Responsible, value-added Marketing

3.4.1 Issues to consider when marketing CBT

“Marketing is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably.”

The Chartered Institute of Marketing (UK)

Marketing aims to optimize customer satisfaction, sales and profit. These goals are also necessary for successful CBT. However, attracting visitors needs to be balanced against controlling the potential, negative impacts of tourism on local environments and cultures. Community members do want to receive regular visitors and earn income from tourism. However, CBT in Thailand is generally regarded as a secondary occupation and an opportunity to earn some extra income. Community members do not want ‘tourism at any cost.’ They wish to maintain significant influence over the types and numbers of tourists who visit.

To help increase the benefits and reduce the negative impacts of CBT, tour operators can help communities by conferring in advance about their target groups and the frequency of visits, and by proactively targeting tourists who are interested in a local experience. Tour operators can also help by preparing their clients in advance, with accurate promotion and excellent information.

Finally, it is very important to prioritize and add value to CBT products during promotion, so that tourists notice CBT compared to similar products, and they understand how and why it is a special experience. In the past, time and effort has often been put into developing CBT, without sufficiently clear differentiation or prioritization in the market. Please do help your clients to notice CBT!
Some actions which you can take to market CBT responsibly include:

3.4.2 AIM for appropriate visitors:

CBT can meet the needs of many different types of tourists. These include senior travelers looking for a deep cultural experience; families looking for an educational experience for their kids; students learning about textiles, cookery or community development; and volunteers, hoping to share life in the village and to ‘give something back.’

What unites ‘CBT tourists’ is a genuine interest to have a local experience. The most helpful action which you can take when marketing is to help communities promote their products to these kinds of people, and then assist them to prepare for the different service and safety needs of each particular group.

AIM for CBT friendly tour operators:  
A – Attract appropriate types of tourists, looking for a local experience  
I – Inform them about the community in advance, so they know why it is special  
M – Manage their expectations, so they can make an informed decision to book
3.4.3 Try to manage the community’s expectations for ‘quick sales’

It takes time before products are marketed and start to sell. After meeting community members, and raising their expectations, this wait can be difficult to understand. You can help to manage community members’ expectations by informing them clearly that it can take several months for tourists to arrive.

3.4.4 Stay in touch, and protect your bookings

Experienced communities can manage advanced bookings. However, in less experienced communities, if there is no communication by the tour operator for a long time, even if a booking has been made several weeks or months in advance, community members may understand that tourists will not come. So, do keep the CBT group updated about the progress of marketing and bookings to help to ensure that the community is ready, and bookings are honored*.

* The CBT Network Coordination Center can assist you to do this, on request.
3.4.5. After you have put time and effort into developing a CBT program, you also need to put special time and effort into promoting it.

Use the information learned during your site survey to create interesting, attractive promotion, which shows how CBT is different from other village visits, and why the community is special. Show how CBT is a more authentic, ‘hands-on’ experience which benefits the environment and local people.

Above: a great example of promoting CBT by Andaman Discoveries

3.4.6 CBT can be disappointing if guests are expecting a luxurious experience, or are not prepared in advance for cultural norms.

To manage guests’ expectations and avoid disappointment, communities must be promoted accurately. Product development and marketing departments need to work as a team, to ensure that final brochure copy is attractive and realistic. Limitations (such as bringing modest dress to wear during temple visits, or insisting that guests do not drink alcohol in a Muslim village) need to be passed through the sales chain and communicated before the point of sale.
3.5 Operation and cooperation in the field

Finally, all of the investment and hard work which has been done to prepare and market CBT will succeed or fail in the field, when guests arrive and the tour is operated by CBT staff, working in partnership with your professional tour guides.

Step 1) Preparation:

3.5.1 Good information adds value to a CBT program, and helps to manage tourists’ understanding and behavior. This can include ‘do’s and don’ts’, a language sheet, and a handbook with information about the community’s history, occupations, beliefs, etc. Advice to help tourists to prepare for a safe, responsible visit can also be sent by e-mail, and repeated by your staff guides at orientation meetings.
3.5.2 Tour operators should inform the CBT group in advance about their guests’ age and fitness, so they can prepare for each specific group;

3.5.3 Tour leaders should call the CBT group the day before arriving, and:

i) Confirm arrival times and numbers of men and women;

ii) Discuss any special needs which the guests have;

iii) If there is a rotation / queue system for homestays, it is a good idea for the tour leader and CBT coordinator to discuss and plan in advance which tourists’ personalities are best suited to which homes and host families;

iv) Check quickly on any unforeseen events (storms, funerals, births, etc) so that ‘Plan B’s’ can be made if necessary.

3.5.4 Guides should provide agreed information (e.g. do’s and don’ts, safety or dress advice) to guests prior to their arrival in the community.

Above: briefing tourists on do’s and don’ts in the community
Step 2) During trip operation

3.5.5 Staff guides need to work as a team with local community guides.

○ Ask community members to identify risks in their program, discuss measures which have been taken to control risks, confirm roles, and agree what will be done by who in the case of an emergency;

○ Confirm special aspects of local life and culture that community members are particularly keen that their guests will learn about;

○ Confirm which community members are involved in providing food, accommodation, transport, etc and check with local guides that they have been informed and are prepared to welcome guests. Help confirm if there are enough services for the number of tourists.

3.5.6 Help translate and visit all homestays, to assist communication:

Professional tour guides should join all activities and stay close to local guides, encouraging tourists to listen to their interpretation and helping to translate. If your guides see that tourists are misunderstanding, or wandering off on their own to take photos, they should try to help.

Guides should also pay a visit to each homestay in the evening, to check safety and help communication by shy guests or host families.

Left: Tour Merng Tai, a specialist tour operator in Mae Hong Son, are experts at working as a team with local community guides to facilitate exceptional, cultural exchange experiences. They spend several weeks in the field, training their professional guides.
3.5.7 Backstop: It takes time for community members to gain experience and learn how to provide quality services. Without opportunities to learn, and make mistakes, they cannot improve. Professional tour guides need to give local guides the opportunity to lead activities, while staying ready to ‘backstop’ and lend a hand if necessary.

**After:**

3.5.8 Tour operators should take action in the event that their guides or CBT staff do not follow agreements.

---

**CBT Network Coordination Center policy for managing cancellations**

- Tour operators should inform communities about cancellations asap;
- If cancellations are made 7 or more days in advance compensation is not usually required;
- With 2-6 days notice, compensation is normally 20-30% of the program costs, unless the community agrees to provide an exception;
- For cancellations of under 24 hours notice, compensation should be paid according to the costs actually incurred by the community;
- If cancellation is caused by natural disaster, and the program is cancelled 6 days or less in advance, compensation will be paid at 10% of the program costs;

Note: this was the outcome of a consultation between the Thai CBT Network and responsible tour operator partners in a CBI funded workshop, Chiang Mai, 2012.
3.6 Monitoring and improving CBT

Feedback should be collected, shared and used to improve CBT. For example:

3.6.1 Tourists can be requested to give feedback to the community before they leave, through a guest-book or a feedback discussion;

3.6.2 Tourists can be informed about social media sites (e.g.: Facebook fan pages for the community, or Trip Advisor for the tour operator), where they can leave feedback and upload photos after the trip;

3.6.3 Tour operators should collect feedback from guests, which should be summarized and shared with CBT communities from time to time;

3.6.4 It is recommended that a senior product or operations staff member visits the community at least once per year to monitor and improve partnerships, and to agree on the next years’ contract.

3.6.5 Visit communities in case of a serious or emergency situation.
Organising a feedback meeting between CBT and Tour Operators.

- The tour operator can share guests’ feedback on activities and services (food, accommodation, guides and transport), CBT club coordination and information.
- The community can share feedback on the tour operators’ coordination, tour guides, guests and how well informed they have been.
- Agree on what issues to prioritize for improvement.
4. Thai CBT Standard: a tool to develop community based tourism

The following Thailand CBT standard was developed by CBT-I between 2004 and 2014, based upon the 4 pillars of sustainability defined in the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC), with additional criteria to cover service and safety.

As part of this process, the internationally recognized GSTC criteria were studied and adapted to the Thai context. This was achieved through a series of ongoing, multi-stakeholder research and development projects, with the participation of over 60 communities and over 200 Thai tourism stakeholders.
The Thai CBT standard has been field tested. It is currently being used as an assessment and planning tool for communities in the Thai CBT Network, to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and to raise their CBT service quality and sustainability performance. The standard is being used by the Thai government’s Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA) as a tool to undertake a baseline assessment and judge the progress of CBT communities.

In some communities, particular criteria are considered to be inappropriate to the specific cultural or natural context. In such cases, the community members are able to explain why they are not able to / do not choose to meet the criteria. It is possible to download the full CBT standard online at www.cbt-i.org.

In most cases, CBT communities are not able to meet all criteria in the standard. However, there are real examples of practice for each criteria. Tour operators can use the standard as a frame when working with CBT communities. The criteria can be a useful tool to identify, discuss and solve problems with CBT communities, and also to create appropriate expectations among tourists.

The CBT Network Coordination Center has assessed each member community using this standard. The center can recommend communities with higher levels of service, suitable for seniors or family tour groups; and also less experienced communities, suitable for volunteer or student groups who wish to develop CBT.

Considerations when using the checklist:

i) Check performance against the criteria by observation, participating in CBT activities, using CBT services and interviewing CBT staff;

ii) Tour operators and community members can consider the criteria as a team, in order to identify strengths and weaknesses, and then plan how to work together to raise performance in priority areas;

iii) The checklist is currently quite simple, with ‘yes’ / ‘no’ responses. The levels of quality within a ‘yes’ response have not been defined yet. However, the intention of the standard is to gradually raise the standards of CBT products and services to international level. Therefore, when using the checklist, it is important to emphasize that the final objective is not just to ‘pass,’ but to provide a quality experience, and continually improve in all areas of the standard.
4.1 Service and safety standards

1) Clear, safe tourism activities which are appropriate for the community, target markets and timing (season, time of day, etc);

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Tourism routes are surveyed and the safety of guests and community members is assessed.
2. There are safety guidelines, risky points are identified and tourists are orientated about safety issues.
3. There is sufficient, well maintained equipment.
4. There are warning notices in dangerous places.
5. Activities, prices, distances in the program are clear.
2) accommodation

2.1) Sleeping areas

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6 |   |   | Equipment is clean and sufficient for the number of tourists. It is cleaned each time before welcoming guests (sheets, etc).
| 7 |   |   | There is a private area to sleep (if there is no bedroom, a sheet can be used to create a private area).
| 8 |   |   | The room is airy and there is no stale odour.
| 9 |   |   | There is a waste basket and clothes hangers or a rail.
| 10 |   |   | Drinking water is available near the bed.

2.2) Toilet

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 11 |   |   | The toilet is clean and hygienic, regularly cleaned, without odours. If the toilet and shower are in the same room, water for bathing and water for cleaning oneself after using the toilet are clearly separated.
| 12 |   |   | The toilet is clean and private, with a lockable door. The floor is not slippery, water can run off easily and there is sufficient light.
| 13 |   |   | There is a waste basket and coat hangers / a rail.
2.3) Around and inside the house

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The house is solid and strong, not damaged or dangerous.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The roof does not leak.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The home is airy and comfortable without an odour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>There are no animals which may carry disease in the home.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>There is a place to relax in the home.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>The number of tourists is appropriately managed, with consideration of the size of the house, the number of toilets and the ability of the hosts to provide good service.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>The host restrains pets before the arrival of tourists.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>The home is clean and orderly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2.4) Food and drinks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Food is clean and hygienic, cooked, with a serving spoon. Ingredients are always washed before cooking, and cooks wash their hands before preparing food and cooking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Food is made from mostly local ingredients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Cutlery and equipment are clean, there are lids which can be closed tightly, and equipment is washed before and after cooking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Kitchens are clean and airy, with sufficient light, and equipment is stored systematically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Food is appropriate for the target group (e.g. Halal for Muslims, vegetarian food).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Guests have the chance of cooking with homestay families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>The amount and quality of food represents good value for money and is sufficient for the number of tourists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>There are sufficient plates, cutlery, etc for the number of tourists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>The host introduces the food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Drinking water is clean, hygienic, kept in clean and sealable containers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3) Transport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4) Local guides

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5) Homestay Hosts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>Hospitality skills: introducing the family, and important places in the house to tourists, warm and friendly welcome, politely dressed, not flirtatious with tourists, quiet at night, taking care of tourists’ safety and giving appropriate advice.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>The host family knows about CBT and is knowledgeable about the community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6) Communication and Coordination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7) Safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2. Sustainability standards

The standards below were developed over 10 years, with reference to the 4 pillars, and criteria of the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC).

Pillar One: Sustainable Tourism Management for Community Based Tourism

1.1 CBT management:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q) Why is it important for the community to work as a group?

A) Because CBT aims to support the preservation and sustainable management of local natural and cultural resources. This is simply too difficult for an individual family, or a committed individual to achieve. It requires broader cooperation.
1.2 Participation of CBT group members and the community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3 Capacity building for CBT group members and the community;

Yes  No

8  Leaders and CBT club members are skilled at communicating their knowledge and experience with interested people and organizations.

Yes  No

9  Opportunities for training are shared among CBT group members.
1.4 Feedback is collected to monitor the satisfaction of tourists, CBT group members and the community, covering service and sustainability issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 The CBT group collects feedback from visitors (e.g. visitors book, feedback form) and collects feedback from community members (e.g. at monthly meetings and interviews).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11 Feedback from tourists and community members is assessed in order to use the results to further develop CBT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.5 Community members and tourists follow community rules and regulations;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 The CBT group has rules and regulations for tourists and informs tourists about these rules and regulations in advance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 The CBT group disseminates the rules and regulations in the community (e.g. posters, announcements).
1.6 Responsible Marketing and Promotion.

Yes  No

14  The CBT group targets appropriate markets for the community, and develops appropriate activities for the markets.

15  The CBT group develops a seasonal calendar of activities and informs tour operators and tourists in advance.
Pillar two: CBT distributes benefits broadly to the local area and society, and improves quality of life.

2.1 Support for community development;

Yes □ No □ 16 Income from CBT is regularly contributed to support social activities which benefit the community.

2.2 Fair distribution of income and new opportunities for additional income;

Yes □ No □ 17 CBT members have opportunities to earn additional income, with opportunities shared through rotation systems / queues.

2.3 Respect for human rights and human dignity.

Yes □ No □ 18 The CBT group does not use children to do any work which is dangerous or reduces their opportunities to study.
Pillar Three: CBT celebrates, conserves and supports cultural heritage

3.1 The CBT group has information and is knowledgeable about local culture and way of life;

Yes  No

19  Information is collected and recorded about local history, way of life, local wisdom, art, culture, ceremonies (documents, photos, etc).

19  Artefacts reflecting local culture and ways of life are collected and conserved so that future generations can learn from them.

3.2 Information about the local culture and way of life is shared with visitors and also shared between community members;

Yes  No

21  CBT activities are designed to present art, culture and local way of life.

22  CBT activities enable tourists to experience cultural exchange, learn about local culture and ways of life, through direct experience or hands on activities.
3.3 Rules and regulations exist to respect and protect local culture, as well as respect the culture of visitors; The CBT group practices the support, conservation and passing on of culture to the next generation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 The CBT group supports, conserves, and passes on culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pillar four: Systematic, sustainable natural resource and environmental management

4.1 The CBT group has a database of information about natural resources, which is used to educate visitors;

Yes  No

28 The CBT group has clear information about local natural resources, the environment and relationships between people and the environment.

29 The CBT group is able to present clear information about local natural resources, the environment and the relationships between local people and the environment.
4.2 Product design takes into account sustainable natural and environmental management

Yes  No
☐  ☐  30 CBT activities give visitors the chance to learn about the environment and relationships between natural resources and local people.

☐  ☐  31 There are guidelines for tourists and CBT group members to reduce impacts on the environment and local guides are able to advise tourists about guidelines effectively.

☐  ☐  32 Tourists have opportunities to participate in conservation activities.

4.3 Sustainable natural resource and environmental management and biodiversity conservation;

Yes  No
☐  ☐  33 The CBT group systematically manages natural resources in an appropriate manner for the area, taking sustainability into account.

☐  ☐  34 The CBT group has an environment fund and concrete examples of using the funds for environmental protection.
4.4 Waste management in the community and tourism destinations;

- Yes  No
- □  □  35 The CBT group participates in waste management in the community and tourism destinations.
- □  □  36 Efficient waste management in tourism attractions.

4.5 Water and waste water management;

- Yes  No
- □  □  37 Homestay homes and activities use water efficiently.

4.6 Noise pollution management;

- Yes  No
- □  □  38 Guidelines for tourists to reduce noise pollution.
4.7 Energy and power management;

Yes  No  39  The CBT group advises group members and tourists to use electricity, petrol, gas and other energy efficiently.

4.8 Environmentally friendly products;

Yes  No  40  Environmentally friendly products are for sale for tourists.

4.9 Construction.

Yes  No  41  Construction is controlled to limit environmental impacts.
5. Case Studies: lessons learned from successful partnerships

The recommendations in this handbook are based on lessons learned by Thailand Community Based Tourism Institute, Thailand Community Based Tourism Network Coordination Center, community members and tour operator partners.

We have helped to facilitate approximately 50 partnerships between tour operators and CBT communities. We have also supported partnerships between communities and other types of organizations, including Thai and international schools, universities, special interest groups, companies and NGOs.

The most successful partnerships have lasted for more than 5 years, and provided several thousand tourists with opportunities to experience authentic Thailand. They have created significant benefits for local community development and conservation activities, and income for local people.

Other partnerships have not succeeded. In these cases, we have reflected on the reasons for failure. Both success and failure have provided valuable lessons.

The following section presents four case studies of successful CBT partnerships. These case studies represent a variety of models of CBT, and provide valuable insights into the specific best practices which have informed this handbook:

I. Intrepid Travel and Leeled Community Based Tourism for Coastal Conservation Group, in Surrathani province, southern Thailand;

II. Peak Adventure Travel and Hua Tung Community, Chiang Mai province, Northern Thailand;

III. Exotissimo Travel and Ja Bor community, Mae Hong Son province, Northern Thailand;

IV. Thailand Autrement and Pha Mon community, Inthanon National Park, Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand.
5.1 Leeled Community Based Tourism for Coastal Conservation Club, Surrathani province, and Intrepid Travel

5.1.1 Leeled Community, Surrathani province

Leeled is a coastal community located in Ban Don Bay, in Surrathani, Southern Thailand. The community is nestled among a system of canals, which are fed by the Tapi River and flow through a rich mangrove ecosystem to the open sea.

In 2003, this area was experiencing serious negative impacts as a result of extensive commercial shrimp farming, causing the destruction of mangrove forests; and over-fishing by trawlers. Unrestricted access to coastal areas, poor regulation and weak law enforcement were contributing to the rapid depletion and destruction of coastal resources. Commercial trawlers were encroaching on the territory of small fishers, reducing their catches and livelihoods security.

5.1.2 Why did the community develop Community Based Tourism?

CBT in Leeled was developed in partnership with the EU – Royal Thai Fisheries Department CHARM project (Coastal Habitats Resource Management) and the Responsible Ecological Social Tours Project (REST), a Thai NGO, as a strategy to improve the sustainable co-management of coastal habitats and resources.

REST assisted community members to establish the Leeled Community Based Tourism for Coastal Conservation Group, and provided a capacity building support package covering CBT development, management and marketing; guiding and hospitality; waste management and green product development.

REST’s team also facilitated a pioneering partnership between Leeled CBT Group and the Australian small-group tour operator, Intrepid Travel, which lasted for 6 years (2005-2011), with weekly visits taking place for 6 months of each year.

The specific goals of the CBT project in Leeled were:

- Conservation and Coastal Resource Management;
- Cultural exchange, (to be well known and feel proud of ourselves);
- Human Resource Development (new skills and knowledge);
- Community development, cooperation, unity and happiness;
- Additional Income.

Note: In 2006, REST partnered with the Thailand Research Fund (TRF), to establish Thailand Community Based Tourism Institute (CBT-I).
5.1.3 What can tourists do in Leeled community?

Guests in Leeled enjoy warm hospitality and delicious food with friendly local families. Local people play roles as local community guides, homestay hosts, boat and car drivers. There are 30 homestays. The highlight is a boat journey down Leeled’s canals and out to sea. Visitors can meet local fishermen, explore the mangrove forests, and learn how the local people use mangrove products in their everyday lives as a source of foods, dyes and natural remedies.

Local guides also show guests 1000+ hectares of new mangrove growth, which has been recovered since the community began their CBT program. It is often possible to see beautiful birds. In addition, visitors can drop by local occupation groups where local people produce different environmentally friendly products.
5.1.4 CBT business partner: Intrepid Travel

Since 1989, Intrepid have been leaders in responsible travel. Intrepid offer a variety of trip styles, including Basix, Original and Comfort trips. Themes include family, active, overland, wildlife, urban adventures, photography, festivals and events and private groups. Average group sizes of only 10 travelers provides the space to connect with people and places on route. The Intrepid Foundation supports around 50 NGO’s with projects in health care, education, human rights, child welfare, sustainable development and environmental and wildlife protection. Customer donations are matched dollar for dollar by Intrepid.

5.1.5 Best practices which supported a successful partnership

Many best practices were developed through this partnership, including:

- Intrepid sent their operations and responsible tourism managers to Leeled to meet the community, introduce themselves and their guests, learn about CBT and survey the community’s CBT services and program;
- Intrepid assisted the community to adapt their 3 day package to a 2 day package, which could be fitted into Intrepid’s overall 2 week program;
- Intrepid’s operations manager visited Leeled each year to inform the community about visitor feedback, and listen to community feedback about their guests and guides. Intrepid and the CBT group responded to feedback. This lead to continual improvement on both sides. Agreements were revised and recorded at these meetings, in annual contracts.
- Intrepid sent regular trips, giving Leeled community an opportunity to continually develop all aspects of managing their CBT program, including taking bookings, organizing transport, cultural exchange, local food, homestay rotation and cooperation between local and staff guides.
5.1.6 Benefits of tourism in Leeled

By 2011, Leeled’s CBT program had attracted over 7000 tourists and students, earning over 119,000 EUR, and become a national and international study site for coastal conservation through tourism, welcoming more than 30 educational institutions, from around Thailand and around the world. Only 847 visitors were sent by Intrepid. However, working with Intrepid enabled Leeled to get their CBT program off the ground, funded conservation activities and proved they could offer a sufficiently high-quality program to attract an international tour operator.

In addition to food, homestay and activity costs, each visitor to Leeled pays 100 Baht into a community and conservation fund. This fund had raised over 10,000 Euro by 2011, paying for the establishment and monitoring of a new coastal conservation zone, which lead to the historic replenishment of over 1250 hectares of pristine mangroves, including 445 hectares of new growth.

As a direct result of a better protected and healthier mangrove environment, the quantities of fish increased. This benefited Leeled’s poorest families, without the funds to buy deep-sea boats, who survive by fishing and foraging inside and close to the mangrove forests. By 2005, small fishers were benefiting from higher catches (double to triple the previous volume of some species of fish) and greater livelihoods security, without negative impacts on the environment.

In addition to mangrove conservation, the fund was used to sponsor youth work and social welfare for community members. CBT also built the capacity of community members, created income and jobs, funded school and temple activities and supported local culture by reviving the tradition of Jungle Theatre.
5.1.7 Challenges and how they were overcome.

Challenges were overcome with regular communication between Intrepid and Leeled CBT group, assisted by the NGO, REST. For example, the overlapping roles of local and professional guides lead to some tension. Roles and responsibilities were then discussed and agreed in a common document. Early in the partnership, Intrepid guests often went to bed late, the night before visiting the village. They arrived and started the boat trip late, in the heat of midday. There were complaints. The solution was for Intrepid’s tour leaders to brief the group about the CBT program, and gently request that guests had an early night!

5.1.8 Other observations

Leeled was located between two important destinations for Intrepid Travel, Khao Sok National Park and Koh Samui. In addition to being an interesting place to visit, Leeled was a good stopping off point between these two destinations. So, a combination of Leeled’s good location and Intrepid’s commitment to include a local experience in their programs, created an opportunity for Leeled.

Another factor which distinguished the partnership was the high level of effort which Intrepid invested when visiting the community to give advice about how to adjust their 3 day / 2 night program to make it viable; when re-visiting the community to follow up; and when acting on feedback about their tour leaders.

Finally, this benefited Leeled, which became a nationally famous study site for CBT and mangrove replenishment, and also for Intrepid which successfully used Leeled as a case study, when applying for various responsible travel awards.
5.2 Hua Tung, Chiang Mai and Peak Adventure Travel

5.2.1 Hua Tung Community, Chiang Mai province

Hua Tung is a gateway for an exploration of Doi Luang Chiang Dao, Thailand’s third highest peak and a haven for rare plant species. The village is located approximately 85 km’s from Chiang Mai city, at the foot of the mountain and close to Doi Chiang Dao Wildlife Sanctuary. Behind Hua Tung community, there is a wonderful view of Chiang Dao mountain. In Hua Tung village, local people have worked together to establish a nationally famous community forest.

In this area, villagers are allowed to collect wild foods and medicines, but do not fell trees. The area is protected by a combination of community regulations and ‘forest ordination’ by Buddhist monks. Villagers also have a bamboo forest. Every year, they help each other to harvest bamboo, and share the profits.

5.2.2 Why did the community develop Community Based Tourism?

The objectives of Hua Tung community’s CBT program are to:

1) Educate visitors about relationships between the community and the environment, and share their successes managing community forest;
2) To catalyze cooperation between community members;
3) To earn additional income.

Hua Tung community are clear that they consider tourism to be a supplementary income, and do not want to welcome large numbers of visitors.

5.2.3 What can tourists do in Hua Tung community?

The villagers in Hua Tung have 6 homestays and provide local food and transport. There is a team of 5 local guides. Visitors can enjoy exploring the community forest with local guides, who explain about native forest species, wild foods, herbal medicines, the forest irrigation system, and how local people conserve the forest and prevent forest fires. They also explain how the forest is protected through the practice of ordaining trees as sacred monks. You can visit the bamboo forest, which provides a livelihood for community members, who use bamboo to weave packaging for agricultural products. In addition, visitors can join activities at the local school and enjoy cultural performance.
Above: culture and nature-based activities in Ban Hua Tung, Chiang Mai
5.2.4 CBT business partner: Peak Adventure Travel

Peak Adventure Travel is a DMC, created through a partnership between TUI and Intrepid Travel, which develops and operates itineraries for small-group adventure providers in the TUI family. In 2010, based on the success of the Leeled partnership, Peak contacted CBT-I, looking for a community which would be suitable for launching a new family trip for Intrepid Travel and Sawadee Reizen.

5.2.5 Best practices which supported a successful partnership

i) The CBT-I team consulted with Hua Tung CBT group in advance, by sending a short overview of Peak and their trip development needs;

ii) Based on the Leeled model, Peak’s operations manager visited Hua Tung to meet the community members and survey the CBT program;

iii) Peak and the CBT group reached an agreement on CBT services and prices, which was formalized in a 1 year, renewable contract;

iv) Peak agreed to pay for a minimum of 4 passengers, which made the program financially viable and attractive for community members;

v) Peak employed CBT-I to conduct CBT training for their tour leaders, focusing on how to work effectively, as a team with community guides;

5.2.6 Benefits of tourism in Hua Tung

Between 2010-2013, Hua Tung community welcomed 77 tour groups, and a total of 764 visitors, earning approximately $24,000 USD. The tour was a family program, so most visitors arrived during the European school summer holidays (July and August) and also around the Christmas and New Year period.

10% of income from tourism contributes towards a community fund. 35% of the community fund is used to compensate the CBT committee for their time. 30% of the fund is shared among the CBT club members. 5% each is donated to the village housewives’ group, the village school, the kindergarten, and towards upkeep of the community forest. The remaining 10% covers management costs. Tips are also collected and shared between the CBT committee, CBT members and service providers, and donated to local social and environmental projects.
CBT has been a successful activity to stimulate cooperation among community members, by providing a common activity, which all important sectors of the community are interested in. For example, the President and Vice President of the Sub-district administrative organization are both advisors to the CBT Club.

After 2 years welcoming guests from Peak, Ban Hua Tung was assessed by the Upper Northern Thai Provincial Cluster as an ‘exceptional community for combining tourism and sustainable natural resource management.’ This lead to many paid study tours for government officers and other communities which were interested to learn how to establish their own CBT services and activities.

The community also received many offers to build infrastructure and buildings from different government departments. The depth of cooperation within the CBT group, fostered by the participatory process, meant that they were able to make sensible decisions about which opportunities to accept and to decline.

Hua Tung CBT group proudly explain to visiting communities that achieving nature conservation and the distribution of income through tourism can help communities to win government support for community development.

Consistent cooperation between different community groups who participate in the CBT program, and transparent distribution of benefits has led to improved social relationships, between the local school, nursery, youth and senior groups, which have all had opportunities to participate and share their potential.

For example, the school invited visitors to join volunteer activities, the nursery taught several generations of local children to do short, dance performances. The CBT club organized environment camps for local school children. The local youth group created a short film about Hua Tung with funding from the CBT club. Local senior citizens feel that their knowledge about the environment, herbal medicines, etc is valued and respected respected by the new generation.
5.2.7 Challenges and how they were overcome;

From time to time, the cost of living would rise during the running tourism season, making petrol, food, etc more expensive. Each time that this happened, the community members requested that Peak allowed them to increase their prices slightly. Although it is not a practice in the tourism industry to change prices during the season, Peak allowed a small increase to cover rising petrol costs.

Peak and CBT-I helped the CBT group to understand that the process of agreeing prices each year must be respected, in order for partnerships to succeed. In the future, the community should wait until the next year to re-negotiate prices. This was an important lesson in understanding the reality of the tourism industry, and considering costs carefully during the annual price review.
A similar issue was that the CBT club had a policy that all CBT club members should help keep an eye on tourists and make sure that they stayed safe. Sometimes, many community members would join CBT events. Peak’s guides would not be sure which people were paid guides and which were observers.

On one occasion, when the CBT club requested to increase their prices, there was feedback from Peak that they should try to keep costs down by employing fewer people. However, the additional people were not actually being paid; they were joining in out of community spirit. This was discussed and resolved.
5.3 Ja Bor, Mae Hong Son province
and Exotissimo

5.3.1 Ja Bor community, Mae Hong Son province

Ja Bo is an ethnic Lahu village, sitting on a mountain ridge, accessed by a small mountain road, approximately 10 km’s off the main highway to Mae Hong Son.

Behind the village, a limestone cliff soars into the sky, containing many caves, which are recognized as important prehistoric, archeological sites. These caves contain mysterious, prehistoric coffins, which are considered by local people to be the home of “Pee Man,” or powerful village spirits.

The people of Ja Bo are flamboyant and welcoming. Guests who are lucky enough to visit during the Lahu new year, or other important festivals will have the chance to enter the sacred dancing circle and learn traditional dances from community members, to the tune of bamboo pipes. Ja Bo community is also known for traditional Lahu medicine and local food, made from wild vegetables such as mushrooms, bamboo shoots and young leaves.
5.3.2 Why did the community develop Community Based Tourism?

CBT in Ja Bo developed as a way to solve conflict over the management of Tum Lod and Pee Men caves. The villagers had been criticized for raising pigs in the vicinity of the caves, and also for leading tourists into the caves, because of the risk of damage to cave features and the potential for negative impacts on the caves’ ecosystems. Archaeologists were also concerned about the potential negative impacts of tourism on the prehistoric coffins housed in the caves.

Criticism at district and provincial levels motivated the community members to organize as a group, in order to prove that they also cared about the environment and had the capacity to manage tourism sustainably. Although the coffins in the cave were not related to Lahu history, the community members did believe that Pee Men cave was a sacred site, and forbid any damage or removal of objects from the cave (even by the archaeologists!).

The community established the following objectives for CBT in Ja Bor village:

i) To share and restore Lahu culture;
ii) To increase cooperation among community members;
iii) To earn additional income.
5.3.3 What can tourists do in Ja Bor community?

Inside the village: Guests can help their hosts to collect wild foods from the forest, or cultivated vegetables such as cucumber, pumpkin, and beans from the villagers’ gardens. In 2 or 3 hours, guests can explore the village’s important cultural sites, such as the sacred “Lan Ja Kueh” dancing ground.

Guests also have the chance to meet local craftspeople, usually making clothes and bamboo instruments. Local women are particularly proud of their sewing and weaving skills. They are happy to show guests how they sew and decorate traditional dress, and explain the meaning of the different patterns and colours of their clothes. Guests can sit for half an hour, or half a day enjoying the lively company of the weavers, sharing stories about life at home and in the village.

Activities around the village: Visit Pee Man Cave: is home of the ghosts of the village. Local guides will escort guests on a trek through the village, and up the winding mountain path to the mouth of the cave, which is reached by a wooden stairway, built securely on the cliff. Inside Pee Man cave, there are numerous pre-historic coffins; some lying on the ground, and some on top of tall poles. There are also beautiful glittering stalactites and stalagmites.

Volunteer activities: Community members also welcome guests to join simple volunteer activities, such as building fire breaks, laying water pipes and building toilets for public buildings and teaching English at the local school.

5.3.4 CBT business partner: Exotissimo

Exotissimo is a pioneer tour operator in the Mekong Region, which started from Vietnam in 1993 by offering responsible, eco-adventure packages. It is now one of the leading regional tour operators with offices in Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia, designing quality tailor-made tours and packages for all types of travelers to the Mekong region. The tours foster genuine cultural exchanges, or “living experiences”, by closely involving tourists in village activities. These interactions serve as vehicles for learning the local way of life, beliefs and traditions. Exotissimo’s tours often stop and visit projects aimed at alleviating poverty and training local communities in tourism. Exotissimo established the Exo Foundation where they invest one dollar for every traveler who takes a tour with them. The Exo Foundation is supporting great projects in all Mekong countries.
5.3.5 **Best practices which supported a successful partnership**

- Exotissimo approached the CBT-I team at the Thailand Travel Mart in 2010, and invited the CBT-I team to make a presentation about CBT at their Bangkok office, for the benefit of senior management. Subsequently, CBT-I were invited to meet the local Exotissimo team in Chiang Mai.
- Exotissimo’s product manager conferred with CBT-I over several potential communities and Ja Bo was shortlisted. After an initial site inspection in March 2012, the first clients arrived in August 2012.
- In coordination with CBT-I, Exotissimo worked to train their guides to understand how CBT is different from similar, rural excursions.

5.3.6 **Benefits of tourism in Ja Bor community**

Exotissimo has sent an average of 6 trips per year to Ja Bo since 2013. Between 2011 and 2013, Ja Bor welcomed 495 guests, earning a total income of over $10,000 USD. Five percent of the costs of the program was contributed towards maintaining the CBT Network Coordination Center.

Active families earned between $150-250 USD per year, including from the sale of souvenirs, such as Lahu shoulder bags. Ja Bor is a remote, rural village, This represents an average 20% increase in annual income, which was used to repair local homes, pay for education and health, and improve toilets.

Welcoming tourists motivated community members to lift hygiene standards and improve cleanliness around the village, creating a healthier environment, especially for children. With the help of volunteers, villagers built seven dams and fire breaks in the forest, and toilets in the homes of CBT members. 10 times a year, the CBT group pays for meals for school children, during events like children’s and sports’ days. Local guides have improved their English, learned about new cultures and built their self-confidence.
Benefits for the caves: Pee Man cave is an important archaeological site. Community members made the decision to help protect the cave as a spiritual duty. After proving their commitment to preserve the cave, they received additional training in cave ecosystems and interpretation, and learned how Pee Men cave is linked with other cave systems in Pang Ma Pha district, Mae Hong Son. 10% of income from tourism is donated to a CBT fund, which is also used to repair the track to the cave, supported with volunteer labour by the CBT club.

Benefits for the environment: Ja Bor community is located close to the water shed. Local people rely on this water, and well preserved forest, for their livelihoods. Conservation activities are included in local spiritual practices, and included in the CBT program. Volunteers can help to construct fire breaks and environmentally-friendly irrigation channels. In addition, local people continue to use traditional, herbal, medicines. Preserving knowledge about these medicines is one way to encourage the new generation to value and protect the forest. In Ja Bor, all local guides must be able to notice herbal medicines along the nature trail, point them out to tourists and explain their uses. Overall, the forest has not been encroached on and the village has water all year around.

5.3.7 Challenges and how they were overcome;

Due to bad past experiences, the local village guides did not trust the professional guides to pay them. Exotissimo agreed to pay the fees for the CBT program directly into the village bank account. This also meant that all partners could keep track of payments and income from tourism. Moreover, it supported the transparent management of funds inside the village, as all CBT group members could see exactly how much money had been paid.
5.4 Pha Mon, Chiang Mai
and Thailande Autrement

5.4.1 Introduction to the community

Pha Mon is an ethnic Karen community of around 600 inhabitants, located in Doi Inthanon National Park, 90 km’s from Chiang Mai, and reached via an unsealed mountain road. Pha Mon overlooks a sea of rice paddy, which is breathtaking during the rainy and winter seasons. According to local legends, Pha Mon mountain is a sibling of Doi Inthanon (Thailand’s highest peak). These two mountains remain at the heart of village livelihoods and spiritual life. Local people still maintain a vibrant culture, including ceremonies, arts and crafts. Since 2005, community members have worked with French tour operator, Thailande Autrement, to build 3 community lodges for French cultural travelers.

5.4.2 Why did the community develop CBT?

In 2005, Pha Mon community was assisted by Thailand Research Fund (TRF) to research aspects of their community, including local culture, livelihoods, and indigenous knowledge about sustainable forest management and wildlife. The villagers realized that the knowledge which they had collected could be very attractive for nature and culture enthusiasts. They became interested to develop tourism, and use the research outcomes to propose a blueprint for CBT management appropriate for their culture and location in the National Park.

While the community were considering their strengths and potentials, they were introduced to Thailande Autrement (TA), a French tour operator which was seeking a local community partner to develop cultural programs. A group of villagers decided to donate their wages from the research project, as well as their labor, to construct a community resort, subsidized by a loan from TA and repayable only if TA was successful in marketing the community lodge.

The communities’ objectives when establishing their CBT program were to:

i) Create awareness of how Karen people live in harmony with the forest;
ii) Motivate community members to work together;
iii) Additional income.
5.4.3 Main CBT activities and services

The people of Pha Mon prefer to welcome small groups of travelers, and tourism is designed to flow alongside the natural rhythm of local life. At different times of the year, visitors can observe villagers performing traditional ceremonies in their paddy plots on the terraced hillside, and carrying baskets of bright flowers, supported by the Royal Project as an alternative occupational activity, to generate income for the villagers and reduce farming in the national park.

Working with TA, the villagers built a comfortable bungalow in the rice fields, which is ideal for a single family to stay in, for a totally unique and intimate experience of local life. This model has now also been expanded to 2 nearby villages, allowing neighboring communities to also benefit from tourism.

Some of the activities which tourists can enjoy include:

i) Exploring the nature trail and bird watching: Local guides can lead guests on an exploration of the forest, including a bird watching trail where guests have the chance to see about 30 kinds of local and migrating birds. Local guides will share traditional legends, including the role which bird songs play in traditional Karen courting rituals!

ii) Cycling: Pha Mon is a fantastic destination for mountain biking. Some of the local community guides have been trained to lead cycling trips.

iii) Learn Karen Weaving: Karen women are famous for their bold, bright designs, hand woven using a traditional ‘back strap loom’. Men are experts at weaving bamboo into household items. Guests can meet the weavers, watch them work, and have a go at weaving too.
5.4.4 Profile of CBT partner tour operator: Thailande Autrement

Thailande Autrement (TA) organises exceptional cultural trips for French-speaking families and couples. Groups are kept very small – usually 2 to 5 people accompanied by a Thai French-speaking guide. TA leads fair trade partnerships by example, investing time, energy and resources, working as long-term partners with community-based organisations, academics and NGOs.

TA’s commitment to working with local people and respecting their right to choose how tourism should be done, as well as working together to solve problems, is inspirational. TA does not barter with family-run accommodation; employs 8 out of 12 Thai staff from hill tribe communities; provides wages which are considerably above the minimum wage for their staff, with private health insurance and excellent benefits. Lodges in partner Karen villages are fitted with energy and water efficient equipment and TA offsets guests’ flight emissions and co-funds climate solidarity projects (3625 € in 2010) with the French NGO, GERES.

5.4.5 Best practices which supported a successful partnership

TA learned that Pha Mon community were interested to find a tour operator partner committed to community benefits and reducing negative impacts. Manager, Ben Lefetey, was invited by the community to discuss partnership and product development. TA’s vision of building a simple, comfortable community lodge was compatible with the villagers’ desire to maintain privacy at home.

The village owns the lodge. TA financed the fittings and furniture, to ensure the standards needed by their clients. TA also provided an interest free loan of $850 USD (now repaid) to purchase building materials. Guide and guesthouse training was provided to all staff, and 5 year contracts were agreed. TA marketed the experience in France. In February 2006, the community welcomed their first clients to the Bamboo Pink House and had repaid all debts by 2008.
Best practices in this partnership include:

- The community had a solid foundation of preparation and planning, and clear goals for tourism / controlling negative impacts before it began;
- TA clearly explained the profile and expectations of their target markets, and built the community’s capacity to provide appropriate services;
- Regular field visits, meetings and communication between Pha Mon CBT and TA lead to mutual understanding and well-matched expectations;
- The concept and design of the lodge; the details of the co-investment; activities, prices and roles and responsibilities were defined clearly;
- TA orientated their clients and guides very clearly about local culture, do’s and don’ts and re-trained guides where necessary to solve problems;

5.4.6 Benefits of tourism in Pha Mon

Local staff who managed the community lodge and a local CBT manager received full time salaries. To ensure broad distribution of benefits, villagers could also earn shares in the enterprise by contributing work to the construction of the Bamboo Pink House. 60 villagers participated. This model has now been successfully expanded to nearby Nong Lom and Pha Mon Mai villages.

5.4.7 Number of tourists and income from project

In 2010, Pha Mon village received 235 visitors, netting the community about $14,600 directly through food purchases, salaries, transportation and contributions to the village fund. In 2011, Pha Mon village welcomed 500 guests, and in 2012 welcomed 450 guests, earning the CBT group an income of over $33,000 USD per year. Neighboring Nong Lom village also received 400 tourists per year, earning around $30,000 USD per year. In 2013, Pha Mon received 400 guests, or around $23,000 USD. Both Nong Lom and Pha Mon Mai, where new lodges had been build using the same model also welcomed guests. This does not include additional donations, purchase of local crafts and tips. Profit is divided as: 15% to the land-owner, 25% towards the upkeep of the community lodge and 60% paid to the shareholders. Moreover, by working as a network, and actively sharing opportunities within Pha Mon and with neighboring villages, Pha Mon CBT group have motivated cooperation and minimized conflict.
The CBT group donate a fixed percentage of their income to a community fund. (10% of food costs, 5% of transport, souvenirs and cultural performance costs.) This is used, for example, to fund 500 THB scholarships for 10 grade 6 students per year, provide welfare for 2 poor families per year (depending on the decision of Pha Mon CBT committee) and funding environmental activities such as building fire protection lines, local dams, waste and forest management activities.

5.4.8 Challenges and how they were overcome

- Initially, villagers were shocked by how guests dressed, wearing revealing clothes and sunbathing. The CBT group held a meeting with TA and their tour guides, after which additional training took place, and codes of conduct were developed for the visitors, TA’s guides and the community defining their roles and responsibilities as well as ‘do’s and ‘don’ts.’

- Some villagers saw that the community lodge earned good income and wanted to establish their own, private homestays or lodges. Other villagers were concerned that this would lead to tourism getting out of control and having negative impacts on local culture and the environment. In the end, the villagers reached a consensus that they did not want tourism to create conflict in the community, or conflict with the National Park authorities. Therefore, tourism would remain a supplementary income.
6. Codes of Conduct for the CBT-N Coordination Center and partners

6.1 What is this section of the handbook?

This section of the handbook is a framework agreement, describing the terms of cooperation between:

i) Thailand Community Based Tourism Network Coordination Center (CBT-N CC);
ii) Thailand Community Based Tourism Community Members;
iii) Thailand Community Based Tourism Network Tour Operator Partners.

The system has been designed to clarify roles, responsibilities and actions which are recommended to be taken at important stages of partnerships between tour operators and CBT communities:

i) Product development;
ii) Marketing and coordination;
iii) Operation / cooperation;
iv) Monitoring and improving CBT.

6.2 Definitions of partners

6.2.1 Thailand CBT Network Coordination Center (CBT-N-CC)

Is an organization which provides information about Thai community based tourism (CBT); supports partnerships between “members” and “partners” of the Thailand Community Based Tourism Network Coordination Center (CBT-N CC) and promotes CBT so that it is more widely known.
To become members, communities must complete an application to work with the CBT Network Coordination Center; and agree to follow the CBT Standard checklist described in this handbook. (Section 4).

Communities must attach evidence that a meeting has taken place and a consensus has been reached to work with the CBT-N-CC. At least 3 CBT staff must sign the application form, and attach copies of their Thai ID cards.

Each community must complete a form providing information about their CBT products and services; and identify a responsible contact person, to communicate with the CBT-N-CC and Tour Operators.

Member communities will then be registered with the CBT-N-CC. Each community will have a registration number and a separate file with their information.

An example CBT program, with photographs and the reference number of each community will be included in the CBT-N-CC database.

Communities pay an initial, token fee of 100 Baht to register with the CBT-N-CC. After the community has welcomed guest(s) through the CBT-N-CC, they pay a 500 Baht yearly membership fee. In the case that tourists have not visited the community yet, but the community wishes to renew its membership, the fee is 100 Baht per year.
6.2.3 CBT-N CC Tour Operator Partners

i) Tour operators must apply to become a “CBT-N CC Tour Operator Partner,” and agree to work in partnership with the CBT Network Coordination Center.

Each Partner Tour Operator will have a registration number, a separate file with their information, and will be included in the CBT-N database.

ii) Partners agree to follow the “Code of Conduct for CBT-N CC Partner Tour Operators” (which is outlined in this handbook).

iii) Tour operators pay an initial registration fee of 500 Thai Baht to the CBT-N CC, which will be valid until the 31st December of the same year. If the tour operator decides to renew, the fee will be 1000 Baht per year from 1st January to 31st December.

iv) **Important note:** To maintain TO Partner status, tour operators must work with and promote at least 1 CBT-N CC community each year.

To guarantee support from the coordination center, partnerships between communities and tour operators must have been recorded in partnership agreements, which must have been sent to the CBT-N-CC.
6.3  The Roles and Services of the CBT-N Coordinating Center

The main services provided by the CBT-N Coordination Center are:

i) Providing information about CBT, and promoting the CBT products and services offered by members;

ii) Working with CBT communities to develop standard CBT programs and prices for tour operators to promote. The CBT-N CC will work with communities to develop at least 1 ‘standard CBT program.’

If Tour Operator Partners wish to offer additional programs (tailor-made), they should visit the community in person to consult with the CBT group and reach an agreement on the new program.

iii) Sharing and disseminating information about CBT and CBT-N-CC member communities (e.g. website, brochures, press releases, newsletters, etc) and promoting / explaining CBT to tour operators, the media, tourists, etc;

iv) Updating information on bookings and sales. The center will develop a database of community capacity, and maximum occupancy for each member community, to be followed up every 3 months;

v) Conflict mediation if communities and tour operator partners are unable to settle disputes independently.

vi) Supporting cooperation between CBT-N CC members and TO partners:

✓ Identifying responsible TOs to link with CBT communities;
✓ Responding to inquiries about communities by TOs, schools, etc;
✓ Preparing a brief overview of the profile and target markets of Partner Tour Operators which are interested to organize tours in a community, which will be sent to communities to help prepare for meetings with TO’s;
✓ Introducing member communities and tour operator partners (on request, or when a new community joins the network);
✓ Monitoring the results of cooperation (successes and challenges related to guest satisfaction, local environment, economy, society and culture).
CBT | Community Based Tourism

CBT Communities

CBT empowers local communities to manage their tourism in the form of ‘group / community organizations’ to provide community benefits from tourism. Both in terms of conserving natural resources and environment, income is distributed fairly. And exchange knowledge with guests, in turn, tourists or guests have the opportunity to share and learn the culture, and way of life of local people through a variety of activities, and has been involved in the action with hosting by local guides and members of CBT group.

In Thailand, CBT communities are in every region. The Coordination Center of the Thailand
6.4 CBT Service and sustainability standards: ‘Ready for Market’

The CBT-N Coordination Center will work with communities to assess if they are ‘ready for market’ (see section 2, Ready for Market Checklist for details). Communities which are assessed ready for market, and agree, will then be prioritized in CBT-N-CC promotion.

The CBT-N-CC will assess new communities using the CBT standard. Communities which pass the minimum criteria will be eligible for marketing support.

Communities which do not pass the minimum criteria will receive recommendations on how to reach the standard. Subsequently, they can use the standard as a frame for improvement, and perform self-assessments, until they are ready to request CBT-I to perform an assessment.

The center will inform tour operators which criteria CBT communities meet and do not meet. Tour operators can choose to work with communities which already have a high score, or choose to work with less experienced communities and help them to improve their performance. The center will help communities to assess their services using this checklist every year.
6.5 Benefits which member communities and partner tour operators are entitled to after they have registered and paid registration fees

A) Member communities

- Information about member communities’ products and services will be promoted on the CBT-I website www.cbt-i.org and the CBT-N website http://cbtnetwork.org and in a variety of other media, including a newsletter (note: success will depend on the active cooperation of members and partners to share progress and information with the center);
- Introductions to tour operators who are interested in their CBT programs;
- Included in mail shots / newsletters and informed about events and resources;
- Help and advice for working effectively with tour operator partners;
- Invited to relevant trainings, workshops, etc. This will help to develop the capacity of individuals in the community, and the CBT group.

Press Release:

Thailand’s top Community Based Tourism programs will be promoted at Thailand Travel Mart 2009 Plus, June 4-7th, 2009: “Amazing Gateway to the Greater Mekong Sub region”

Communities around Thailand have developed a range of inspiring programs for guests seeking a living, learning experience of local life. These communities are now searching for committed partners in the tourism industry who are prepared to work together as a team and break new ground in the growing trend of rural ‘Responsible Tourism’...

“Trends that travmatics across all regions, the desire for social and environmental responsibility, interactions, authentic travel experiences and fair trade. Consumers are willing to trade up for sustainability, thus operators should list ‘considerable consumption’ with the travel and tourism industry through these uncertain times.”

Fiona Jeffrey, Chairman, World Travel Market - WTM Report 2008

Today’s tourists are looking for creative, insightful, authentic experiences which immerse them in the life and culture of faraway lands. They hope to meet local people, get away from the crowds and behind the scenes. Travelers are also better informed about the negative impacts which tourism can have on local communities and the environment. “They are searching for ‘fairer’, responsible travel experiences.

Community based tourism offers today’s travelers creative, fun, living, learning experiences... which are good for local people and the environment.

“CBT” programs are crafted by local people, based on very special aspects of life, culture and nature which they value and choose to share with guests. Community members manage and operate these programs themselves. They choose how they wish to be presented to the world. They feel proud to share their lives with guests.

A selection of Thailand’s best community based tourism will be showcased this year at the Thailand Travel Mart 2009 Plus, 4-7th June, in Bangkok, Thailand. Programs will be available from all regions of Thailand, and are suitable for a range of different tasks and ages... cultural travelers, active seniors, families, students, and many other guests will enjoy these unique journeys to the heart of Thailand...

“Living, Learning, Sharing... Moments in our Lives”
B) **Tour Operators**

- Information about CBT, CBT-N CC member communities and their services;
- Introductions to CBT communities which are appropriate to their trip needs;
- Included in mail shots / newsletters and informed about useful resources;
- Profile included on the CBT-N CC website with “CBT-N CC Tour Operator Partner” status; and on the CBT-I website;
- Links to their programs which include CBT-N CC communities, with a brief description, will be included on the CBT-N CC website;
- Priority assistance (needs are prioritized before other TOs which are not members);
- Invited to relevant trainings, workshops, etc.
- Receive a CBT-N-CC Partner Logo, for use online, on their website and in brochures.

**Note:** TO’s will be sent a logo after they have sent a report of an agreement made with a partner community to the CBT-N-CC and began promoting the community.
6.6 Additional, Paid Services offered by the CBT-N Coordination Center to Tour Operators

The center offers additional, paid, services to partner tour operators, on request.

Fees cover necessary staff time and transport to the field:

i) Organising and facilitating a site inspection / survey or feedback trip, or

ii) Facilitating a monitoring / evaluation meeting with community members;

iii) Field preparation or accompanying a FAM media trip organised by a partner tour operator for journalists or for a marketing / promotion team;

iv) Assisting coordination between communities and tour operators on request. (E.g. confirming bookings with CBT club, sending guest name lists, tour leader’s name / number to the community, confirming trip details.

For site visits, tour operators must pay actual CBT-N staff travel and sustenance costs, and make a contribution to staff time @1000 THB per day.

Note: The coordination center is not responsible to assist coordination with communities which are not members of the CBT-Network or not registered with the CBT-N.
6.7 The marketing role of the CBT-N Coordination Center

i) The center will provide marketing support, both for CBT-N member communities and for the packages being offered by partner Thai tour operators;

ii) The center recognizes the value of working as a partner with inbound tour operators, and does not intend to compete against partner Thai tour operators.

As a general principle, marketing at the national and international levels will be done in co-operation with Thai CBT Network Tour Operator Partners;

iii) When independent travelers contact the center, the coordinator will first recommend that they visit a community with a partner tour operator. If tourists insist on traveling independently, then the center will inform the tourists how to get to the community. (The center will only do this if the community has the capacity to welcome independent travelers.)
However, the center reserves the right to organize field visits for professionals and organizations which are visiting Thailand to study community based tourism, E.g.:

- CBT partner organizations at national and regional levels;
- Educational institutes with the goals of studying CBT or sustainable development;
- Environmental, nature protection and community development organizations;
- Media and public relations organisations, such as journalists;
- The CBT-N-CC can also organize special trips from time to time, to test and develop the capacity of communities to welcome different types of tourists.

6.8 Contributions and commissions

6.8.1 Rational

To be sustainable, the CBT-N Coordination Center must be able to support itself. This will rely on the active support of member communities and partner tour operators.
In addition to annual membership fees, a percentage contribution, based on sales generated by the CBT-N-CC, is necessary to sustain the organisation and its work.

To raise funds, the CBT-N-CC will request member communities to add 5% to their ground costs.

If a community decides not to add 5% to their ground costs, then they must agree to deduct 5% from their current price, and donate this to the CBT-N-CC.

By applying to be a member or partner of the CBT-N-CC, member communities and tour operators are committing to help the CBT-N-CC to become a self-sufficient organisation, working for the benefit of all partners. The 5% donation is understood to be necessary for the CBT-N-CC to function and to be able to provide services to its members and partners.

Tour operators which pay this additional 5% contribution benefit from the work of CBT-I and the CBT-N-CC to promote and raise the standards of Thai CBT.

Moreover, they are helping to maintain a unique, national CBT coordination and information center and may promote this as an example of their support for CBT.

The CBT-N-CC will use this income to cover its operating costs and assist partnerships between member communities and partner tour operators to move forward smoothly:

i) E.g. After partner tour operators and member communities have agreed to sell a program, the CBT-N-CC will follow up progress (by telephone). If tour operators experience difficulties coordinating with a member community, or visa-versa, either partner can request assistance from the CBT-N-CC to help coordinate or mediate. The CBT-N-CC will update information, such as keeping up to date with changes in price.

ii) CBT-N-CC will report annually on how much income is raised and how it is used;

iii) The CBT-N-CC will follow up progress, and report back to communities and tour operators about expenditure by the CBT-N-CC, income to member communities, distribution of income, as well as social, cultural and environmental benefits and impacts of CBT. This information will be useful for communities, tour operators and supporters to learn about the results of CBT and add value to CBT promotion.
6.8.2 Pricing system, discounts and contributions

Setting prices:
1) Ground costs in the community (homestay, food, guide, etc) 100
2) Add 5% contribution towards the operation of the CBT-N-CC 5
Total price 105

i) 105 then becomes the community’s standard price for tourists and tour operators*;

* CBT-I recommends that communities should use this cost-plus rate as their new walk-in rate. In the event that they do not sell through the coordination center, they can put the extra 5% towards their own marketing and promotion costs.

ii) If guests are generated for CBT community via the CBT-N CC, 5% of the price of the program is contributed by the community to the CBT-N-CC to help the organization to be sustainable;

iii) If community members do not want to add 5%, they must deduct 5% from their standard price and donate this to the CBT-N-CC.
iv) Tour operators pay the community directly. The communities save the 5% contribution towards the CBT-N-CC and transfers this at the end of each year;

v) Tour operators and communities benefit from having a commonly agreed price breakdown. After the community and tour operator have agreed on a program and price, the CBT-N-CC will send the price breakdown to both parties;

vi) In order to be able to keep track of bookings and carrying capacity, tour operators should inform the CBT-N-CC of bookings. CBT-N-CC will prepare an invoice for the tour operator, including the bank details of the partner community. CBT-N-CC will also inform the community about the booking, confirm the number of tourists and the fees which the tour operator will transfer to the community’s account. This system will allow CBT-N-CC to know how many tourists are visiting each community, and how much income each community is earning through the CBT-N-CC.

Recommended Extra Discounts

○ 1 tour leader or 1 tour guide’s accommodation should be offered free of charge. 
○ CBT groups are recommended to offer free meals to professional tour guides.
6.9 **Code of Conduct to be followed by the CBT-N Coordination Center**:

6.9.1 **Ethics for registering new tour operator partners**

All tour operators which agree to follow the Code of Conduct for Tour Operator Partners, and make the agreed contributions may become tour operator partners of the CBT-N-CC.

6.9.2 **Ethics for recommending Partner tour operators**

i) The CBT-N-CC will not discriminate between CBT-N-CC partner tour operators;

ii) The CBT-N-CC may offer advice to tourists, based on known specializations of partner tour operators. However, the CBT-N-CC must provide such advice about all partner tour operators with this specialization and cannot say TO “A” is better than TO “B”.
6.9.3 Confidentiality / respect for sensitive, commercial information

i) The CBT-N-CC will treat sensitive information confidentially. If the CBT-N-CC wishes to use potentially sensitive information (e.g. while making a presentation about the results of partnerships), they will first request advance permission from partner tour operators;

ii) Sensitive information will never be used for personal profit by the CBT-N-CC staff;

6.9.4 Coordination and marketing

i) The CBT-N-CC will prioritize requests from tour operators on a first-come, first-served basis, except under exceptional circumstances, where a slow response could have a serious negative impact on a CBT-N-CC member or the safety / security of tourists;

ii) However, the CBT-N-CC can provide limited handling services for non-commercial groups which come with the objective of studying CBT or sustainable development.
6.10 **Code of Conduct for tour operators working with the CBT-N-CC**

Partner tour operators agree to follow the recommended best practices for partner tour operators, which are described in the first section of this handbook. In addition:

i) Tour operators can contact CBT communities directly to discuss / develop programs.

ii) Tour operators can promote their programs using a **CBT-N-CC partner logo**, when the tour operator is an official partner of the CBT-N-CC, with an up to date registration fee, and has made a clear agreement with the community, and sent a copy to CBT-N-CC.
iii) Tour operators can promote 2 types of programs, with different conditions:

A) **Standard programs:** It is not necessary for a partner tour operator to visit the community in advance of promoting a standard CBT program, as long as the community has prior experience welcoming tourists, and is happy for the tour operator to promote their standard program. However, the tour operator (or CBT-N-CC) must contact the community to introduce themselves and to inform the CBT group that they wish to promote their standard program. The tour operator must also complete a ‘standard program report form’ reporting the agreed program, price and other agreements and send it to the CBT-N-CC.

B) **New, tailor-made, or individual programs:** In this case, to ensure clear understanding and expectations, the tour operator must visit the community to discuss the new program before promoting it, and must reach a clear agreement with the CBT group.

iv) Before promoting a CBT program, the tour operator must either coordinate with the community, or visit the community and make a formal agreement between the TO and CBT group. A copy of this report must be sent to the CBT-N-CC.
6.11 Code of conduct to be followed by CBT-N-CC communities

i) CBT-N members which want to be promoted by the CBT-N-CC will agree to follow the ‘Ready for Market’ list, work hard to maintain high service standards and;

ii) Will appoint a named, responsible coordinator, who is easily contactable, or at least indicates and respects clear times when they can be easily contacted;

iii) Will send information and photographs, if available, to tour operator partners to help them to market the community and CBT program accurately;

iv) Will record, check and honour bookings made by partner tour operators. Communities will report actual sales to the CBT-N-CC every 3 months;

v) Will communicate positive and negative experiences with the CBT-N-CC;

vi) Will work actively with tour operators and the CBT-N-CC to solve problems;
6.12 Formal Agreements between the CBT-N-CC and Tour Operators

In order to stress the importance of a close and trustful relation between TO’s and local and national CBT, framework agreements should be signed with tour operators.

The framework agreement is based on these agreed, general Codes of Conduct for relations between Partner TOs and the CBT-N-CC, which define mutual expectations.

Tour operators which sign a co-operation agreement are considered to be official partners of the CBT-N-CC, and rewarded with CBT-N-CC TO Partner Status and the benefits described above.

i) Complementary agreements will be made between TOs and the CBT Service Providers

ii) The CBT-N-CC will help partner tour operators and CBT-N member communities to solve problems or bottlenecks in cooperation, on request from either partner.
## 6.13 Booking permission system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Booking / Clients</th>
<th>Individual clients outside Thailand</th>
<th>Individual clients in Thailand</th>
<th>Thai non CBT-N-CC partner TO</th>
<th>Thai CBT-N-CC partner TO</th>
<th>Outbound (international) TO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct booking to CBT Comm.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes (v. unlikely)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via provincial CBT network</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes (unlikely)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via CBT-N-CC</td>
<td>CBT-N-CC will send enquiries to partner TO’s or communities with English speaker</td>
<td>CBT-N-CC will send enquiries to communities or partner TOs</td>
<td>CBT-N-CC send to member communities to consider</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Advise to work w/ Thai tour operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via partner TO</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Advise to become a partner</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Explanation:**

i) CBT communities can accept direct bookings from all parties;

ii) Partner TO’s and communities must inform the CBT-N-CC of bookings and actual visitors to CBT-N communities;

iii) Provincial CBT Networks can accept bookings from all parties;

iv) CBT-N-CC can handle bookings from partner TOs, on request;

v) Community and partner TO inform CBT-N-CC of bookings / sales every 3 months.
6.14 Cancelling membership / partnership status

CBT-N member communities and tour operator partners are free to cancel their membership / partnership status at any time, on written notice to the CBT-N-CC. The CBT-N-CC request that a reason is given for a decision to cancel. Paid up membership / partnership contributions are not refundable.

6.15 Revoking Partnership Status

i) Complaints regarding breaches in agreements by communities or partner tour operators will be resolved depending on the details of the agreements reached by communities and tour operators. If either partner wishes to make a formal complaint, they can contact the CBT-N-CC or CBT-I for assistance.

ii) Violation of the rules will result in a first warning in writing to the party concerned;

iii) After a second and final warning the partnership can be canceled.
7. Additional information

For more information or to request an application form, please contact:

The Thailand Community Based Tourism Network (CBT-N)
Lies under the umbrella of The Thailand Community Based Tourism Institute (CBT-I)

Address : CBT-N Coordination Center
The Thailand Community Based Tourism Institute
Room 216, Pentecost Building, Payap University, Mae Khao Campus
Muang, Chiang Mai, 50000 Thailand

Website : http://cbtnetwork.org
E-mail : thaicbtnetwork@gmail.com
Tel. : +66 (0) 5385-1478 Ext. 7261 | Mobile : +668 1111 4871 | Fax : +66 5385 1757
Skype : CBT.Network.Thailand
A sincere thank-you to all of the tour operators who have invested time and energy over the past 10 years, working to support community based tourism:

| Ami Thai Ticket and Travel | Andaman Discoveries | Asian Trails | Asien Travel |
| Bangkok Vanguards | Buffalo Tours | Diethelm Travel | Exotissimo Travel & the Exo Foundation |
| Friends of Nature | G Adventures | Intrepid Travel | Khiri Travel | Kob Trekking | Local Alike |
| Natural Focus | NS Travel and Tours | Nutty’s Adventures | Oriental Voyage |
| Peak Adventure Travel | Responsible Travel Dot Com | Royal Silk Holidays | Sawadee Reizen |
| Thailande Autrement | Tiger Trail Thailand | Tour Merng Tai |
| Travel4Good and Volunteers without Borders | Trekking Collective | Trekking Thai | Visit Beyond |
| Wild Thailand |