Community Based Tourism Guideline For Recovery Plan

Bangladesh Tourism Board
Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism

Introduction

Tourism in developing countries has been seen as an industry that can provide much-needed economic benefits in rural and remote areas to communities that lack knowledge and financial resources to take part in tourism development without external support. New development paradigms created under the umbrella of sustainability introduced principles that support and encourage self-help, self-reliance, and empowerment of communities. When sustainable tourism was introduced as a new global standard to replace conventional tourism, many countries designed policies that reflected this shift. As a result, concepts such as community participation, empowerment, transparency, fairness, equity, and equality were integrated into national regulations and development strategies. However, these principles are not met purely by a simple statement in a policy document. For a policy to be effective, the objectives need insurance in terms of mechanisms that facilitate or guarantee compliance with these principles. The failure to provide them discredits the policy leading to its illegitimacy. Despite the potential, in many instances, the policies, plans, or programs do not provide a sufficient basis for meaningful community involvement.

Objectives

The main objectives of the Community Based Tourism Policy are as follows:

- To facilitate partnership
- To restrict new accommodation
- To develop policy in reducing import
- To empower the community and ownership
- To empower the community leaders
- To optimize the potential of local products
- Conversation of resources
- Social and economic development
- Quality visitor experience

Guiding Principles

This Policy adopts internationally recognized principles which serve to direct the development of CBT in a manner which ensures that the community is the primary beneficiary while allowing the visitor to enjoy meaningful participation in community based activities.

The guiding principles, have been adopted from the Asian Community Based Tourism Standard (2016) and Responsible Ecological Social Tour (REST, 2003). The CBT development Society is committed to:

- Ensure that community ownership is recognized, supported and promoted

- Recognize the need for environmental preservation, protection and conservation and therefore sustainability

- Facilitate the preservation of and respect for the local culture;

- Enable education and awareness through meaningful interaction and cross-cultural learning;

- Distribute derived benefits fairly and transparently, particularly within the community;

- Enhance social well-being; and

- Encourage and provide capacity building for entrepreneurship and other essentials within the community.

Goals

The goals set for the development of the CBT are:

- To engage and empower local communities in the planning and decision making process for the development, management and ownership of tourism products and services;

- To support the preservation, protection and restoration of the natural assets and resources within the community;

- To support and facilitate an enabling environment that stimulates local investment in tourism and sectorial linkages in the community;

- To promote an environment for the health, safety and security of residents and visitors; and

- To support the development of strategic partnerships with the private sector, NGOs, CBOs and funding agencies that support CBT.

Public policy

Public policy is made by governmental actions: what governments say and what they do in relation to a problem or controversy. Definitions of public policy highlight the fact that for a policy to be considered public, it must have been shaped within a framework of procedures determined by stakeholders with authority to solve specific problems. It does not imply, however, the involvement of non-governmental stakeholders in the design of the policy or that these problems are public. If policies, plans, or programs do not provide a sufficient basis for meaningful community participation, they can be considered ineffective, as the law alone does not ensure legitimacy. The involvement that leads the governed people to understand, value, and fulfil the regulatory framework is the condition that ensures and shapes its legitimacy. After all, policies and legislation should be developed in a way that creates a real possibility for the local people to play a major role in determining their own benefits from tourism.

To date, despite increasing attention focusing on evaluating the outcomes and process of tourism Policy-making, there has been very little systematic or detailed examination of policy outputs, such as documents. There is an evident gap in terms of frameworks that propose applicable universal criteria against which policy documents could be evaluated. In

consequence, studies evaluating and/or comparing the effectiveness of tourism policy documents in meeting specific objectives are scarce.

Community Participation, CBT and Public Policy

Definition of a community and a CBT initiative: "a community is a delimited place where people live and meet their daily needs trying to pursue their collective or individual agendas.

A community-based tourism initiative is a project or program, or collective action of a group of people that belong to a community that decided to participate in, or develop together a small to medium scale local tourism industry". Participation is a key concept in CBT development.

It is a form of voluntary action in which individuals confront opportunities and responsibilities of citizenship, such as self-governance, response to external decisions that impact one's life, and collaborative work on collective issues. However, not all types of participation in tourism are equally beneficial for communities. In a strong sense, participation gives the real possibility of finding a common ground of relative equality with other stakeholders to decide on the development objectives of the community. In the weak sense, participation is limited to taking part in planning and management activities but without any real possibility of influencing major decisions and outcomes. According to this conception, participation fluctuates between two extremes: people either possess the power to influence decisions or are just spectators of the process.

In this context, the CBT has been focused on strong participation that involves community control over management and development of tourism, ownership and generation of direct financial benefits. Goodwin and Santilli note that the two most significant criteria used in the academic definitions of CBT are community ownership/management and community benefit. Although communities can receive benefits from participating in tourism without having direct control or ownership, these benefits are centred mostly on the provision of low-level employment for local people (e.g.,). Therefore, the high level of participation originally described by Arnstein is what separates CBT from participation in conventional tourism. Tourism initiated and led by the communities is more likely to maximize the desired social and economic outcomes.

It should be noted that CBT development is often not something that can be easily decided by local people and then executed. It requires recognition from powerful, multi-dimensional, and in many instances, anti-participatory stakeholders that dominate lives or local people. The problem of power relations is central to the equitable and sustainable community-based tourism development. Power relation is also an inseparable characteristic of policy design. Since policy formulation is influenced by various actors, the characteristics of participants, their authority, power and the way they deal with and control each other will affect the final outcome.

Despite the involvement of many actors representing various interests, all policy-making can be considered political due to the overwhelming use of government authority. Therefore, for communities to develop CBT a shift in balance between the powerful and the powerless is

required, not only in terms of economic, psychological, and social power but also political power

to drive CBT implementation and influence public policy to support meaningful community involvement. The latter can be achieved through partnership arrangements with community stakeholders. Although this sort of measures has some important disadvantages, the actors and the way they relate to each other influence perceptions of policy formed through negotiation of interests and communication of knowledge. In this way, a policy can be shaped and even renegotiated with those affected by it which, in turn, increases its legitimacy. It should be further stressed that even after implementation, communication, and negotiation may trigger new rounds of policy-making. The implication of these debates impacts the subsequent shape of the network of the actors, encouraging strategic learning, and in some cases affecting the power balance among those involved.

Framework for Policy

1. **Fundamentals of the principle of participation**

   - Clear definition of the community
   - Involvement of community stakeholders in the tourism planning stage
   - Creation of a forum/network to facilitate mutual understanding and communication among stakeholders
   - Local representation in the management of protected areas
   - No excessive formality and bureaucracy in the processes of community involvement

2. **Administrative governance**

   - Political commitment to support community-based tourism
   - Non-Overlapping jurisdiction of different agencies
   - Regulation enforcement
   - Government interest in remote regions
   - Expertise among personnel
   - The roles and responsibilities of the community and partners are clearly defined
   - No corruption of government officials

3. **Capacity development and assessment**

   - Technical cooperation
   - Provision of capacity-building
   - Effective individual leadership
   - Skills and expertise in areas required for tourism
   - Presence of management structure
   - Management skills
   - High level of participation in community organizations
   - Good management of funds
   - Consistent (non-fragmented) community organization
   - Marketing skills
   - Fostering relationships between local and national/international experiences
   - Tourism leadership from within the community
   - No reliance on external actors to start and lead the initiative

4. Protection of community rights

- Independence in the decision making process
- Healthy and equal relationship and coordination with institutions providing assistance
- Clarity about tourism and its costs and benefits
- Dissemination of information about planned tourism development and related opportunities
- Primacy of local interests over private interests
- Primacy of local interests over external interests
- Tourism based on traditions and local customs that attract tourists and strengthen the role of the community
- Recognition of the importance of community participation
- Strict community norms and rules that are enforced
- Respect for local traditions, community leadership and traditional authorities
- Community control over land and resources
- High level of control over tourism activities in the area
- Tourism is not the only economic activity, it complements other activities and does not conflict with them
- No conflict between traditional resource use practices with conservation objectives of the protected area
- Lease of communal lands / contractual partnership with tour operators
- Awareness of the importance of current tourism resources
- Resistance to selling land to outsiders
- Legal sustainable use of the natural resources in the area

5. Distribution of benefits

Unity of the community and/or understanding of the importance of collective over individual actions
- Involvement of community stakeholders in the tourism planning stage
- Involvement of community stakeholders in management / Co-management
- Increased community pride due to foreign visits
- Communal sense of ownership of the initiative
- Noticeable improvement of quality of life in the community (health, education, economy)
- Financial support
- Mechanism for distribution of profit
- Significant employment in tourism
- Equity in benefit distribution
- Awareness of the importance of nature conservation in the area
- Low dependence on resource consumptive activities
- Absence of external actors that compete for the resources
- Lower pressure on natural resources because of employment in tourism