

FINAL REPORT



Workshop on

“Developing Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan for Suksamran Minor District, Ranong Province”

5-7 February 2007

Submitted to

The Post-Tsunami Sustainable Coastal Livelihoods Program

A Project of the University of Rhode Island (URI) in partnership with
The Asian Institute of Technology and University of Hawaii

Funded by USAID

Prepared by

Asian Center for Tourism Planning and Poverty Reduction (ACTPPR)

About the Center



Asian Center
for
Tourism Planning
and
Poverty Reduction

The Asian Center for Tourism Planning and Poverty Reduction (ACTPPR) is a collaborative effort between the Faculty of Social Administration, Thammasat University and the School of Travel Industry Management, University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Address:

*Asian Center for Tourism Planning and Poverty
Reduction (ACTPPR)
Rm. 213, 2nd Floor, Faculty of Social Administration,
Thammasat University, Rangsit Campus Pathumthani
12121 Thailand Tel: (66 2) 696-5508-9 Fax: (66 2) 986-
8322 www.tu.ac.th/org/socadm/actppr*

Program

Feb 5, 2007

- 0900 Opening Remarks by Mr. Brian Crawford, CRC SUCCESS Director,
University of Rhode Island
- 0915-1015 Introduction to the workshop
- Objectives and activities
 - Participants introduce themselves and their expectations from the workshop
- 1030-1200 Situational Analysis on Suksamran Tourism
- 1200-1300 Lunch
- 1300-1400 Group Presentation on Situational Analysis
- 1400-1600 Stakeholder Consultation on “SWOT Analysis” for Suksamran
- Strengths
 - Weaknesses
 - Opportunities
 - Threats
- 1600-1700 Preliminary Assessment on Tourism Potential in Kampuan
By Pawinee Sunalai, Asian Center for Tourism Planning and Poverty
Reduction (ACTPPR)

Feb 6, 2007

- 0900-1000 Community-based Tourism Project at Ban Talenok by NATR
By Mr. Bodhi Garrett, Director of NATR and
Khun Darunee Phukdee, Project Coordinator
- 1000-1100 Presentation on “Draft Tourism Strategy of Ranong Province”
By Mr. Sawong Suwan, Center for Tourism, Sports and Recreation
- 1100-1200 Stakeholder Consultation on “Tourism Direction for Suksamran” (based on
SWOT analysis)
- 1200-1300 Lunch
- 1300-1400 Stakeholder Consultation on “Tourism Direction for Suksamran” (based on
SWOT analysis) (cont.)
- 1400-1500 Presentation on “Sustainable Tourism Concept and Principles”
By ACTPPR Team
- 1500-1700 Discussion on “Tourism Strategic Actions”

Feb 7, 2007

- 0900-1200 Development of “Tourism Strategic Plan for Suksamran”
- 1200-1300 Lunch
- 1300-1400 Implementation of Tourism Strategic Plan
- 1400-1500 Wrap-up for the Workshop
Closing Remarks

Table of Contents

Background	1
Objectives.....	1
Participants.....	1
Structure of the Workshop	1
Summary of the Workshop.....	3
Part 1: Situational Analysis on Suksamran Tourism	3
Part 2: SWOT Analysis for Suksamran	4
Part 3: Tourism Knowledge and Experience from Other Organizations.....	5
Part 4: Tourism Direction for Suksamran.....	7
Part 5: Sustainable Tourism Concept and Principles.....	8
Part 6: Strategic Tourism Plan for Suksamran.....	8
Establishment of Tourism Network for Suksamran.....	9
Conclusion	9
Recommendations	10
1. For Suksamran Community	10
2. For SCL-USAID Project.....	10

BACKGROUND

The community of Suksamran has never had a tourism plan and for the last 10 years tourism activities in this area have been minimal. The SCL-USAID project recognized that with a proper planning and management, tourism could be an important tool for poverty reduction and a better quality of life for the Suksamran community. Thus the workshop on “Developing Sustainable Tourism Strategy Plan for Suksamran” was held February 5-7, 2007. The program was developed and delivered by the Asian Center for Tourism Planning and Poverty Reduction (ACTPPR), which is a collaborative effort between the Faculty of Social Administration, Thammasat University and the School of Travel Industry Management, University of Hawaii at Manoa. The intent of this workshop was to bring major stakeholders involved in Suksamran tourism together to share experience, exchange information and views on tourism in order to understand the present tourism situation in Ranong and specifically in Suksamran and to determine a strategic direction for tourism in Suksamran.

OBJECTIVES

- To bring stakeholders together to share information and exchange views on the present tourism situation in Suksamran and explore the opportunities.
- To provide knowledge on the planning process for developing a tourism plan and sustainable tourism concepts and principles.
- To facilitate discussion on a tourism direction and develop a preliminary tourism plan for the Suksamran community.

PARTICIPANTS

This three-day workshop was held 5-7 February 2007 at the Learning Center of Kampuan Community in Suksamran Minor District. Participants are representatives from following organizations.

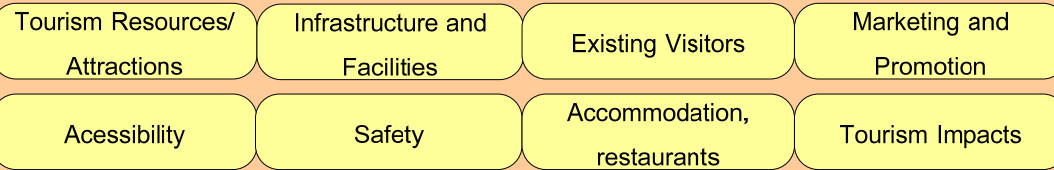
- Suksamran Minor District
- Center for Tourism, Sports and Recreation in Ranong Province
- Tambon Administration Organization (TAO) of Naka
- Tambon Administration Organization (TAO) of Kampuan
- Laemson National Park
- Village volunteers
- North Andaman Tsunami Relief (NATR)
- Wild Animal Rescue Foundation (WARF)
- Rak Thai Foundation
- Thailand Environment Institute (TEI)
- Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)

List of Participants, Trainers and Staff appears in Annex 1.

STRUCTURE OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop placed special emphasis on the participation of multi-stakeholders, intensive and interactive activities to discuss and exchange views and experience on tourism. Approaches and methods employed for the program included group discussions and presentations by guest speakers and trainers. This workshop was conducted in Thai. Contents of the workshop are in six parts as shown in Figure 1.

Step 1 Situational Analysis on Suksamran Tourism



Step 2 SWOT Analysis



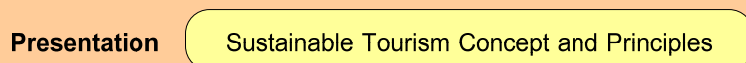
Step 3 Tourism Projects and Activities by Other Organizations



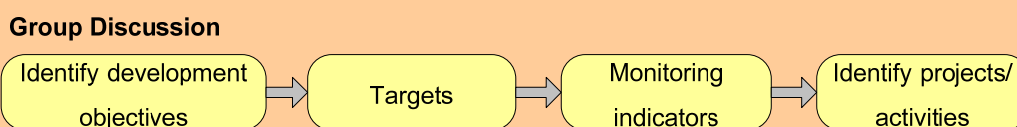
Step 4 Developing Tourism Direction and Strategic Actions



Step 5 Knowledge on Sustainable Tourism



Step 6 Drafting a Tourism Development Plan by Suksamran Community



SUMMARY OF THE WORKSHOP

Part 1: Situational Analysis on Suksamran Tourism

The objective of Part 1 was to illustrate to the participants how to carry out situational analysis on tourism and the type of issues/factors that need to be taken into consideration. The followings issues were discussed.



- Tourism resources/attractions/activities (e.g. cultural resources, natural resources, tourism activities, language, way of life, authenticity, shopping, events and festivals)
- Infrastructure and facilities e.g. electricity, water supply, solid waste and wastewater management, transportation, pollution control – whether there is any problem related to this issue.
- Accessibility – mode of transportation to this area, public transportation exists, access to the attractions, existing directional signage.
- Tourism impacts – whether there are any positive and negative impacts (environmental, social, cultural and economic aspects) in relation to tourism.
- Safety of tourists traveling to and around Suksamran.
- Existing visitors – who they are, where they are from, length of stay, spending behavior.
- Accommodation and local restaurant services – number of services, target market, service quality.
- Marketing and promotion – what has been done so far.

Summary on Situational Analysis

- Participants identified natural attractions and activities as their tourism products that have been offered to tourists such as trekking, canoeing, camping, Thai cooking class. Local culture and seafood were identified as potential tourism experience/products that can be offered to tourists.
- Majority of visitors are Thais from other areas in Ranong province or from nearby provinces. Most of them are individual tourists and normally travel to Suksamran between November – February.
- Visitors can travel to Suksamran by road or by air. Before there was a direct flight Bangkok-Ranong but operation ceased after the Tsunami. Thus, visitors will have to fly to Phuket and then drive up to Suksamran for 3 hours. This is seen as an obstacle for tourism development in Suksamran.
- Traveling around Suksamran is still inconvenient since the lack of public transportation makes it difficult for visitors to move around from one attraction to another in Suksamran. Visitors would need to have their own vehicles.
- There is only one bungalow and homestay service in Suksamran for visitors who would like to stay over night. If visitors prefer to stay at better accommodation, they have to go to nearby areas/districts.
- There are no safety standard when taking tourists out for trekking or snorkeling.

Detail situational analysis from group discussion appears as Annex 2 (in Thai).

Part 2: SWOT Analysis for Suksamran

This part was intended to facilitate discussion among participants to identify strengths and weaknesses of Suksamran as well as identify opportunities and threats as they relate to tourism development in Suksamran.

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tourism resources ▪ Human resource ▪ Infrastructure and facilities ▪ Accessibility, safety ▪ Marketing and promotion ▪ Tourism service 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tourism resources ▪ Human resource ▪ Infrastructure and facilities ▪ Accessibility, safety ▪ Marketing and promotion ▪ Tourism service
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public policy ▪ Private policy/plan/activities ▪ Trends related to tourism 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oil price ▪ Economy ▪ Terrorism in the South

Results from SWOT Analysis

- For the past 10 years, Suksamran, composed of 2 sub-districts - Kampuan and Naka sub-districts, has never had a clear tourism direction or tourism plan before. Local government has carried out some limited projects such as improving access to attractions, providing signage and constructing the restrooms.
- Tourists are not aware of attractions in Suksamran (except for a few – Prapad beach and Talenok beach), partly because there is a lack of information and signage to inform visitors of what Suksamran has to offer. And for those beaches that are currently known to the public, after being hit by the Tsunami, there are few activities at the beach and cleanliness is also an issue.
- Suksamran is situated in the area where a number of people would have to pass on their way to the South e.g. Phuket, this can be seen as an opportunity for Suksamran. However at present Suksamran has not been able to attract those people since visitors are not aware of attractions at Suksamran.

Observations during the Group Work

- Lack of sufficient and accurate information to be used for the analysis such as information on visitors at attractions.
- Participants experienced some difficulty in identifying obstacles to tourism. This was partly because they did not view themselves as visitors or outsiders.
- It was observed that when assessing the strengths of the destination participants used their feelings and impressions rather than relying on available information (e.g. number of visitors, number of repeat visitors, visitors' satisfaction).

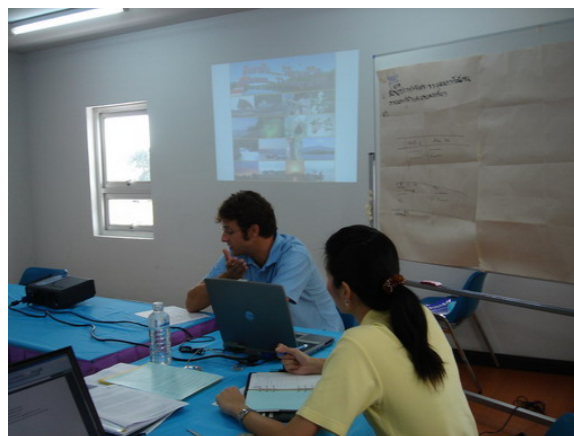
Detail of the SWOT analysis from group discussion appears as Annex 3 (in Thai).

Part 3: Tourism Knowledge and Experience from Other Organizations

This part was designed to provide knowledge/information from other organizations on their tourism projects working in this area in order to learn from other organizations' experience.

Ecotourism Project in Ban Talenok by NATR

North Andaman Tsunami Relief (NATR) is an independent, non profit organization that provides assistance to Tsunami-affected coastal communities of the North Andaman. To date NATR has implemented over 120 projects in twelve villages focusing on human needs and services. One of the twelve villages is Talenok village in Suksamran and the project is an ecotourism development that is managed and operated by the local community. The following are activities available in Ban Talenok.



- Homestay
- Thai cooking class
- Traditional fishing
- Snorkeling
- Camping, hiking
- Hand-crafted soap demonstration

In 2005 there were approximately 150 visitors to Talenok village and most of them are foreigners. Revenues from tourists go directly to the villagers with a small percentage going into a community fund in order to benefit the whole community and not only those directly engaged in the tourism activities. NATR described factors contributing to the success of this project are:

- a. The use of sustainable tourism concepts and principles with a focus on culture and nature s were seen as the strength of Suksamran.
- b. Provide training programs on a wide range of topics such as tourism, English, computers and business development.
- c. Assist in marketing such as promoting village-based tourism of Ban Talenok on NATR website at www.andamandiscoveries.com, creating booking system, contacting tour operators, involving volunteers from the village in a marketing program.

Tourism Strategy of Ranong Province

The Center for Tourism, Sports and Recreation of Ranong Province has just completed developing a tourism strategy for Ranong province. It would be useful for Suksamran to be aware of what the provincial tourism strategy and determine how Suksamran's tourism direction would fit into the overall strategy. Summary of the strategy includes:



Vision: To be a center for health tourism in the region

Objectives:

1. Promote and develop health tourism in Ranong.
2. Develop and promote health tourism products and services that would match the needs of the customers.
3. Enhance service quality of health tourism.
4. Encourage and enhance competitiveness of health tourism products and services.
5. Develop human resources in the tourism industry to become more competitive.
6. Create job opportunities for Ranong people.

Strategy:

1. Enhance tourism competitiveness

Strategic Actions

- Develop tourism infrastructure and facilities for health tourism
- Develop human resources in tourism services
- Develop effective marketing and promotion
- Develop human resources in tourism management

2. Develop quality tourism products and services

Strategic Actions

- Develop health tourism products
- Conduct research and development on tourism in Ranong

3. Develop integrated tourism management

Strategic Actions

- Develop effective management system for health tourism
- Manage tourism in a sustainable way
- Develop data base/inventory for tourism resources in Ranong

Preliminary Assessment on Tourism Potential in Kampuan

The objective of this study was to assess tourism potential in Kampuan sub-district. It was funded by the SCL-USAID project and carried out in 2005 by the Asian Center for Tourism Planning and Poverty Reduction, which is a collaborative effort between the Faculty of Social Administration, Thammasat University and the School of Travel Industry Management, University of Hawaii at Manoa. Based on this preliminary assessment, it can be concluded that Kampuan has little tourism potential as a single destination given that its attractions do not have a strong competitive advantage compared to other nearby attractions. In addition, there is little tourism infrastructure and facilities to accommodate tourists in the area i.e. accommodation, restaurants, local transportation, information about the attractions etc. Based on this reality the next step in the development process must be to assess market conditions and tourism possibilities within the larger regional setting.

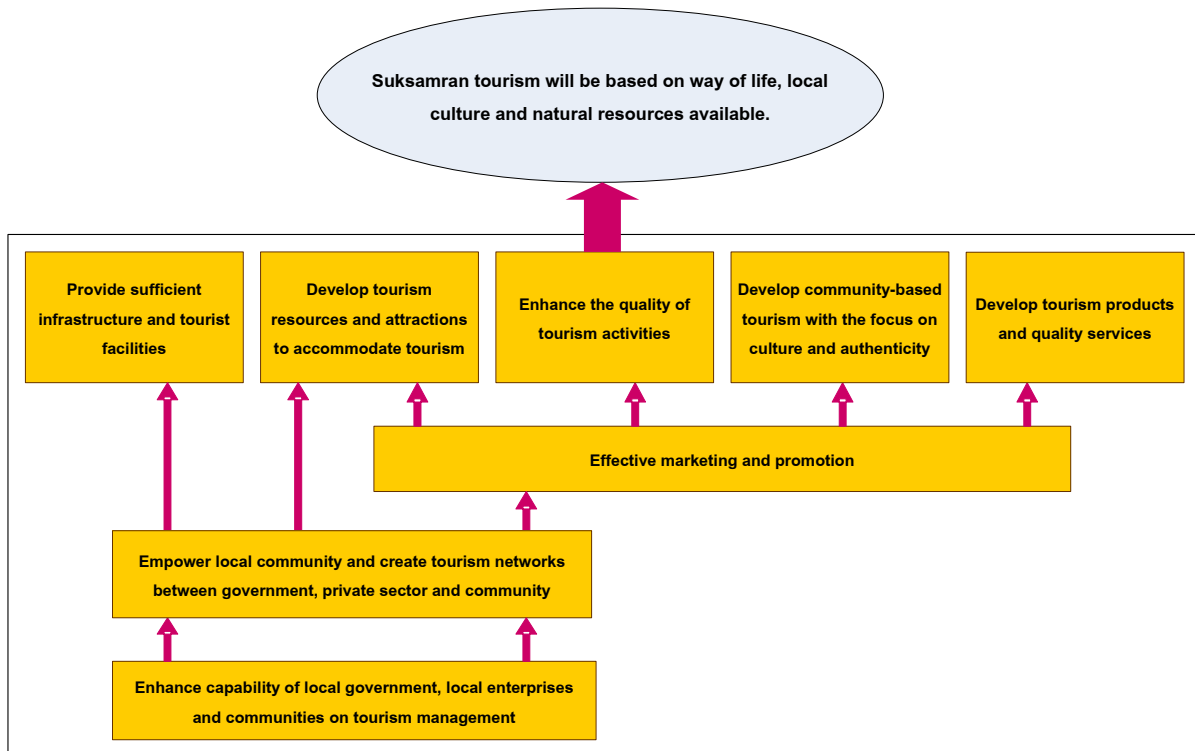
In order to achieve the SCL-USAID objective of diversifying local economic activity in Kampuan and through the use of revolving funds for tourism SMEs, two main recommendations are proposed.

- That a complete market assessment study be carried out looking at not only the target area but the larger regional setting.
- Based on the market study develop a tourism strategy for Kampuan and its region.

Powerpoint presentation and related documents appear as Annex 4.

Part 4: Tourism Direction for Suksamran

This part intended to determine tourism direction and develop strategic actions based on SWOT analysis from Part 2. Participants were divided into 2 small groups to do a brain storming. The below figure illustrates tourism direction and strategies for Suksamran based on group discussions.



The next step is to develop the overall strategic tourism plan based on tourism direction and strategic actions. The plan is comprised of the goal, key performance indicators, existing target, proposed target (in the next 3 years) and strategies used to achieve the objectives.

Key performance indicators to assess how well the community is doing can be divided into 3 aspects including environment, economic and social & culture. Indicators derived from this brain storming session can be seen as a result from this exercise only. There is still a need for further change and development of these indicators to be more realistic and practical.



Observations during the Group Work

- It was noted that people felt more comfortable to express their views and thoughts and exchange ideas when they were divided into smaller groups.
- The identification of indicators and targets required accurate and sufficient background information and the participation of all relevant stakeholders. Unfortunately this workshop did not have sufficient information or a representative stakeholder group. In order to overcome this deficiency there will be a need to

develop and finalize the draft plan by taking into consideration views from all stakeholders and accessing relevant existing information.

Draft overview of strategic tourism plan for Suksamran appears as Annex 5 (in Thai and English).

Part 5: Sustainable Tourism Concept and Principles

This part provided basic knowledge on tourism in order that participants consider and use sustainable tourism concepts and principles as a basis for developing a detailed tourism strategic action plan. The main contents of this session included components of the tourism industry, types of tourism, concepts and principles of sustainable tourism, and a challenge for Suksamran to balance tourism development with cultural conservation and environmental protection. The trainer teams also provided participants with a book on “Integrated Planning for Sustainable Tourism Development” for further readings and information.

Powerpoint presentation appears as Annex 6.

Part 6: Strategic Tourism Plan for Suksamran

Objective of this part was for participants to identify necessary projects or activities for each strategy developed from Part 4 and to also think about what key performance indicators can be used to evaluate the success of each strategy as well as examine existing and proposed targets are. Given the time limitation of this workshop, it was impossible for participants to complete the plan, as can be seen from the Annex that some parts are still missing and some activities/ projects need further improvement. Thus this section is seen as a learning process for participants to continue to work together and develop a strategic tourism plan.

Observations during the Group Work

- It seems to be easier for participants to identify projects and activities rather than think about key performance indicators. One issue that was not discussed during the group work was how practical are those indicators, who would and how to collect and analyze the information. These issues need to be considered when developing a plan.
- Since there is a lack of background information or a data base, participants have difficulty in determining the exact proposed targets. Thus it is suggested that a database be created so that the tourism plan for Suksamran is developed based on accurate information.



Draft detail tourism strategic plan appears as Annex 7 (in Thai and English version).

ESTABLISHMENT OF TOURISM NETWORK FOR SUKSAMRAN

At the end of the workshop participants suggested that there is a need for a tourism network for Suksamran responsible for further development of this tourism strategic action plan. The network would be formed from stakeholders participating at this workshop as follows:

Suksamran Minor District	Head of the Working Group
Tambon Administration Organization (TAO) of Naka	Working Group
Tambon Administration Organization (TAO) of Kampuan	Working Group
Laemson National Park	Working Group
Klong Naka Wildlife Sanctuary	Working Group
Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)	Advisor
Thailand Environment Institute (TEI)	Advisor
Provincial Administration Organization of Ranong	Advisor

Participants committed that after the workshop the working group will invite more stakeholders to get involved in the tourism planning process e.g. private sector and local occupational group.

CONCLUSION

This was the first time that Suksamran participated in this kind of workshop that provided information on the planning process for developing a strategic tourism plan and sustainable tourism concepts and principles as well as facilitated discussion about Suksamran's tourism situation and its future direction. Although there were only 10 participants, they attended the workshop to exchange information and ideas, and to discuss possible tourism directions for Suksamran during these three days which reflects their commitment and willingness to work together on developing tourism. In addition having local officials from Laemson National Park and Naka and Kampuan sub-districts at the meeting also indicates the level of support and assistance from local government to work with the community and other stakeholders to develop and promote sustainable tourism for Suksamran.

However, since this workshop did not have the participation of all the major stakeholders such as representatives from TAT regional office who are experts in marketing, promotion and tourist statistics and from private enterprises (local accommodation, restaurants, fishing community), the tourism strategic action plan from group discussion can be seen as a preliminary draft only and needs further development. Therefore, it is essential that stakeholders work together to develop the final Suksamran tourism plan

A friendly environment for discussion/consultations created at the workshop helped participants feel comfortable in sharing/expressing their views and ideas and also in working together to develop the first draft tourism plan for Suksamran. Since people had a chance to participate in this tourism plan, it creates a feeling of "ownership" of the plan, which is an important element for tourism planning. To further develop the Suksamran tourism plan, more stakeholders must be involved and given the opportunity to participate in the planning process in order to create a strong sense of ownership by all stakeholders. This could lead to a strong commitment to tourism activities and to ensure success.

In conclusion this workshop initiated by the SCL-USAID project was a good start for developing a responsible tourism for Suksamran community. There will be a need for further supports in terms of technical and financial assistance for them to move ahead and ensure

that Suksamran adopt tourism as one of their sources of economic development that builds on its traditional activities while still achieving the benefits of tourism development as discussed in this workshop.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For Suksamran Community

- Establish a tourism working group or tourism committee for Suksamran that involves stakeholders from the community, government and the private sector.
- The working group calls meetings involving all local stakeholders to share ideas on the tourism direction and strategic tourism plan for Suksamran.
- The working group is to revise a draft tourism plan and present to all major stakeholders for their consideration and approval.

2. For SCL-USAID Project

- Technical Assistance

- Capacity Building

If Suksamran community is to assume responsibility for their futures, they need time to develop the necessary skills/knowledge and recognize the importance of sustainable approaches to community development. Capacity building program must be in place for local government and communities on several aspects related to sustainable tourism planning and management such as:

- Process for getting the community ready for tourism
- Destination management
- Visitor management and interpretation
- Tourism services
- Marketing and Product development
- Monitoring

These could be offered through traditional classroom settings while others could be through informal discussions and meetings with focus groups, study tours.

- Research

There will be a need to conduct a market study that will identify the nature and quality of the existing visitor experience, assess the market demands and the potential for particular products/services, identify appropriate target market segments and determine whether the demand is sufficient to justify the investment of the local community. This activity is important to ensure the viability of tourism activities/services that Suksamran will develop in the future.

- Advisor

The role of the advisor is to assist and support the Suksamran community to continue working on its tourism plan, to facilitate discussion during the stakeholders' meetings or workshops and to provide advice throughout the planning process.

- Financial Assistance

In order to conduct follow-up activities based on the results of this workshop, there is a need for financial assistance to initiate this step. The SCL-USAID project should consider providing some funds to support meetings, research and a pilot project for the Suksamran community.