



ALTERNATIVE KUDAT CBET COLLECTIVE
Framework for Community-based Ecotourism Development



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Alternative Kudat CbEt Collective Framework for Community-based Ecotourism Development

The framework for community-based ecotourism (CbEt) development have been tailor-made for local CbEt development in Kudat, particularly for the five communities that make up the Alternative Kudat CbEt Collective (AKCC). Based on the tenets of sustainable development and AKCC vision, these guidelines aim to identify some underlying principles as well as some practical considerations on a local level. Additionally, this framework can be referenced by local communities that wish to establish CbEt in their respective villages as well as other stakeholders such as governmental agencies, donor organizations and the private sector, for guidance, planning and the overall decision-making process for the current development and the future expansion of AKCC as well as the overall development of CbEt in Kudat.



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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AKCC	Alternative Kudat CbEt Collective
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian
ATSP	ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan
CbEt	community-based ecotourism
CBNRM	Community-based Natural Resource Management
CBST	Community-based Sustainable Tourism
CBTS	Community-based Tourism Standard
CTI-SEA	Coral Triangle Initiative-South East Asia
ESOK	Ecotourism Society of Kenya
FiTs	free and independent travellers
FR	forest reserve
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KCDP	Kudat CbET Development Plan
km	kilometre
KTCS	Kudat Turtle Conservation Society
NGO	nongovernmental organization
PA	protected area
TOC	Respect Our Culture
STSC	Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council
TLCC	Tajau Laut Conservation Club
TLGHM	Tajau Laut Guest House
TLGHM	Tajau Laut Guest House Management
TMP	Tun Mustapha Park
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WWF	World Wildlife Fund



I. THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM

A. Definition of Sustainable Development

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has established that international tourists have exceeded the 1 billion mark in 2014. As a major growth industry, unsound tourism development could leave a multiplicity of negative economic, social and environmental impacts. In order to mitigate such abhorrent outcomes, there is an imminent need for the adoption of alternative management and planning strategies based on the concept of 'sustainable development' which was introduced by the Brundtland Report in 1987. Although there are several definitions of sustainable tourism, it is useful to endorse one that can be widely accepted across the spectrum of tourism development, ranging from mass tourism to community-based ecotourism (CbEt).

Definition of sustainable tourism by the UNWTO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (2005):

"Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities".

Also known as the 'triple bottom line', sustainable development should address the equilibrium between the tenets of sustainability that refer to the environmental, economic and sociocultural aspects of tourism development. These sustainability principles are crucial for the development of destinations particularly in the case of CbEt in Kudat, where the majority of natural and cultural attractions occur within and adjacent to Protected Areas (PAs) that hosts unique and fragile terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

B. Community-based Ecotourism (CbEt)

The definition of ecotourism has taken many forms and have, to an extent, been loosely used to boost the marketing and promotion of other forms of tourism that have incorporated nature-based activities such as wildlife safaris and bird watching as part of their visitor programme. In its truest sense however, the approach to ecotourism should encompass all the tenets of sustainable development as described in the introduction.

CbEt is a form of tourism, envisioned, initiated, managed and owned by the local communities themselves which are generally small-scale and low-impact, involving close interactions between the host community and tourists, where cultural and social exchanges are key to visitor satisfaction. Usually established as a supplementary livelihood option alongside other livelihood activities, CbEt favours local service providers and suppliers, and would foster linkages and the distribution of benefits to other sectors of the community.

These community concerns usually occur in rural or remote areas, mostly located in or adjacent to PAs which in most cases, constitute areas of outstanding natural beauty. Therein lies a richness, not only in the natural beauty of the surroundings, but also in the cultural heritage that forms the allure for intrepid domestic and international travelers. The sustainable development of CbEt are as follows:

- Owned and managed by the community;
- Conserve and promote living cultural heritage and welfare;
- Provide funds for the conservation of the environment;
- Educate visitors about culture and nature;



- Enrich existing skills and develop new skill sets;
- Distribute benefits through economic linkages to other sectors of the community;
- Adopt good management practices;
- Prioritize visitor satisfaction and safety;
- Maintain and develop a network of stakeholders including other communities, governmental agencies and the private sector; and
- Empower and strengthen the community for future self-determination.

C. The Vision

The core of a successful CbEt initiative is the conceptualization of a clear vision should which offer a sound foundation and steer the course through various hurdles thus, setting the tone and direction for future development.

The Vision for CbEt

- Forms the foundation and core for CbEt development
- Fosters clear objectives;
- Incorporate long term goals;
- Encompasses the tenets of sustainable development;
- Owned and managed by local communities; and
- Accepted by local communities.

D. The Local Champions

The development of tourism is a double-edged sword and as a major driver for change, can lead to both positive and negative outcomes for local communities. However, through careful planning, awareness and education, opportunities should be able to outweigh the threats. Community participants should be lead to understand that the introduction of CbEt in their villages would bring about environmental and social changes when they come under increasing contact with outside visitors. On the outset, the communities should also seriously re-question their intention, need and ability to undertake the development of CbEt as it is important for them to understand that tourism, as with other livelihood options, is seasonal and should be considered as a source of supplementary and not, an alternative income.

In some cases, community participants would have had some experience in the tourism industry and in having done so, would wish to be engaged in the activity in a more proactive manner. However, the success of CbEt would rely on the identification of a local champion to lead the initiative, organize and inspire other champions in his or her wake. These individuals may or may not be a local leader nor have experience in the tourism industry, but should possess several positive qualities in order to take on the role as CbEt managers (**Table 1**).

Table 1: Qualities of a Local Champion

1. Visionary	7. Disciplined
2. Innovative	8. Inspirational
3. Communicative	9. Trustworthy
4. Proactive	10. Committed
5. Resourceful	11. Driven
6. Courageous	12. Organized
<i>Adapted from Handbook on Community Based Tourism: 'How to Develop and Maintain CBT'</i>	

E. Identifying and Developing the Right Skills

Tailor-made training programmes are meant to provide participants with appropriate skills in order to strengthen their engagement in CbEt. These training programmes should also guide the community into assessing their personal commitment to CbEt development thus, helping them to make informed choices before they fully embark in the enterprise. During this process, community expectations regarding the negative impacts of CbEt development are managed, and taken into account. Training programmes should also be evaluated and monitored, and any gaps should be identified in the process. It is also important to understand that successful engagement in CbEt would require ongoing skills development. Existing and developing skills should also be accompanied by advice and application. The skills for engagement in CbEt are as follows:

- Product and package development;
- Accommodation facilities;
- Emergency First Response;
- English as a communication tool;
- Best health and safety practices;
- Guiding services;
- Marketing and promotion;
- Best management practices;
- Information technology;
- Conservation and environmental awareness.

II. THE ALTERNATIVE KUDAT CBET COLLECTIVE (AKCC)

The Alternative Kudat CbEt Collective (AKCC) is located at the northern most district of Kudat, Sabah, Malaysian Borneo, in the Tun Mustapha Park (TMP) within the Coral Triangle Initiative-South East Asia (CTI-SEA). Funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), AKCC involves participants from five communities, Inukiran, Bavang Jamal, Loro Kecil, Tajau Laut and Limbuak (West Banggi Island). With the exception of the land-bound village of Inukiran, all the other communities are located along the coast in the Kudat Peninsular and Banggi Island.

THE AKCC VISION	
<i>"To empower, revitalize and strengthen local communities through a shared vision of economic, social, cultural and environmental sustainability" – 1st October 2016, Ria Hotel, Kudat</i>	
Vision Objectives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To form a CbEt loop encompassing the communities in order to celebrate the cultural and environmental uniqueness and diversity of Kudat; - To strengthen the basis for a supplementary livelihood option and poverty alleviation; - To provide a platform for product differentiation among the different communities; - To boost mutual support of the different products amongst these communities; - To foster a collaboration and strengthen bonds between these diverse communities; - To provide a stage for learning and sharing skills, information and ideas for CbEt planning, product development and management; - To create mutual cultural and environment awareness of what is unique in Kudat; - To strengthen a joint marketing and promotion strategy of tourism products; - To revitalize intangible and tangible culture; - To spread the benefits of CbEt development within AKCC; - To form a stage for stakeholder involvement and interaction; 	

- To pave the way to for other communities wishing to join AKCC in the future;
- To build a strong position for joint funding opportunities for CbEt development.

Gazetted in May 2016 as Malaysia's largest marine PA, Tun Mustapha Park consists of 1m hectares incorporating multi-use management zones. Four out of five communities in AKCC rely on marine resource use as a main livelihood supplemented by small-scale farming activities. In the face of climate change, the development of CbEt would provide a supplementary livelihood so as to lessen the reliance on marine resources deeming these communities as partners in the natural resource management process.

Also known as 'Alternative Kudat', AKCC was initially conceived in August 2016 as an all-encompassing vision that emphasizes on fostering the spirit of collaboration, understanding and acceptance, through the celebration of the richness and diversity of the environment and culture of these communities through the CbEt development. The main premise of the Vision is to form an interconnecting ecotourism loop between these villages thus, enabling intrepid visitors to experience an enriching diversity of cultures, landscapes and seascapes. The conceptualization of the Vision and its objectives forms the foundation of these guidelines, providing the community with important references for future expansion and development of CbEt in AKCC.

A. Travel Logistics to Kudat and AKCC

Access to Kudat is served by good road linkages from the capital, Kota Kinabalu, and can be reached by a three-weekly flight schedule from KK and Sandakan, from the west and east coasts respectively. Similarly, there are several public bus companies that operate a route from these main towns. The communities within AKCC which include Inukiran, Bavang Jamal, Loro Kecil and Tajau Laut on the Kudat Peninsular are connected by a good network of roads. The main port of Karakit on Banggi Island can be reached by public ferry, one hour from Kudat Town (Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2: Travel Logistics to Kudat and AKCC

Mode of Travel	Kudat	AKCC
Flights from Kota Kinabalu	✓	n/a
Flights from Sandakan	✓	n/a
Public Buses	✓	✓
Self-drive – Own transport	✓	✓
Self-drive – Car Hire	✓	✓
Ferry to Banggi from Kudat town	n/a	✓ (Banggi)

Table 3: Road Distances from Kota Kinabalu to Kudat and AKCC

AKCC	Kota Kinabalu (km)	Kudat (km)
Kota Kinabalu	n/a	174.4
Inukiran	114	45
Bavang Jamal	174.5	25
Loro Kecil	178	28.3
Tajau Laut	176.3	12
Banggi (Karakit)	174.4 (+38km)	38 km Ferry crossing

Travel logistics in general would hold the key to success for any destination. One of the main advantages of the communities in AKCC is its accessibility. Although Kudat is located 174.4 kilometers from the main town of Kota Kinabalu, it can also be accessed from other towns on the west and east coasts of Sabah. This destination is ideal for international tourists who are willing to self-drive. Furthermore, Kudat would also appeal to local families looking to take a long weekend break thus, taking advantage of extended public holidays and school holidays. Similarly, it is also possible for visitors to visit AKCC by air and public transport. Travel logistics within AKCC also holds the key to product development and the planning of itineraries, particularly for villages of Loro Kecil, Bavang Jamal and Tajau Laut. Inukiran can be conveniently incorporated into these itineraries and visited either on the way in or the way out of Kudat (**Table 4**).

Table 4: Road Distances within AKCC

Road Distances within AKCC (Kudat Peninsular)				
AKCC	INU	BJ	LK	TL
Inukiran	-	64	67.3	61
Bavang Jamal	64	-	3.3	21
Loro Kecil	67.3	3.3	-	24.3
Tajau Laut	61	21	24.3	-

B. The AKCC Communities

The map of Kudat and AKCC Villages is shown in the figure below.

Map of Kudat and AKCC Villages



1. Inukiran

Kampung Inukiran is located about 114 kilometer (km) from Kota Kinabalu (45 km from Kudat Town), 3.8 km from *Kg Matunggong* on the main Kota-Kinabalu-Kudat highway. The habitants of this village of 100 homes, elk out a living with agrarian pursuits of rubber, oil palm and fruit trees, and a vibrant cottage craft industry. Homes are generously spaced, surrounded by small-holdings on privately-owned land. Initiated by a local champion, *Monungkus* is a craft collective consisting mainly of women where basketry, beading and weaving skills are nurtured inter-generationally for the production of a range of products aimed for the handicraft market. These products are sold *in situ* and are also distributed to and sold by *Kraftangan* Malaysia, *Gerei Orang Asli* and *Kadai Ku*, a local craft shop in Kota Kinabalu.

The 'unique selling experiece' of the tourism product by this community is the experience of the craft production process. Cotton plants and natural plant dyes are cultivated for the production of yarn for the weaving of a traditional Rungus cloth that consists of three basic colours, black, red and yellow. Guests are taken to view the plants and are then are given a hands-on experience ridding the cotton of seeds, softening and conditioning through traditional labour-intensive methods facilitated by tools made from iron, bamboo and rattan. The final product is then steeped in an infusion of the desired colour. Weaving is then skillfully undertaken by the village elders and other trainee weavers. Similarly, guests can also experience basket weaving and beading with other members of *Monungkus*.

Guest facilities have recently been constructed which include a community development centre and a three-room guesthouse built as an extension to the *Monungkus* craft center which were built and financed by the community. Additionally, with materials and supplies provided by ADB CTI-SEA, the community has also constructed a longhouse with the view of the hills as well as a short trail that leads from the craft centre. There is also the potential to incorporate other village activities such as rubber tapping, harvesting of cotton and other plants for craft production as well as trekking in the the Matunggong forest reserve (Class 1 – Protection). The conservation of watersheds was also initiated with the planting of marang-parang trees along the river. These trees when in bloom, could offer the visitor a spectacle of bright orange flowers during the year-end months.

Revenue generated from CBET would supplement a vibrant cottage craft industry and under the local champion's leadership and passion, the community of Inukiran could present to a wider audience, a unique product through which guests can experience the authenticity of craft production in the traditional environment of the Rungus. This essentially authentic product has the potential to make an enriching contribution to the variety of the tourist experience.

2. Bavang Jamal

The village of Bavang Jamal, 25 km from Kudat town, is located adjacent to the well-known Kelambu Beach and has well-established tourism facilities in the form of a family-run Rungus longhouse set in a patch of coconut trees. Access to the majestic Kelambu Beach is provided through a short stone trail from the longhouse across the mangroves of the Bavang River. Currently accommodation facilities are also augmented by camping grounds and facilities on Kelambu Beach.

The local champion and owner of the longhouse, is also the co-founder of the Kudat Turtle Conservation Society (KTCS), a community-based conservation initiative. This initiative was established in 2011 with the sole objective to conserve and improve sea turtle populations in the



Tun Mustapha Marine Park. Aside for the usual intake of paying guests, the longhouse also receives visitors who wish to partake in turtle conservation activities. Since its founding, KTCS has established a turtle hatchery at Kelambu Beach as well as a visitor centre in the vicinity of the longhouse. Materials and supplies provided by ADB CTI-SEA have contributed to the building of the trails, extension of the visitor centre as well as camp ground facilities such as toilets and showers. Apart from beach activities, visitors can also enjoy spectacular sunsets from Kelambu Beach or Simpang Mangayau or the Tip of Borneo.

3. Loro Kecil

The main appeal of *Kampung* Loro Kecil is its setting of outstanding natural beauty in the secluded and pristine Loro Bay. Highly accessible, via a gravel road through paddy fields, the bay forms a teardrop shape with an entrance from the South China Sea, flanked by protruding headlands. Breathtaking sunsets are said to occur between the months of April to June when the sun disappears into the horizon in the centre of the opening of the bay. In the hinterland, the village is surrounded by forested ridges, 28.3 km from Kudat town, 19.5 km from the main Kota Kinabalu-Kudat highway. This community of Rungus elk out livelihoods as fishermen and small-scale farming of oil palm, wet and hill rice, vegetables and on a lesser scale, rubber trees. Home abodes numbering 13, are spread out by a white-sand beach in the bay into the nearby interior.

The community is currently receiving visitors sporadically sent by the nearby resorts of Tampat Do Aman and Tommy's place. However, there are no accommodation facilities for guests who would generally prefer to informally camp or visit the beach for a few hours. Currently, the local tourism champions would informally involve staying guests in village activities such as fishing and clam collecting. In some cases, boat trips are also provided into the mangroves of the Kudat and Marudu Bay Forest Reserve (FR) (Class V) on the Longgom River.

Another side attraction of Loro Kecil is the village of Loggom Kecil, set in the mangroves of the Longgom River which can be reached by a short boat ride from Loro Bay or by road, one kilometre away. This idyllic Rungus village is linked to the neighbouring community of Longgom Besar at the river's mouth through a series of boardwalks, bridges and paths. Although the inhabitants of Longgom Kecil have been approached in the past, they have not indicated an interest in CBET development. However, this village can still be involved in the form of river cruises through boat rental services.

Even without proper guest facilities, there is good potential for camping as indicated by a ready stream of visitors. Additionally, there is also a possibility to include village activities such as Rungus language lessons, fishing, shore fishing, rice harvesting and planting, nipah thatched roof-making and rubber tapping into the visitor itinerary. Trails can also be developed to the headlands for sunset viewing while the shallow waters of Loro Bay with constant eastward wind, partially barricaded by the protruding headlands, could be developed into a safe haven for snorkelling, windsurfing and traditional kayaking activities. Loro Kecil has also experienced a fair share of Japanese activity during the Second World War, as indicated by former bombed-out sites, rock etchings and the remains of a warship buried in the sand on the beach.

There is informal craft production by the village's elder, Nenek Pika, who has bequeathed the younger female generation with beading skills. Although small craft items such as bracelets, necklaces and purses have been produced, poor merchandising has restricted the sale of locally-produced craft. However, this hurdle can be overcome through creative marketing combined with design and product development to produce items that are unique to the locality.



Craft activity could also benefit from exposure to tourists visiting the village. Traditional weaving skills are also present in Loro Kecil. Similarly, there is a cultural dance troupe at the village that is hired sporadically for tourists on demand at the nearby resorts.

4. Tajau Laut

Kampung Tajau Laut is a fishing village located on the east coast of the Kudat peninsular with clear views of Balambangan and Banggi islands. The village is easily accessed through a series of meandering single-lane gravel and cemented roads, 12 km from Kudat town, 10-11 km from the main Kota Kinabalu – Kudat highway. Residential structures take the form of ubiquitous social housing, arranged in a linear pattern along a cemented main road. Tajau Laut currently has about 60 houses with the community consisting of Bajau, Suluk, Bonggi and several others.

Tajau Laut has simple guesthouse and chalet facilities, erected by a team of CbEt participants led by a local champion, that accommodates a maximum of 16 guests. Visitor activities would include mangroves trips for crab trapping, traditional kayaking, fishing and camping, as well as boat trips to the neighbouring Balambangan Island and other communities in the AKCC network. Tajau Laut Guesthouse management (TLGHM) also conducts diving and snorkelling packages including wreck diving. Visibility is deemed good at 50m thus, providing divers and snorkellers the opportunity to observe several coral species, micro sealife and sea fans. There is also the potential for seasonal whale shark and dolphin watching although this option have not been explored further.

Labuan FR (Class I – Protection) can be accessed via 3 km of gravel/cemented roads from the village. There have been opportunistic sightings of threatened and endangered wildlife such as the Bornean king cobra, bearcat (*Binturong*) and the western tarsier (*kera hantu*) in the reserve. Jungle trekking could be incorporated into the CbEt package combined with cycling tours to the Reserve. The village is also located 1.5 km via the shoreline to the mouth of the mangrove-lined Tajau River where dugongs and otters have been opportunistically sighted.

Balambangan island is within reach at 25 km away. This historical island boasts emerald water bays, white sand beachers, limestone outcrops, imposing cliff faces and caves. Culturally, home to the Bonggi, the island hosted the first ill-fated colonial settlement in North Borneo set up by the British East India Company through a treaty with the erstwhile Sultan of Sulu in 1773 (Warren 2007). To date, Balambangan has been assessed for filming by a company called Rope Skills Rigging Sdn Bhd based in Kota Kinabalu and is found to have potential for rock climbing, abseiling, caving and via ferata. Rock Skills Rigging currently conducts training courses for these activities which could be harnessed by the local community into adding a side activity to their current tourism product. There is also the potential for camping as well as caving, camping and nature trails in the Balambangan FR (Class 1 – Protection).

Apart from dedication and passion, boosted by an impressive current skill set, the community's main strengths are its accessibility and proximity to a host of marine attractions. Activities such as jungle trekking, river cruises, camping and abseiling on Balambangan can be developed as supplementary products so as to create a multi-dimensional tourist experience. However, cultural identity and presence in this community is largely undeveloped as village folk adopt modern lifestyles and attitudes.

5. Banggi Island

The main CbEt attractions in West Banggi includes the village and waterfall trail to Banggi FR starting at Limbuak village, 13.5 km from the main port of Karakit. Conceived by a local champion, this 10-km trail weaves through the coastal villages of Maliyu, Padang, Damaran, Kalangkaman, Nusa Nusa, and Kapitangan. The 1-2 km trail to Bungga waterfall in Banggi FR starts at the village of Kalangkaman (7 km from Limbuak) on the Bungga River trek lasting 45 minutes through pristine, logged-over, dipterocarp forest. Apart from a multi-tiered waterfall, the main points of interest are the red, green and white-veined boulders scattered on the river as well as limestone outcrops and interesting vegetation such as mature trees, liana, wild ginger and wild begonias.

Banggi FR also hosts the peak of Mount Sinabung where trekkers can have spectacular views of Kudat Peninsulat and Balambangan Island. Similarly, on a clear day they can observe the islands of Mangsi, Balabac and Palawan in the Philippine waters. There are three possible sites for camping along this trail at Limbuak, Kalangkaman and Nusa Nusa. Alternatively, at Nusa Nusa, there are two community-owned beach-side accommodation facilities consisting of simple chalets. Visitors bound for west Banggi can also visit the black beach at Kapitangan and the red-grit beach at Damaran.

The tourism potential of the area would combine the experience of the waterfall and the rainforest as well the beaches. There is the opportunity for cycling tours though these coastal villages where the visitor could have an authentic experience of Bonggi, Bajau, Ubian and Molboc culture. Additionally, there is wood-carving and boat-making activity at Padang. In tune with the AKCC vision, the CbEt package could also informally involve these communities, where the visitor could be taken to observe wood-carving activity as well as the inclusion of lunch and tea breaks at these villages. Spectacular sunsets can be also viewed from the jetty in the mangrove-lined Limbuak Bay near the village of Limbuak in west Banggi. Limbuak village and its open grounds is also ideal for camping facilities and would serve as a starting point for cycling and photography trails to through the villages of west Banggi.

The other main CbEt attraction in Banggi are the Maliangin Islands, 7.5 km to the south west of the main port of Karakit. Famed for its crystal-clear waters and pristine coral reefs, Maliangin consists of two islands, the larger Maliangin Besar, and the smaller adjacent island, Maliangin Kecil. There is a small community of 5-7 families eking out a living through fishing and craft production on Maliangin Besar. The women folk of this community hand craft items such as bracelets and mats from pandan leaves harvested on the island. There is also the neighbouring Maliangin Resort that provides the community with informal business with regular purchases of fish and seafood for the restaurant. There is good potential for snorkelling and diving on the Maliangin Islands as well as camping at the village of Maliangin Besar. Additionally, these sites as well as Balambngan island can be easily reached by boat from Tajau Laut, east of the Kudat Peninsular and can be harnessed to be part of the collective product development of AKCC.

C. Summary of Existing Tourism Resources in AKCC

Tables 5 and 6 shows summary of the the existing built tourism resources and mobile networks in AKCC.

Table 5: Existing Built Tourism Resources

	Inukiran	Bayang Jamal	Loro Kecil	Tajau Laut	Banggi
Longhouse	✓	✓	(✓)	x	x
Guesthouse and/or chalets	✓	x	x	✓	✓*
Camping	x	✓	(✓)	✓	✓*
Craft centre	✓	x	x	(✓)	x
Interpretation centre	✓	✓	x	x	x
Community centre	✓	x	x	x	x
Trails	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
Conservation site	x	✓	x	x	x
*Located along the West Banggi coast at Kalangkaman and Nusa Nusa villages. (✓) To be established					

Table 6: Mobile Networks in AKCC (CELCOM)

	Inukiran	Bayang Jamal	Loro Kecil	Tajau Laut	Banggi
Poor	✓	✓	-	-	-
Moderate	-	-	✓	-	-
Good	-	-	-	✓	✓

III. THE TOURIST MARKET

The international tourist market for Sabah is particularly vulnerable to several political, environmental and security factors such as earthquakes, regional haze and terrorist activities that have momentarily affected tourism on the east coast of Sabah. This market is further influenced by seasonality and global economic downturns. Therefore, in terms sustainability, it is vital that the market for AKCC should not solely rely on international markets but to develop in tandem, domestic tourism. Pricing of the AKCC products are highly competitive for both international and domestic visitors, and communities in the network are in a sound position to capitalize on both these markets.

A. The International Market

The international visitor profile for AKCC would include visitors who seek travel experiences beyond mainstream tourism that are off-the-beaten track. These types of visitors would include free and independent travelers (FiTs), adventure tourists, cultural tourists and eco-tourists. They tend to be intrepid and experienced travelers, curious about other cultures and the environment, and are keen to come into contact with local communities in order to broaden their horizons. Most are generally sensitive to the environment and other cultures. The following are the international visitor profile for AKCC:

- The market for products offered by AKCC would appeal to international visitors who wish:
 - to have an alternative travel experience away from mainstream tourism;
 - to have diverse experiences in one destination;
 - to learn about other cultures;
 - to have cultural exchange with local communities;

- to appreciate the environment and cultures; and
- to support community-based enterprises.

B. The Domestic Market

Sabah as a state can offer diverse experiences not only to the international visitor but also to the local tourist. In this case, the domestic market for AKCC would generally include local visitors who wish to momentarily escape the grind of urban life in order to experience something out of the ordinary, and immerse themselves in the State's diversity of cultures, landscapes and seascapes. This would also appeal to visitors who wish to experience life's simple pleasures, keen to go back to basics. The AKCC product is also particularly suited for young families. The following are the domestic visitor profile for AKCC

- The market for products offered by AKCC would appeal to local visitors who wish:
 - to have an alternative travel experience at a competitive price;
 - to have diverse experiences in one destination;
 - to learn about other cultures in their own backyard;
 - to return to the life's simple pleasures; and
 - to support community-based enterprises.

C. Seasonality in AKCC

The success of AKCC would depend on harnessing the opportunities caused by the threats posed by the environmental, economic and political factors. Similarly, tourism in Kudat would be affected by the seasonality of international and domestic tourist flows. As most of the activities are based outdoors, the drier months from April to September are the most ideal to visit AKCC. In general, increases in international arrivals would peak during the mid-year months from June to September in accordance to the school holiday season. Similarly, domestic flows would increase in November and December. The AKCC network could also be patronized by local visitors during the intermittent public holiday breaks such as Chinese New Year, harvest festival, Eid al-Fitr, Deepavali and Christmas as well as other long weekends that occur throughout the year. These breaks would also allow domestic tourist to take advantage of the drier months (Table 7).

Table 7: Tourism Seasonality in AKCC

Seasonality	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
IDEAL MONTHS TO VISIT AKCC												
Tourist Season												
International												
Domestic												
Major holidays in Sabah	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
- New Year	✓											
- Chinese New Year		✓	✓									
- Wesak day				✓								
- Labour day					✓							
- Harvest festival					✓							
- Hari Raya Puasa						✓						
- Malaysia national day								✓				

Major holidays in Sabah	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
- Malaysia Day									✓			
- Deepavali											✓	
- Prophet's birthday											✓	
- Christmas												✓

It is crucial that AKCC should strategically cater for domestic visitors who would normally self-drive hence, taking advantage of the accessibility of the network. Overall, the seasonality of tourism flows to AKCC would also be affected by the monsoons over the concluding months of the year. Therefore, it needs to be stressed that CbEt should be developed as a supplementary livelihood option in conjunction with other livelihoods.

IV. SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN AKCC

Sustainable management strategies for AKCC encompasses the underlying premise to spread the environmental, economic, cultural benefits of CbEt development thus, instilling a sense of local ownership and pride among participants.

A. Collaborative Process in AKCC

Particularly for AKCC, the collaborative process is key to the success of the whole network and should be considered an integral part of sustainable management strategies. This process can be fostered by reinforcing open channels of communication in order to fulfil the collective vision which can be achieved more effectively through regular informal contact between participants, communities and other tourism stakeholders. Regular face-to-face contact or any other means would provide a platform for advice and moral support, information sharing thus, fostering professional and friendship bonds between participants. Below is the list of the communication methods for AKCC.

- Informal visits to participants' villages;
- Social gatherings;
- Informal trips to experience each other's locations;
- Facebook pages;
- Whatsapp groups and messaging

B. Stakeholder Relationships

The sustainability and resilience of any CbEt venture in the longer-term could benefit from developing partnerships and networks with relevant organizations in order to create a supportive platform for outreach. This internal network also has the scope to include other communities that are interested in CbEt development. However, it is also equally important that the AKCC would establish external networks with relevant donors, governmental agencies, non-profit organisations, and the private sector.

Building stakeholder partnerships should be adopted as important part of any tourism management strategy as partnerships between CbEt participants and external parties have the potential to contribute towards many aspects of tourism management including product and skills development, marketing, knowledge management and information sharing. For instance, support can assume forms such as financial assistance, training in tourism service delivery, as well as assistance in marketing (**Table 8**).

Table 8: Types of Tourism Stakeholders External to AKCC

Government Sector	Non-Profit sector	Private Sector
Local government	Local NGOs	Funding agencies
Tourism authorities	International or national NGOs	Tour operators
International government donor agencies	Community organisations and cooperatives	Hotels and Resorts
Natural resource management	Other communities	Travel agents
Educational Institutions	Tourism networks	Festival organisers

1. Building on Existing Relationships

It is important that a central CbEt manager or 'Champion of Champions' be nominated to represent the interests of AKCC, and who would serve as a main point of contact with each external stakeholder. At this point, there are several existing partnerships that should be nurtured and sustained as these relationships have already developed a degree of trust and shared experiences. The CbEt manager should also be open to initiating new partnerships where appropriate and should adapt to changes as it progresses.

C. Ethos of Local Management Strategies

The underlying ethos of local management structures for AKCC is to encourage linkages so as to spread the benefits, both direct and indirect, of CbEt development within the communities and others in the AKCC network. It is important that CbEt managers are aware that such linkages do not occur as a natural consequence, but rather as an understanding or a goodwill gesture which should adopt an all-inclusive approach to management, involving other sectors of the community. However, the sustainability of CbEt development remains in the approach that these enterprises should be managed and owned by members of the local community. This process has deeper ties to self-empowerment and self-determination which would ultimately contribute to sustainable development.

1. Distributing Benefits through Direct Intervention

The main thrust of sustainable CbEt development is to adopt a management ethos through direct intervention so as to distribute the benefits of CbEt to the wider community. The following are the distributing benefits through direct intervention:

- Limited carrying capacity of accommodation facilities;
- Outsourcing of some of visitor activities;
- Outsourcing services;
- Using locally-sourced supplies and produce;
- Direct employment;
- Increase environmental and cultural awareness and appreciation;
- Increasing existing skill sets;
- Creating social and commercial space.

a. Limited carrying capacity

Community tourism enterprises are generally initiated on a small scale due to space and budgetary constraints. This limitation can open opportunities for other members of the

community to become involved in CbEt thus, avoiding a situation whereby, a local enterprise assumes a monopoly over tourism development in the village.

b. Outsourcing of visitor activities

The CbEt enterprise would also be conducting some activities such as mangrove trips, cycle and tent hire. However, in order to spread benefits to the wider community it is recommended that some visitor activities should be outsourced to other members of the community. For instance, the outsourcing of fishing trips to another household.

c. Outsourcing of services

Although most tourism enterprises would provide catering and housekeeping services themselves, when required, the outsourcing of these services could help spread the benefits of CbEt development.

d. Using locally-sourced supplies and produce

The use of local supplies and produce would spread the benefits of tourism development in the area. For instance, fish could be caught by the household for own use but in cases when this is not possible, the household could source fish from another member of the community or even at the local market. This has the advantage of keeping costs low as well as helping the local economy. The use of locally-sourced produce in traditional dishes would also enhance the 'localness' of product and the service.

e. Direct employment

As CbEt enterprises develop, there could arise the need to employ workers from the community on a more regular basis.

f. Increase in environmental and cultural awareness and appreciation

The success of CbEt development would rely on the conservation of the environment and cultural representation as most visitor attractions and activities are conducted in areas of natural beauty in association with local communities. Local managers should include conservation and cultural interpretation as part of visitor activities as well as introducing environmental and cultural education to the wider community.

g. Increasing existing skill sets

Involvement CbEt would require various skill sets that could be developed and refined further through experience. Skills gaps and advancement could then be identified in the process and developed further as time progresses.

h. Creating social and commercial space

The construction of structures for CbEt could also be used as a social and/or space for the community. For instance, the plan for a village craft gallery by a CbEt enterprise would open up opportunities for a cottage craft industry in the community and thus, engaging other members of the community, particularly women and other who are not directly involved in tourism.

2. Distributing Benefits through Indirect Intervention

The sustainable development of CbEt would also create indirect linkages to the wider community. Some of these linkages are unexpected benefits deriving from successful development. The following are the distributing benefits through indirect intervention:

- Leading by example to other community members;
- Leading by example to other communities outside the network;
- Creating opportunities for other small enterprises;
- Indirect linkages to ancillary businesses;
- Development skill sets through partial involvement and training.

a. Leading by Example

Successful CbEt enterprises have far-ranging effects on both members within the community as well as other communities outside the AKCC network. For instance, in Tajau Laut, other community members have indicated an interest to get involve in CbEt after witnessing the success of the Tajau Laut Guest House (TLGH). Similarly, other communities have indicated an interest to collaborate with TLGH management.

b. Creating Opportunities

The presence of CbEt development in a community also has the potential to create opportunities for other sectors of the community. For instance, the establishment of a village craft gallery would create an outlet for the cottage craft industry in the community.

c. Indirect Linkages to Ancillary Businesses

Other small enterprises within the community could also benefit from CbEt development. For instance, increased patronage at the village shops and markets.

d. Developing skill sets

There is also the potential for current skill sets to develop within the wider community. For instance, the improvement in guest services skills should the CbEt enterprise employ other community members and/or engage them in visitor activities.

D. Physical Structures

The provision of physical structures for CbEt should ideally include some or all of the criteria listed below.

- Designed and built by the local community;
- Owned and managed by members of the community;
- Back-to-basics concept;
- Limited carrying capacity (Up to 18);
- Use of low-voltage electricity or solar power;
- Using sustainable and locally sourced materials and suppliers;
- Aesthetically suited to the cultural and natural environment;
- Represents the cultural identity of the community;
- Conducive to local weather and environmental conditions;



- Provide a communal space that would encourage the interaction between the host (community) and guests.

These criteria are based on the tenets of sustainable tourism, incorporating principles such as carrying capacity and accommodation development bearing in mind that part of the attraction of CbEt is the back-to-basic quality of village life with simple guest facilities. There are several advantages of this approach for the development of physical structures which includes low building and running costs amongst others. The advantages of low-impact development are as follows:

- Easily constructed by the local community;
- Relatively low building costs;
- Relatively low running costs;
- Easier to manage;
- Manageable maintenance costs;
- Provides a location identity.

E. Product Development

Product development for AKCC should adopt the triple-bottom-line approach and should incorporate the several criteria. Preferably, product development for CbEt should be developed in consultation and managed by community participants so as to encourage a firm sense of ownership. Furthermore, it should have minimal impact on the environment, using local/readily-available resources, and have the potential distribute benefits to the wider community. Product development is a creative process that should take into account social, economic and environmental changes. The product development criteria for AKCC are as follows:

- Ideas originating from the community;
- Represents the culture and environment of the community;
- Developed and managed by the community;
- Provide a sense of responsibility and ownership;
- Represents the culture and the environment of the community;
- Low impact on the marine and terrestrial environment;
- Beneficial to the local culture and the environment;
- Using local resources;
- Potential to engage wider sectors of the community;
- Relatively low set up and running costs;
- Provides economic benefits to the local community; and
- Provides benefits for conservation and culture.

The collaborative nature of AKCC could also benefit the product development process in that, CbEt managers and participants should take advantage of this platform to exchange ideas and information in order to enrich the tourism products in the network. This can be done in various ways whereby participants are encouraged to undertake informal 'study tours' and 'product tests' in order to familiarize themselves with range of products available in AKCC.

1. Economic Sustainability

The economic sustainability of small CbEt enterprises could be boosted by income generated from accommodation facilities although it has to be taken into account that this revenue has its

limitations due to its limited carrying capacity. However, CbEt enterprises could improve income by developing tourism products and conducting these activities themselves as well as 'outsourcing' some of these activities to other members of the community. For instance, TLGM has developed a sea-faring package linking up with other coastal AKCC communities as well as developing a product that includes camping on Balambangan island. Similarly, the hire of tents, bicycles and snorkeling sets would augment incomes. Other activities such as kayak hire have been outsourced to another household (Table 9).

Table 9: Existing and Potential CbEt Activities in AKCC

ACTIVITIES	Inukiran	Bavang Jamal	Loro Kecil	Tajau Laut	West Banggi
A) Physical Activities					
i) Mangrove river cruises	x	✓	✓	✓	x
ii) Trails and Jungle trekking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
iii) Waterfall trekking	x	x	x	x	✓
iv) Mountain trekking	x	x	x	x	✓
v) Camping	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
vi) Snorkelling	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
vii) Scuba diving	x	x	(✓)	✓	(✓)
viii) Inter-village cycling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ix) Traditional kayaking	x	✓	✓	✓	x
x) Abseiling/Caving	x	x	x	(✓)	x
xi) Sunset viewing	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
xii) Sun-rise viewing	x	x	x	✓	x
xiii) Other beach activities	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
B) Village Activities					
i) Fishing	x	✓	✓	✓	(✓)
ii) Shore fishing	x	x	✓	x	x
iii) Rice planting/harvesting	x	✓	✓	x	x
iv) Planting crops	✓	x	✓	x	x
v) Rubber tapping	✓	x	✓	x	x
vi) Performing Arts	✓	(✓)	✓	(✓)	(✓)
vii) Batik Botanik	x	x	x	✓	x
viii) Beading and weaving	✓	x	✓	x	x
ix) Pandan mat weaving	x	x	x	(✓)	✓
x) Cooking	(✓)	x	(✓)	✓	x
xi) Boat-making viewing	x	x	x	x	✓
xii) Nipah roof weaving	x	x	x	(✓)	x
C) Conservation Activities					
i) Mangrove restoration	x	x	✓	✓	(✓)
ii) Forest restoration	(✓)	(✓)	(✓)	(✓)	(✓)
iii) Watershed restoration	✓	x	x	x	x
iv) Coral reef restoration	x	(✓)	(✓)	✓	(✓)
v) Turtle Conservation	x	✓	x	x	x

NOTE: (✓) Potential products in brackets; *Balambangan Island.

2. Product Packaging and Itinerary Development

The communities in the AKCC network represent diverse cultural, social and physical landscapes and therefore, the packaging of the AKCC product should include itineraries incorporating at least two or more communities in the ecotourism loop. Itinerary development should also encourage overnight stays so as to ensure that economic benefits remain in local economy and ultimately, introducing diversity to the visitor experience and thus, overall satisfaction (**Table 10**).

Table 10: Example of Itineraries from Kota Kinabalu

Itineraries	Villages
<p>1) Itinerary A (2 Days/1 Night)</p> <p><i>Day 1 (Tajau Laut/ Simpang Magayau):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leave Kota Kinabalu/Lunch and rest - Briefing followed by snorkeling or activity of choice - Sunset trip to Simpang Magayau - Dinner and cultural activities at Tajau Laut <p><i>Day 2 (Inukiran):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sunrise beach breakfast/Leave Tajau Laut for Inukiran - Craft and cultural activities, and lunch at Inukiran - Visit to Sumangkap gong-making village - Return to Kota Kinabalu 	Tajau Laut Inukiran
<p>2) Itinerary B (3 Days/2 Nights)</p> <p><i>Day 1 (Inukiran):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leave Kota Kinabalu to Inukiran/Lunch - Craft and cultural demonstration/Tea break - Village trails and/or hike to the peak of Matungong forest reserve for view of sunsets over Kudat Peninsular - Dinner and cultural activities at Inukiran <p><i>Day 2 (Loro Kecil/Bavang Jamal):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trip to Loro Kecil and hiking in the headlands or activity of choice/Lunch - Lazy afternoon by Kelambu beach at Bavang Jamal/Tea break - Trip to the Longgom River mangroves and sunset viewing - Dinner at Loro Kecil/cultural activities and overnight beach camping. <p><i>Day 3 (Tajau Laut):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leave for Tajau Laut - Day trip and lunch at Balambangan Island – fishing, hiking or activity of choice - Return to Tajau Laut - tea break - Return to Kota Kinabalu 	Inukiran Loro Kecil Bavang Jamal Tajau Laut

The packaging of the CbEt product should ideally be flexible enough to cater to the needs of the visitor which is manageable due to small visitor numbers. This has an added advantage in that, tourism activities can be easily catered to the needs of the visitor. For example, the visitor might have just enough time to experience Balambangan island on a day trip as part of the TLGH sea-faring package. These packages can be charged accordingly.

F. Administrative Structures in AKCC

The CbEt initiatives within the AKCC network are enterprises that operate independently thus, enabling them to make key decisions and assume full control over the business. With the exception of the product in Banggi, all the other communities are managed by a small group of

participants in partnership with each other. However, the inclusive nature of AKCC would also provide a collaborative platform for networking, management advice, product development and problem-solving.

1. Independent yet Together

a. Champion of Champions

Although these CbEt enterprises are individually managed on a local level, there arises the need for a 'Champion of Champions' to unite, inspire, empower and collaborate with other local champions. This ultimate champion would have a firm belief as well as the ability and experience to reinforce the vision and represent AKCC to the wider stakeholder network.

b. Joint Marketing Campaigns

The diversity and combination of the AKCC product and community network has a strong marketing appeal which can be harnessed to form a memorable marketing campaign. Therefore, these CbEt enterprises have a lot to gain through joint marketing and promotional strategies through mediums such as brochures, facebook and other Internet forms.

c. Joint Licensing Procedures

Accommodation and camping facilities managed by these CbEt enterprises would also largely benefit through joint licensing applications. For instance, a guesthouse license can be used as an umbrella for joint licensing for other communities within the AKCC network.

d. Joint Funding

The AKCC network of enterprises could also have an added advantage in terms of donor funding applications as financing a group of communities (as opposed to one) would be a safer option and more effective option.

2. Local CbEt Enterprise Partnerships

The local CbEt enterprise partnerships would largely benefit from strong local leadership headed by a local champion in partnership with other CbEt participants. These local champions in AKCC have naturally emerged as drivers of local development and have the capability to empower others, and sustain a future in their individual communities. Furthermore, the advantages of joint-management partnerships and the sharing of responsibilities could enable these local enterprises to function in a more efficient manner.

a. Financial Management

The AKCC participants have received a substantial amount of training, materials and supplies with funds provided by ADB CTI-SEA. However, it is important that CbEt managers and participants should understand that initial support is just help kick-start an ecotourism business. The future success of CbEt in their individual communities would rest on their management skills as managers. It is therefore, imperative that local administration structures are agreed amongst the local partners and implemented accordingly.

For instance, the mutual agreement of the division of profits, and the percentage of profits that is to be re-invested into the business. Participants of CbEt in AKCC have also undergone training in basic accounting and book keeping procedures which would leave them in good stead in terms of administration. Any gaps or questions that arise could be addressed by liaising with other CbEt participants in the AKCC network. The following are the financial agreement for local CbEt enterprise:

- Bank account;
- Pay structures of partners or profit sharing;
- Profit-sharing structures;
- Amount to be put aside for maintenance;
- Re-investment into the business;
- Re-investment into product development;
- Contribution into community development or initiatives; and
- Contribution to conservation activities

b. Financial Planning

Community enterprise managers should also take into account that revenue from CbEt activities is seasonal and/or irregular, and they could run a risk of being highly dependent on tourism income. In which case, tourism should be considered a supplementary option to main livelihoods in terms of income generation. It is also important that funds are ploughed into personal savings so as to help them to financially manage during periods of low activity.

c. Management Roles

Each CbEt enterprise is unique in the management of accommodation facilities and visitor activities. As these enterprises are small, there is a strong possibility that roles overlap in the initial stages of development. Although these enterprises are managed and spear-headed by a leader, operations management will have to assume a flatter structure as participants assume multitasking roles. For instance, as house-keepers, chefs, guides, and book-keepers and so on. Multitasking has the advantage of developing all-round management skills. Listed below are the small enterprise roles.

- Housekeeping duties;
- Book keeping and Record keeping;
- Catering and entertainment;
- Guiding and interpretation;
- Marketing and promotion;
- Equipment maintenance;
- Building maintenance; and
- Environmental maintenance.

d. Record Keeping

Apart from book keeping, record keeping must be incorporated as part of small enterprise management strategies. In the case of CbEt, the record of guest details should be kept and analyzed in order to aid management and market planning, improve customer service and product development. These records would also be useful in supporting a business plan should the enterprise need to apply for funds from other agencies in the future. Record keeping should



however be maintained in a consistent manner throughout the AKCC network. The guest details in the record keeping are as follows:

- Number of guests;
- Number of nights stays;
- Dates of visitations;
- Number of day trippers;
- Age bracket;
- Nationality – international or domestic;
- Tourism activities;
- Origin of information about AKCC; and
- General guest comments.

e. External Funding

External funding sources may be needed in the future for the expansion of CbEt activities whether it is in the form of a bank loan or microfinancing. However, financial arrangements regarding extra funding should be considered as a last resort, and should undergo in-depth discussions and consultation among the local partners in order to avoid future disagreements and friction. To this end, there arises a need for a business plan that should incorporate a funding proposal. In reality, most CbEt enterprises could benefit from seeking assistance and consultation from partners and stakeholders when drafting business plans or funding proposals. More importantly, CbEt enterprise partners should recognize that the application for extra funding has several conditions set out by the funder that are to be honored by the enterprise. Some of the funding sources and examples are:

- International donor agencies - ADB, European Union; USAID;
- Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) – World Wildlife Fund (WWF), The Nature Conservancy, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN);
- Government Aid – Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Environment Sabah;
- Private investors – Resorts and Hotels; and
- Fund raising events – Local festivals; craft fairs.

V. MARKETING, BRANDING AND PROMOTION

Marketing and branding should bank on the collective appeal of the diversity that forms the core of the AKCC network. In this case, visitors are given a selection of experiences to choose from depending on their time and budget. To this end, communities in the AKCC network will be marketed in tandem order to promote a sense of togetherness and family. Moreover, marketing should also effectively communicate the shared vision that encompasses a much deeper purpose, that is, to empower, strengthen and revitalize these communities in order to strive towards economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability through, the development of CbEt as a supplementary livelihood option.

A. Branding and the AKCC Logo

Logos would represent the ‘face’ of an organization. They are graphical displays of the organization’s unique identity that allows the wider audience to identify with the core branding. In the case of AKCC, the logo would exhibit a common market identity for these communities and is important for overall branding. It could be displayed on merchandise such as key rings, t-



shirts and other souvenirs as well as on signage for road signs. The logo could also be used on websites, brochures and all other promotional materials used in order to strengthen the connection to the AKCC network.

The AKCC Logo



The logo was selected on the basis of neutrality because AKCC represents a diversity of cultures that are inherent in Sabah, and represents the Celtic symbol for family. Although diverse, the communities in the AKCC network should function as a supportive all-encompassing family.

B. Marketing Mediums

The advancement of technology and the Internet has provided professionals with cost and time effective tools which can be harnessed to boost marketing strategies. In this case, online strategies can be boosted with the production and distribution of brochures. On a grassroots level, the aim of AKCC is to engaged the communities in the loop to mutually market and promote each other's diversity and products in order to enrich the overall visitor experience.

1. Web Presence and Social Media

The marketing of AKCC can benefit from having an online presence in the use of social media such as Facebook, tripadvisor and blogging sites. One of the main advantages of FB and local blog-spots is that the message can be relayed in the local language, accompanied by uploaded photographs and videos. These mediums also have the tendency to connect on a more personal level to the target audience who can then plan their trips based in informed choices. Additionally, word-of-mouth recommendations are increasingly relayed through an online presence and should not be underestimated. Some of the advantages of online marketing are as follows:

- Lower operational costs;
- Demographic targeting;
- Capacity to reach a large target audience;
- Can be easily personalized, adapted and updated;
- Easily accessed; and
- An important platform for building closer customer relationships

2. Brochures

Online marketing strategies could be complemented by the production and the distribution of a brochure. The underlying message of the brochure enhances the all-inclusive nature of AKCC as well as stressing upon the deeper purpose of developing supplementary livelihoods in as part of natural resource management in the Tun Mustapha Park. To this end, all five communities in AKCC are featured in individual panels, and concurrently be given the opportunity to manage their CbEt resources. Moreover, the overall image that the brochure also portrays is an alternative visitor experience of 'what is truly, the heart of Kudat'. The advantages of brochures as a marketing tool are as follows:

- Complements the online presence of AKCC;
- Condenses large amounts of information in an attractive manner;
- Versatility in its distribution as it can be used on several key locations;
- Can be uploaded and distributed online;
- Capacity to reach its target audience;
- Cost-effective when ordered in bulk;
- Captures the reader's undivided attention especially when using images; and
- Portable and could be distributed easily by the reader's themselves.

3. Travel writing and Guides

There are several hardcopy guides on the market but ones that has the capacity to reach the target audience for AKCC are the Lonely Planet (LP) and the Rough Guides. The Lonely Planet is currently the world's largest selling guide book, aimed at backpackers and budget travelers. As of 2011, has sold 120 million copies since its inception in 1972. Additionally, the LP has an online presence that can be accessed for free. The Rough Guides was founded in 1982 represents more than 120 destinations and similar to the LP has a worldwide distribution network. Initially published for budget travelers, the RG has widen their reach and included more expensive recommendations to cover a wider spectrum of the target market. Similar to the LP, the RG has a strong online presence with an award-winning website.

4. Marketing and Networking with Other Stakeholders

The success of marketing strategies for AKCC could benefit from networking with other stakeholders such as governmental agencies, community organizations and the private sector. This networking could materialize in the form of physical brochure distribution and online links. The engagement of the private sector such as resorts, hotels and tour operators could greatly benefit the marketing strategies of AKCC. For example, the management of Tommy's Place and Tapat Do Aman has offered to distribute the brochures at their resorts as well as distributing it among their colleagues. Additionally, the incorporation of CbEt activities into resort itineraries would highly complement each other. (Table 11)

Table 11: Kudat Stakeholders for CbEt

Kudat Stakeholders for CbEt			
Governmental Agencies	Community Organizations	Local and International NGOs	Private Sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sabah Tourism Board - District Office of Kudat - Sabah Parks - Sabah Forestry Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Korperasi Pelancongan (KoPel) - Sabah Homestay Association - Other community organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WWF-Malaysia - Kudat Turtle Conservation Society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hotels and Resorts (e.g. Tommy's Place, Tapat Do Aman) - Tour operators (e.g. Dietlem, Exo travel, Borneo Tribe)

C. Marketing in AKCC

Marketing strategies for AKCC could be developed further, and is at a different stage for each locality. The most established tourism presence is at Bavang Jamal which have been operation for some time followed by the Tajau Laut Guesthouse that have been in operation since March

2017. Future marketing strategies for AKCC should take on an all-inclusive view on providing a platform for these communities to showcase their diversity and uniqueness. The marketing mediums used in AKCC is in **Table 12**

Table 12: Marketing Mediums used in AKCC

Marketing Mediums used in AKCC						
Medium	AKCC	Inukiran	Bavang Jamal	Loro Kecil	Tajau Laut	Banggi
Website	x	x	✓	x	x	x
Social media (FB and blogs)	x	✓	x	x	✓	x
Brochures	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Travel guides (LP and RG)	x	x	✓	x	x	x
Travel writing	x	x	✓	x	x	x
Tour operators	x	x	✓	x	x	x

Marketing strategies should be flexible and should evolve in conjunction with product evolution and the developments of social media. Ideally, these strategies should undergo re-evaluation and re-developed in order to keep abreast of the efficacy of the medium, as well as keeping up with the progress in emerging markets, marketing mediums and technology.

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL CONSERVATION

The foundation of CbEt development in AKCC is the natural environment with majority of tourism resources are set in areas of natural beauty. Therefore, environmental conservation is key to the success for any ecotourism venture. Similarly, the importance of the preservation of cultural resources in tourism development. Furthermore, both environmental and cultural resources are the mainstay of a destination's identity and have the potential to enrich the tourism experience as well as contribute to the conservation of these assets.

A. Conservation of Natural Resources

Community livelihoods in AKCC and Kudat are highly dependent on the changing seasons and marine resource use, and ultimately the link between landscapes and seascapes. The incorporation of conservation activities could reap multiple benefits for the environment and marine-based livelihoods, and in the truest sense fulfilling the definition of ecotourism and sustainable development. Below are the environmental conservation activities that could be incorporated into CbEt:

- Coral reef restoration;
- Giant clam gardens;
- Turtle conservation;
- Reef monitoring and evaluation surveys;
- Mangrove restoration;
- Forest restoration;
- Forest reserve gazettement;
- Watershed restoration; and
- Marine interpretation and education centres for environmental awareness.

The concept of Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) is still in its infancy in Kudat. With the exception of the presence of the KTCS and the Tajau Laut Conservation Club (TLCC), there is a huge potential for CBNRM to develop and mature, and could be harnessed to be included as part of CbEt activities and product interpretation. This will also provide ample opportunity for to develop multi-stakeholder relationships with the AKCC network to work towards the sustainable future of Kudat (**Table 13**).

Table 13: Stakeholders in Environmental Conservation in Kudat

Stakeholders in Environmental Conservation in Kudat	
<i>Communities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tajau Laut - Bavang Jamal - Loro Kecil - Inukiran - Limbuak, Banggi - Other communities
<i>Governmental Agencies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - District Office of Kudat - Sabah Parks - Sabah Forestry Department - Department of Fisheries
<i>Non-Governmental Organisations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WWF Malaysia - Kudat Turtle Conservation Society - Tajau Laut Conservation Club - Reef Check Malaysia - LEAP
<i>Private Sector</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tommy's Place (Resort) - Tampak Do Aman (Resort)
<i>Educational Institutions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University Malaysia Sabah - University Malaya
<i>Please note that this list is not exhaustive.</i>	

One of the recommendations for conservation would include the gazettement of mangrove forests at the Tajau River in collaboration with the Sabah Forestry Department near the AKCC village of Tajau Laut. The Tajau River could also be protected under the native *Tagal* system, through the Department of Fisheries in order to create a sanctuary for fingerlings. Thus, conserving a vital livelihood source for fishing communities in general. The incorporation of low-impact CbEt activities such as river cruises as part of the sustainable management of the river system would ensure that ecotourism would benefit the environment through conservation fees, improved environmental awareness, and could offer a source of interpretation for the eco-tourist. Additionally, the Tajau Laut Conservation Club has plans to establish a marine education centre in the near future to open opportunities for the community to play a more active role in marine conservation.

Activities such as these could initiate knock-on effects that could inspire other communities to get involved in conservation. Overall, the incorporation of low-impact tourism activities for CbEt will fulfil the triple bottom line for sustainable development thus achieving the delicate balance between the environments, the local economy and increasing stewardship for the environment amongst local communities.

B. Conservation of Culture and the Living Arts

Culture and the living arts would offer a destination a distinct and unique identity. The incorporation of cultural assets in the development of CbEt could prospectively help to conserve and/or revitalize local cultural identity. The communities in AKCC and Kudat form an enriching combination of cultures and traditions. Home to the Rungus, Bajau, Suluk, Ubian, Bonggi, Molboc and the Balabac, these communities represents a cultural microcosm of Sabah. The development of existing crafts such as weaving, beading, basketry and *Batik Botanik* can be incorporated into CbEt activities could, provide a supplementary source of income, and at the same time engaging the active participation of women in the process.

Similarly, the performing arts such as the *Mongigol*, *Rungus* chanting and *Berunsai* can be channeled into tourist activities. In Loro Kecil, these forms of living arts are preserved as skills are bequeathed to the younger generation by the village elders. In Inukiran, the *Monungkus* collective has initiated the cultivation and processing of cotton and indigo, a revival on an age-old practice. The conservation of the living arts has an enriching role to play in the product development for CbEt activities through cultural interpretation centres has the potential to re-educate both communities and visitors alike thus, instilling local pride in culture and traditions.

VII. THE SUSTAINABILITY OF AKCC

The sustainable development of AKCC is dependent on several factors discussed in the preceding chapters. Notwithstanding, the importance of a sound vision, the adoption of sustainability principles, and the empowerment of local champions. The future for AKCC in terms of an all-inclusive CbEt development is boundless and is open to several opportunities and developments that could ensure its longevity.

Sustainable Development for AKCC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sound vision as a foundation for growth; - Adoption of sustainability principles; - Collaborative management; - Empowering of local champions; - Developing the right skills; - Awareness of domestic and international markets; - Product development that is sensitive to the culture and the environment; - Beneficial to the conservation of culture and the environment; - Development of a unique identity; - Marketing branding and promotion; - Local and national stakeholder partnerships; - Monitoring and evaluation.

A. Future Expansion of the AKCC Network

The all-inclusive vision of the AKCC network could pave the way for future expansion for other communities wishing to be or who are already directly involved in developing CbEt in their villages (**Tables 14 and 15**). Notwithstanding, the villages that can be linked up through a tourism product such as the villages on the trail to the Bungga waterfalls and Mount Sinabung in Banggi FR on Banggi island. Furthermore, the success of AKCC will no doubt spur on other communities to join the network.

Table 14: Communities that have Indicated an Interest in CbEt

Community		Location
1	Kg Bak Bak	Kudat Peninsular
2	Kg Parapat	Kudat Peninsular
3	Kg Marang Parang	Kudat Peninsular
4	Kg Selamat	Balambangan Island
5	Kg Batu Seri	Balambangan Island
6	Kg Nusa Nusa*	West Banggi Island
7	Kg Kalangkaman	West Banggi Island

Table 15: Communities that can be Linked to AKCC through Tourism Products

Community		Location
1	Kg Sumangkap	Kudat Peninsular
2	Kg Longgom Kecil	Kudat Peninsular
3	Kg Maliangin Besar	Maliangin, Banggi Island
4	Kg Padang	Banggi Island

B. Sustainable Tourism Certification

The process of certification formally ensures that an activity or product meets certain criteria and standards. Although certification programmes for products and services have been long in existence, tourism certification came to the forefront of the sustainable management process at a conference that led to the Mohonk Agreement in 2000. This conference brought about the formation of the Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council (STSC) that sets out to identify the minimum standards and criteria for the certification of sustainable tourism and ecotourism, as well as formally distinguishing the different types of tourism in existence. In 2005, the STSC was finally established as an accreditation body for various worldwide tourism certification programmes.

Definition of Certification

A voluntary procedure that assesses, audits and gives written assurance that a facility, product, process of service meets specific standards. It awards a marketable logo to those who exceed baseline standards."

– Honey and Rome (2001)

Currently, there are several tourism certification networks and programmes in operation in Europe (*Blue Flag – also worldwide*), the Americas (*Sustainable Tourism Certification Network of the Americas*), Africa (*Fair Trade, Ecotourism Society of Kenya (ESOK)*), and Australia (*EcoCertification, Respect Our Culture (ROC)*). Worldwide certification programmes would include Green Globe 21 (GG21), International Ecotourism Standards (IES), and Blue Flag (beaches) which could be applied to AKCC and Kudat in general. In South East Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) Community Based Tourism Standard (CBTS) would also be most applicable for the AKCC network. The network could also greatly benefit from a joint application to CBTS.

1. ASEAN Community Based Tourism Standard (CBTS)

The ASEAN Community Based Tourism Standard (CBTS) covers a range of activities including homestays and community-based tourism. This initiative was prepared by the Cambodian

Ministry of Tourism under the auspices of the ASEAN Tourism Standard Task Force. This certification standard will be adopted by ASEAN member states as recommended in the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) (2012-2015) in order to “create quality visitor experiences by showcasing community livelihoods and natural and cultural assets in a presentable, safe and attractive manner.” The CBTS has defined community-based tourism as:

“A tourism activity, community owned and operated and managed at the community level that contributes to the well-being of communities through supporting sustainable livelihoods and protecting socio-cultural traditions and natural and cultural heritage resources.”

Principles and Criteria for ASEAN Community Based Sustainable Tourism (CBST)

The above definition of CbEt was used to formulate the following principles and criteria:

- 1) Involve and empower community to ensure ownership and transparent management;
- 2) Establish partnership with relevant stakeholders;
- 3) Gain recognized standing with relevant authorities;
- 4) Improve social well-being and maintenance of human dignity;
- 5) Include a fair and transparent benefit sharing mechanism;
- 6) Enhance linkages to local and regional economies;
- 7) Respect local culture and tradition;
- 8) Contribute to natural resource conservation;
- 9) Improve the quality of visitor experience by strengthening meaningful host and guest interaction and;
- 10) Work towards financial self-sufficiency.

Sustainable tourism accreditation will no doubt contribute to the sustainable development of the AKCC network as well as tourism in Kudat as a whole. The principles and criteria provided by certification standards can provide a sound foundation on which new CbEt development can be based thus, setting up the community enterprise for a sustainable future.

C. Kudat CbEt Development Plan (KCDP)

The progress of community tourism could largely benefit from a comprehensive Kudat CbEt Development Plan (KCDP). In this respect, the success of AKCC can serve as a blue print for the future of community tourism in Kudat thus, highlighting the environmental and cultural diversity of the district. Community-based ecotourism in Kudat has the potential to be developed further as there are resources that are yet to be discovered, researched and developed. The KCDP could be drafted based on sustainability criteria reiterated in previous chapters under the auspices of the Kudat District Office with multi-stakeholder consultations with other government agencies, NGOs, communities and the private sector. The Plan, although not exclusive, could cover several areas as listed in the table below.

Kudat CbEt Development Plan (KCDP)

- a) Collaborative vision;
- b) Sustainable management strategies;
- c) Community training and development;
- d) Structural development and maintenance;
- e) Exploration and development of other attractions;
- f) Developing stakeholder partnerships;
- g) Conservation activities in CbEt;
- h) Environmental, cultural and historical interpretation;

- i) Environmental, cultural and historical education and awareness;
- j) Sustainable tourism certification programmes;
- k) Tourism research;
- l) Monitoring and evaluation;
- m) Branding, marketing and promotion.

D. Formation of the AKCC Network Association

The expansion of AKCC could also benefit from the formation of the AKCC Network Association headed by a management committee. This will further strengthen the network and ensures a united vision for the network. Furthermore, this could formalize the collaborative process thus, forming a supportive platform for CbEt participants. The Association could provide a strong basis for the application future funding for CbEt development in Kudat.

E. Conclusion

Although still at its starting phases, the future for the sustainability and growth of the AKCC network has endless possibilities. The environmental and cultural diversity of Kudat can be harnessed for tourism development, and CbEt has an important and complementary role to play alongside mainstream tourism in that, it can provide the intrepid visitor with the opportunity to experience the myriad of cultures, landscapes, and seascapes that is core to the destination's identity. But more importantly, this product differentiation has the potential to provide Kudat with a competitive edge over other attractions in Sabah.