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Towards Sustainable Tourism Development in the Philippines and Other Asean Countries: An Examination of Programs and Practices of National Tourism Organizations

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Acknowledgments

Glossary

Best practices
Practices that are the best ways of managing an operation, or performing a certain task, measures that accomplish objectives most efficiently and effectively.

Carrying capacity
The limit to an environment's capacity to withstand use or activity. Beyond this limit the activity's impact (social, ecological or both) is unacceptable. This term was originally used in agriculture and ecology. Carrying capacity can also refer to social or economic capacity.

Conservation
Defined by the World Conservation Strategy as 'the management of human use of the biosphere so that it may yield the greatest sustainable benefit to present generations while maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations'.

Ecotourism
Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well being of local people.

Environment
A concept which includes all aspects of the surroundings of humanity, affecting individuals and social groupings.

Environment Impact Assessment (EIA)
A detailed study for a proposed development that should comprise four essential components. 1. description of the environment affected by the proposed development, 2. predictions of the likely changes in the environment as a result of the proposed development, 3. an assessment of the significance of the predicted changes in terms of health, social, aesthetic, ecological or economic implications, and 4. a detailed report on all of the above in form of an environmental impact statement.

Indicator
Something that helps one to understand where he is, which way he is going, and how far he is from where he wants to be (Hart, in Miller, 2002).

National Tourism Organization
The lead government agency tasked with developing and promoting a country's tourism industry to serve national goals. (Gee, *et al*, 1989). Also referred to by the World Tourism Organization as national tourism administration (NTA).

Sustainability

"Meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (Brundtland Commission, 1987)

Sustainable tourism development
Tourism development that leads to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled, while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems (Tourism Canada).

Tourism
The activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environments for a period of not more than one consecutive year, for leisure, business, and other purposes (WTO).

Acronyms

APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
Asean	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DOT	Department of Tourism
ESI	Environmental Sustainability Index
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
MOCAT	Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Tourism
NEDA	National Economic Development Authority
NEDC	National Ecotourism Development Committee
NEP	National Ecotourism Plan
NES	National Ecotourism Strategy
NGO	non-governmental organizations
NTO	national tourism organization
PATA	Pacific Asia Travel Association
PCSD	Philippine Council for Sustainable Development
STB	Singapore Tourism Board
TAT	Tourism Authority of Thailand
TMP	Tourism Master Plan
UN	United Nations
UNCSD	United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WTO	World Tourism Organization
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature or World Wildlife Fund

Executive Summary

Introduction

National tourism organizations (NTOs) play a central role in tourism development in the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) region. Such active intervention has been widely credited for the rapid development of the tourism industries in the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. Over the last forty years, the growth of tourist arrivals and tourist receipts in these countries (with the exception of the Philippines) were among the highest in the world. By 2000, the four countries generated a total of nearly US$21 billion in receipts from 32 million arrivals (various sources).

However, poorly planned mass tourism in these countries has also led to environmental and cultural degradation. As a major force in the world economy with tremendous impacts on the environment and culture, it came as no surprise that the tourism sector became a target for reform in its approach to development. The new paradigm has come to be known as sustainable development. This paper looks at the ways by which NTOs in the Asean region operationalize the principles of sustainability.

The specific objectives of this paper are
- To identify the activities that NTOs in the four Asean countries do to effect sustainable development of their respective tourism industries;
- To evaluate the sufficiency of these measures in attaining sustainable tourism development; and
- To suggest ways of improving current efforts in order to attain a more sustainable development of tourism.

This study is based on desk research of printed literature and research materials that are available online. An ocular visit to tourist sites in Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore was done to augment the scant material on sustainable tourism development in these countries. Interviews of key experts in the countries were also carried out using a semi-structured questionnaire.

The NTOs surveyed for this study were
1. Department of Tourism (DOT) (Philippines)
2. Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism (MOCAT) (Malaysia)
3. Singapore Tourism Board (STB) (formerly Singapore Tourism Promotion Board)
4. Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) (The Ministry of Tourism and Sports has just been created in October 2002. - author)

The level of analysis was limited to that of the national tourism organizations in order to provide focus for the discussion. The study covered only the NTOs of the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, which may not be an accurate representation of the Asean region. Due to financial constraints, only a single visit to a few sites in Peninsular Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand was made. Unforeseen official protocol in Malaysia also prevented the research assistant in obtaining more information about sustainable tourism practices in that country.

The concept of sustainable tourism development

In 1986, the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development studied the dynamics of global environmental degradation and made recommendations to ensure the long-term viability of human society. Gro Harlem Brundtland, then Prime Minister of Norway, chaired the Commission. The Commission's report, *Our Common Future* (1987), became the benchmark for thinking about the global environment, and first popularized the term "sustainable development", defined as

> development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Taking off from the Brundtland Commission's definition, Tourism Canada (1990) came up with the following definition of sustainable tourism development:

> Tourism development that leads to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled, while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.

McVey (1993) identified the three core elements of sustainability, which are

- Economic sustainability, which refers to maintaining growth rates at manageable levels; promoting tourism while keeping an eye on capacities to handle greater demand in order to avoid consumer dissatisfaction;
- Social sustainability, which refers to society's ability to absorb increasing tourist arrivals without adversely affecting or damaging indigenous culture; and
- Environmental sustainability, which is related to the capacity of the natural and built environment to handle tourism without damage.

The UN Commission for Sustainable Development (UNCSD) adds a fourth element, which is institutional sustainability. Institutional sustainability refers to a country's commitment to sustainable development as manifested by the incorporation of sustainable principles into development planning, partnerships for sustainable development, the use of indicators for monitoring sustainability, presence of monitoring and coordinating bodies for sustainable development, and the presence of laws that promote sustainable development.

From the review of literature, tourism is said to be sustainable if it
- Is economically viable
- Promotes conservation of natural resources
- Supports preservation of local culture
- Takes a long-term perspective and is concerned with the well-being of future generations
- Promotes equity, which means sharing the benefits and risks of tourism
- Engages multi-stakeholder participation in decision-making and management
- Promotes cooperation and partnerships
- Promotes responsibility and accountability in behavior and relationships
- Is marketed responsibly
- Is integrated into planning
- Upholds respect for others
- Emphasizes the importance of education, research, and capability building.

Activities of NTOs related to sustainable tourism development
The NTOs of the four countries surveyed have made efforts in the direction of sustainable tourism development. These activities revolve around the following

- Integrating the principles of sustainability into the national tourism plans
- Development of ecotourism and related tourism products
- Making mass tourism economically sustainable
- Support for voluntary initiatives for sustainable tourism

Capability building, research, education and advocacy
Multi-stakeholder participation and inter-agency coordination
- Providing financial support

Problems and issues on sustainable tourism development

Thavarasukha (2002) noted the following stumbling blocks to ecotourism, which also applies to sustainable tourism development itself.

- The concept of sustainable tourism development is not thoroughly understood
- There is poor coordination among the various government agencies, with each agency only relating to each level along the vertical chain
- Tourism master plans had no local participation
- The information on ecotourism (sustainable tourism) are not organized
- There is lack of enforcement machinery, and the penalties for violating environmental laws are very low
- There is no follow-up, which can be used to adjust the strategies
- There is lack of genuine local participation in the crafting of tourism master
- Reward systems and accreditation programs have also not been able to ensure compliance to sustainable environmental practices from the tourism industry.
- NTOs do not use and have not yet identified indicators for sustainable tourism development

This not to say that there are no useful environmental and socio-cultural indicators. Over the years, various models of indicators have been proposed, but the variables used often proved to be too numerous, too broad, or too technical to be useful for monitoring tourism's sustainability. The UN Environmental Programme (UNEP)/Earthwatch lists more than 20 indices for sustainable development, which have been formulated by UN agencies, international NGOs, and regional organizations. Some of the most popular models are the Dashboard of Sustainability by the Consultative Group on Sustainable Development Indices, the Pressure-State-Response Model by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Environmental Pressure Index by the Netherlands for its National Environment Policy Plan, the Human Development Index (HDI) by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), Capability Poverty Measure by the UN, and Cost of Remediation by Harvard University and the Asian Development Bank.

Several indicators of sustainable tourism development may be read in the main article.

Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the foregoing discussion, the following conclusions can be made

- The NTOs of the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand have incorporated sustainable tourism principles into their tourism master plans.
- While there has been significant progress in the adoption of sustainable tourism paradigm at the national levels, the diffusion of such philosophy to the local level has been quite slow. There is the tendency to interchange the related concepts of ecotourism, community-based tourism and sustainable tourism.
- The operationalization of sustainable tourism principles has also been very sluggish. The scarcity of case materials on best practices and the lackluster participation in voluntary initiatives attest to the uneasy transition to sustainability.

In order to accelerate sustainable tourism development, it is suggested that NTOs

- Advocate the equal application of sustainable development principles on mass tourism and ecotourism, and other "niche" products
- Form national and local steering committees on sustainable tourism development
- Compile and document laws, guidelines, and best practices on sustainable tourism for dissemination and easy reference

- Institutionalize local community participation in the decision-making process, from conceptualization to implementation and control
- Connect tourism projects to poverty alleviation measures, including the formation of cooperatives, micro-financing for small businesses, and procurement of supplies and personnel from the local community.
- Integrate sustainability criteria in accreditation programs and tourism awards, and expand the coverage of awards to all sectors
- Establish a program for the integrated development of human resources
- Improve their research capability in order to provide timely and valid data and information for monitoring.
- Monitor sustainability by using indicators

From the review of literature, it became evident that the problem is not the absence of indicators that can be used for monitoring sustainable tourism development but how available indicators may be made more practicable by addressing these key concerns: (1) data availability, (2) comparability of the data across countries, and (3) integrativeness, or how the indicator reflects the interactions among environmental, social and economic issues (European Commission (EC), 2000).

The sustainable tourism index developed by the French NGO (non-governmental organization) Groupe Developpement (GD) comprises only 16 main indicators, based on what GD calls the "least common sm-specific, manageable and easily comprehensible. This index represents the state of the art in sustainable tourism indicator development and has been pilot-tested in Phuket in 2000 and is scheduled for global testing in the near future. The indicators used for monitoring sustainable tourism include

1. Physical impact
2. Sewage treatment
3. Garbage treatment
4. Water consumption
5. Visual impact
6. New jobs
7. Staff continuing education
8. Local frequentation
9. Law and order
10. Public health
11. Local production impact
12. Development control
13. Cultural tourism
14. Technology
15. Child welfare
16. Labor laws and agreements (Vellas and Barioulet, 2000).

The use of indicators as a tool for monitoring the sustainable development of tourism will have a greater chance of success if the indicators would be developed in consultation with all stakeholders, particularly with the local community representatives; the indicators address real issues in the tourist sites; there are qualified people who can do the technical measurements of the variables involved and institutional mechanisms, such as legislation, to ensure that tourist sites or destinations are subjected to regular monitoring.

In the Philippines, the most-often cited problems by tourists are garbage, crime, heavy traffic, lack of information, and poverty (DOT in Cruz, 2000). Other pressing concerns are the peace and order situation in many parts of the country, the quality of beaches, the frequent occurrences of natural calamities which damage industries, including tourism, protection of indigenous peoples' rights to ancestral domains, weak institutional mechanisms for sustainable development. Indicators that address these concerns will

therefore be extremely relevant. In this connection, the supplemental indicator shown on page 35 is being suggested as a way of evaluating the state of tourism development in the country.

It is suggested that the indicators be monitored at the level of the tourist site or municipality, where the impacts of tourism are directly felt. However, the practicality of these indicators will be contingent on primary data collection because of wide gaps in the present Philippine statistical system. The National Statistical Coordinating Board web site presents only two data for the tourism sector: (1) (international) tourist arrivals and (2) (hotel) occupancy rates. The institution of the Philippine Tourism Satellite Account will represent a significant leap in this direction. Aggregating the local surveys can then provide a picture of regional and national situations from the standpoint of tourism sustainability.

Towards Sustainable Tourism Development in the Philippines and Other Asean Countries: An Examination of Programs and Practices of National Tourism Organizations

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Abstract

This paper discusses the concept of sustainable tourism development and how the principles of sustainable tourism are operationalized through the activities, programs or projects of the national tourism organizations (NTOs) of the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. Subsequently, the author identifies the approaches and best practices of the NTOs and gaps in the implementation of sustainable tourism development. The paper ends with recommendations on how to improve current efforts in effecting sustainable tourism development.

1. Introduction

Rationale for the study

National tourism organizations (NTOs) play a central role in tourism development in the Asean region. From the 1960s up to the early 1990s, NTOs had assumed the functions of planning, implementation, and regulation of tourism. Such active intervention has been widely credited for the rapid development of the tourism industries in the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. Along with industrialization and vigorous export promotion, tourism became a tool for economic development of these Asean states. Over the last forty years, the growth of tourist arrivals and tourist receipts in these countries (with the exception of the Philippines) were among the highest in the world. By 2000, the four countries generated a total of nearly US$21 billion in receipts from 32 million arrivals (various sources).

	Tourist arrivals (millions)	Tourist receipts (billions)
Philippines	1.797	2.33
Malaysia	12.775	6.30
Singapore	7.519	5.45
Thailand	10.132	6.88
	32.223	20.96

However, poorly planned mass tourism in these countries has also led to environmental and cultural degradation. Thailand and the Philippines came to be known as sex capitals. The spread of AIDS, particularly in Thailand, has also been abetted by tourism. Local residents have complained of loss of access to beaches and dislocation from areas of economic activity. The once pristine beaches of Boracay and Phuket now suffer from congestion, pollution and beach erosion. Singapore has lost much of its Asian identity as high-rise hotels, giant malls and a futuristic airport were constructed to handle the influx of millions of tourists. As a major force in the world economy with tremendous impacts on the environment and culture, it came as no surprise that the tourism sector became a target for reform in its approach to development. The new paradigm has come to be known as sustainable development. This paper looks at the ways by which NTOs in the Asean region operationalize the principles of sustainability.

Objectives

The specific objectives of this paper are

- To identify the activities that NTOs in the four Asean countries do to effect sustainable development of their respective tourism industries;

- To evaluate the sufficiency of these measures in attaining sustainable tourism development; and
- To suggest ways of improving current efforts in order to attain a more sustainable development of tourism.

Methodology

Methodological frame
This study is based on desk research of printed literature and research materials that are available online. An ocular visit to tourist sites in Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore was done to augment the scant material on sustainable tourism development in these countries. Interviews of key experts in the countries were also carried out using a semi-structured questionnaire.

The review of literature concentrated on documents on international declarations, particularly the world summits on sustainable development. National socio-economic development plans, national tourism master plans, ecotourism master plans of the four countries have also been reviewed, as well as academic papers published in recent international tourism conference proceedings. Officials and personnel of the NTOs also sent documents, some of which proved useful for the study. The Internet was the other major source of information, primarily from websites of the NTOs, the United Nations (UN), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academic institutions. Unless otherwise indicated, information about the NTOs' activities was taken from their respective websites.

The NTOs surveyed for this study were
- Department of Tourism (DOT) (Philippines)
- Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism (MOCAT) (Malaysia)
- Singapore Tourism Board (STB) (formerly Singapore Tourism Promotion Board)
- Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) (The Ministry of Tourism and Sports has just been created in October 2002. - author)

Working steps
The following steps were followed in writing this present draft:
1. Review of literature on sustainable tourism development as can be gleaned from international declarations, action plans and guidelines, national development plans, tourism master plans, and ecotourism development plans to define sustainable tourism development, describe its framework and identify its main elements;
2. Present examples of projects, programs and activities of NTOs; make a classification of the activities, discuss how the activities promote sustainability; and spot the similarities and uniqueness in the approaches made by the NTOs;
3. Identify gaps (problems and challenges) in the NTOs' programs and activities;
4. Look for indicators that NTOs use to monitor sustainability; and
5. Make conclusions and recommendations.

Scope and limitations of the study
The level of analysis was limited to that of the national tourism organizations in order to provide focus for the discussion. The study covered only the NTOs of the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, which may not be an accurate representation of the Asean region. Due to financial constraints, only a single visit to a few sites in Peninsular Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand was made. Unforeseen official protocol in Malaysia also prevented the research assistant in obtaining more information about sustainable tourism practices in that country. (We were not aware that we had to make an official request for interview with MOCAT officials through the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs before the assistant went to Kuala Lumpur.)

2. The concept of sustainable tourism development

To understand "sustainable tourism development", there is a need to explain the fundamental concept of sustainable development.

Review of literature

UN Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, 1972

The beginnings of the sustainable development paradigm can be traced to the environmental movement in Europe and North America during the 1960s. In June 1972, the international community met in Stockholm to focus for the first time specifically on global environmental and development issues. The Declaration of the UN Conference on the Human Environment contained 26 principles on the preservation of the environment (World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) online).

Brundtland Commission, 1987

In 1986, the UN World Commission on Environment and Development studied the dynamics of global environmental degradation and made recommendations to ensure the long-term viability of human society. Gro Harlem Brundtland, then Prime Minister of Norway, chaired the Commission. The Commission's report, *Our Common Future* (1987), became the benchmark for thinking about the global environment, and first popularized the term "sustainable development", defined as

> development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The report echoed the basic principles outlined in the 1972 Stockholm Convention, such as redistribution of economic activity, conservation of and equitable access to resources, and increased technological effort to use them more effectively. It also recommended observance of carrying capacity and sustainable yield, and minimizing adverse impacts (WSSD online).

Earth Summit, Rio de Janeiro, 1992

The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (also known as Earth Summit 1992, or the Rio Summit) brought environment and development issues to the forefront. The Summit produced the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, which added the principles of intergenerational equity, citizen participation, and empowerment of women, the youth and indigenous peoples. Its accompanying document called *Agenda 21: Program of Action for Sustainable Development*, identified ways by which various stakeholders can operationalize the actions called for by the document on a wide range of issues (Gee, 1997). The 1992 Summit generated a high level of public awareness of and engagement in global environmental protection and the health and well-being of future generations. The Rio Summit was well attended by government leaders, public interest groups and non-governmental organizations, as well as private sector interests and business leaders. The Summit highlighted the value of international cooperation in global issues, such as the environment (WSSD online).

World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, 2002

In common with the Stockholm Summit, the 2002 WSSD identified poverty as the main cause of environmental degradation and social problems. As such, measures to eradicate poverty were deemed essential for a sustainable future. These measures called for greater access to basic health services, clean water, and sanitation facilities, and education. It also called for greater participation by women and indigenous peoples to economic activities. Other policies suggested giving poor people access to basic rural infrastructure, credit facilities and application of new environment-friendly technologies (UN, 2002). A very significant aspect of the WSSD is the inclusion of sustainable tourism development, particularly ecotourism and community-based tourism, as strategies for reducing poverty.

World Conference on Sustainable Tourism, Lanzarote, 1995
This conference was the first to call for the integration of sustainable development principles in tourism. The Lanzarote conference on sustainable tourism resulted in two documents: the *Charter for Sustainable Tourism* and *The Sustainable Tourism Plan of Action.* The Charter for Sustainable Tourism is a declaration which sets out 18 principles for how tourism should be controlled so that it can be included in the global strategy for sustainable development. The Sustainable Tourism Plan of Action specifies strategies and proposals for action to be developed by the signatories of the Lanzarote Declaration. The first of such principles states that "Tourism development shall be based on criteria of sustainability, which means that it must be ecologically bearable in the long term, economically viable, as well as ethically and socially equitable for the local communities" (Aronsson, 2000).

Agenda 21 for Travel and Tourism Industry
In 1996, the World Tourism Organization (WTO), the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), and the Earth Council produced the document *Agenda 21 for Travel and Tourism Industry: Towards Environmental Sustainable Development*, which is more specific to the travel and tourism industry. The document called for establishment of mechanisms for the implementation of sustainable tourism practices, participatory decision-making, and the interdependence of tourism and peace, among others.

Code for Sustainable Tourism
In April 2001, the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) published their own *Code for Sustainable Tourism.* It urged their members to conserve the natural environment, respect local cultures, maintain environmental management systems, conserve and reduce energy, eliminate wastes and pollutants. It also encouraged commitment to support environmentally and socially responsible actions, sustainable tourism research and educational activities, and cooperation with individuals and organizations to advance sustainable development practices.

Taking off from the Brundtland Commission's definition, Tourism Canada (1990) came up with the following definition of sustainable tourism development:

> Tourism development that leads to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled, while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.

Eber (1992 in Bramwell, 1998) states further that tourism can contribute to sustainable development when it

> operates within natural capacities for the regeneration and future productivity of natural resources; recognizes the contribution that people and communities, customs and lifestyles make to the tourism experience; accepts that these people must have an equitable share in the economic benefits of tourism; and is guided by the wishes of local people and communities in the host areas.

McVey (1993) identified the three core elements of sustainability, which are

- Economic sustainability, which refers to maintaining growth rates at manageable levels; promoting tourism while keeping an eye on capacities to handle greater demand in order to avoid consumer dissatisfaction;

- Social sustainability, which refers to society's ability to absorb increasing tourist arrivals without adversely affecting or damaging indigenous culture; and
- Environmental sustainability, which is related to the capacity of the natural and built environment to handle tourism without damage.

The UN Commission for Sustainable Development (UNCSD) adds a fourth element, which is institutional sustainability. Institutional sustainability refers to a country's commitment to sustainable development as manifested by the incorporation of sustainable principles into development planning, partnerships for sustainable development, the use of indicators for monitoring sustainability, presence of monitoring and coordinating bodies for sustainable development, and the presence of laws that promote sustainable development.

Tisen et al. (1999) explains the interrelationship of nature, culture and economics in the following example. Among the communities in Sarawak, Malaysia, forest animals are the foundation of legends and traditional belief systems. They are imitated for dances and animal parts are worn as personal decoration. If wildlife disappears, their culture will also fade. Yet the forest also supplies the people with wild meat, which constitutes a third of their meals. But again if the people continue hunting certain animals for meat, then these animals might become extinct. By offering an alternative means of livelihood, tourism in Sarawak helps preserve the environment and culture.

Principles of sustainable tourism development
From the review of literature, tourism is said to be sustainable if it
- Is economically viable
- Promotes conservation of natural resources
- Supports preservation of local culture
- Takes a long-term perspective and is concerned with the well-being of future generations
- Promotes equity, which means sharing the benefits and risks of tourism
- Engages multi-stakeholder participation in decision-making and management
- Promotes cooperation and partnerships
- Promotes responsibility and accountability in behavior and relationships
- Is marketed responsibly
- Is integrated into planning
- Upholds respect for others
- Emphasizes the importance of education, research, and capability building.

3. Activities of NTOs related to sustainable tourism development
This section looks at the ways by which the sustainable tourism framework has been adopted into the national tourism agenda of the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand; how the concept of sustainable tourism has been operationalized through the various activities of the NTOs; and the challenges, issues or gaps that remain to be hurdled in pursuit of sustainable tourism.

National tourism plans
As a result of multilateral commitments entered into by the four countries under study, there has been a conscious effort to integrate the principles of sustainability into their national development plans, which later found their way into the four countries' tourism master plans.

The original six member countries of Asean (the four plus Indonesia and Brunei) adopted the Jakarta Resolution in October 1987 on promoting the principles of sustainable development as a framework in

their efforts on common seas, land resources, tropical rainforests, and air quality (Asean Economic Research Unit, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1991, online). Eventually, the Asean countries would sign Agenda 21, the mother document upon which codes of ethics, guidelines and master plans for sustainable development would be based. The principles of sustainable development would find application in the national development plans. National development plans provide the overall framework for development of a country. They spell out the major objectives, strategies, and identify priority projects for investments, and therefore have direct implications on national budgets. They set the general directions for sectoral plans, such as tourism master plans. National tourism plans in the four Asean countries generally underscores the important contribution to the national economy and its potential to raise income levels and the quality of life in the rural areas, the need for human resource development, environmental and cultural conservation, marketing and product development strategies (e.g., cluster development and trans-border tourism). Some national tourism plans also have special features like extension of financial assistance to tourism ventures, decentralization of control for tourism, and development of e-commerce for tourism.

Malaysia's National Tourism Policy was first proclaimed in the Sixth Malaysia Plan (1991-1995), and updated in the subsequent Seventh (1996-2000) and Eighth (2001-2005) Malaysia Plans. The Federal Government's broad policies for sustainable development of tourism in Malaysia include

- Encouraging the equitable economic and social development throughout the country through the promotion of rural enterprises and accelerating urban-rural integration and cultural exchange, and encouraging the participation by ethnic communities
- Developing environment-friendly tourism products, promotion of cultural and natural heritage. This includes the establishment of a "tourist village" where local products and handicrafts may be put on display and cultural events may be staged. The Malaysian Government has budgeted more than 309 million Malaysian Ringgits (RM) in support of environment-friendly projects, including the provision of budget hotels, historical site conservation and provision of pedestrian walkways and bicycle trails
- Provision of soft loans for small- to medium-size tourism related projects. About RM 200 million has been earmarked for tourism small and medium enterprises (SMEs) development
- Adoption of an integrated approach to planning, continuing human resource development, and preservation and beautification of tourism and historical sites. States that do not have tourism bodies were encouraged to establish a mechanism to plan and coordinate tourism activities as well as formulate tourism master plans. A National Tourism Human Resource Development Council has been established to develop manpower for the traditional tourism sectors, such as hotels, tour operators, and the like.

The Philippine Tourism Master Plan outlines policies, which the DOT believes advance the cause of sustainable tourism development:

- Promoting sustainable tourism products by developing a spread of differentiated tourism clusters, which are each supported by an international gateway, support amenities and services; developing a spread of complementary tourism products in each of the clusters, and diversifying the market mix by aiming to strike a balance between domestic and international tourism
- Maximizing the use of local resources (financial, human and material)
- Maximizing local ownership, livelihood opportunities, individual initiative and self-reliance
- Encouraging domestic tourism as a means to improve the people's quality of life, conserve and promote national heritage, and heighten their sense of national identity and unity
- Promotion of environmental conservation by adhering to development guidelines and carrying capacities of the locale where tourism development would take place, and adopting an integrated

approach in planning, taking into consideration the country's natural, historic and architectural heritage; and supporting the conservation movement

- Establishment of a tourism industry training board, training centers per cluster or region, and standards for tourism professional, and tourism educators.

In response to the call for sustainable tourism development, the DOT, with the help of the Philippine Council on Sustainable Development and other entities, conducted a series of technical workshops to update its tourism policy. The proposed tourism policy statement underscored the significance of tourism as "a catalyst for sustainable development." The updated framework advocates multi-sectoral participation in tourism development by women, cultural minorities, tourists, and big business. Sustainable tourism will be the product of judicious stewardship by the key players in tourism (travel and tourism business and affiliated sectors, politicians, civil society, the academe and technological institutions, host communities, farmers and fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, and visitors). Sustainable tourism development is one that is governed by the primacy of people, the spirit of partnership or consortium, community participation, cultural authenticity and integrity, quality of tourism product or experience, entrepreneurship and productivity, gender sensitivity, and advocacy and leadership (DOT technical workshop paper).

STB's current Tourism Master Plan called *Tourism 21* is basically a marketing plan, and there are no direct references to sustainable development. Lacking the diversity and abundance of nature and culture of its neighbors, Singapore has chosen instead to concentrate on forging regional tourism and business alliances, and packaging complementary tourism products with destinations outside its geographic boundaries (Yeoh, Ser, Wang and Wong, undated). The Plan called for the small city-state to be developed as a tourism hub for Asia and mastering gateway tourism, taking full advantage of its location, sophisticated infrastructure, political stability, and excellent human resource. According to Ms. Shoo Ling, STB only regulates hotels and travel agencies. For tourism sites, regulation is done by the Urban Redevelopment Board. The other agencies in charge of tourism-related development are the National Parks Board, the National Heritage Board, and the Ministry of Environment. There is no definite legislation to ensure sustainable tourism but it is encouraged through intergovernmental alliance with local authorities, business and industry. Singapore has shifted its approach from the "demolish and rebuild policy" of the 1960s to 1970s to one of becoming a green city with well-preserved Asian heritage (Chan and Smith, 2001).

The sustainable tourism policy of TAT emanates from Thailand's constitution itself, which provides for the right of the people to protect their resources, trades and culture as well the right to share the fruits from the utilization of such resources (Wanaporn, 2002). Sustainable tourism development policy is one of the five components of National Policy spelled out in the 8th National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) (1997-2001). Sustainable tourism was made into a national agenda in the National Tourism Development Plan which was contained in the 9th NESDP (2002-2006) (Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research [TISTR], 1997).

Thailand's tourism policy advocates

- A human-centered approach to development, the protection of the wellbeing of the people, and their participation in all levels of development
- Conservation of mangrove forests, coral reefs, and marine park resources, assets that are vital to the tourism industry

- Tourism as the major source of national income
- Multi-stakeholders participation (local people, local government organizations, other government agencies and the private sector)
- Upgrading of service quality standards, building up performance of small and medium entrepreneurs and local communities, and training of personnel at all levels
- Decentralization of power to local administration in managing tourism destination
- Consolidation of Thailand's international image as "Quality Destination" through joint public-private sector public relations campaign
- Development of electronic- or e-tourism composed of e-tourism, e-trust, e-commerce, e-tourism mail and e-market place
- Improvement of integration of related tourism laws (Wanaporn, 2002; Chaisawat, 2002).

Envisioned to be in effect by 2003 the tourism law will cover all tourism related industries, the development of new attractions and improvement of maintenance in existing areas, promotion of trans-border tourism to the Mekong countries as well as to Malaysia and Singapore, and provision of training for TAT staff (business-in-thailand.com). The tourism law will also provide for a system of registration and product grading of ecotourism and nature-based tourism, define curriculum for tourism education, provide a proactive plan to guide tourism development in national parks as well as a manual for resort development.

The National Tourism Development Plan advocates environmental sustainability by increasing green areas, improving landscapes, controlling land use, and expanding capacity of garbage disposal and wastewater treatment facilities. Following the polluter-pays principle of nature conservation, the Plan recommended the collection of park fees and limiting the number of visitors in national parks. It also called for the training of rangers as tour guides, collaborating with private sector and local communities in the upkeep of protected areas and national parks, and in observing carrying capacities.

Development of ecotourism and related tourism products
The International Ecotourism Society (1991) defines ecotourism as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well being of local people." Implicit in this definition, according to the IES, are the characteristics of successful ecotourism:

- Minimizes the negative impacts on nature and culture that can damage a destination
- Educates the traveler on the importance of conservation
- Stresses the importance of responsible business that works in cooperation with local authorities and people to meet local needs and deliver conservation benefits
- Directs revenues to the conservation and management of natural and protected areas and biological diversity
- Emphasizes the need for both regional tourism zoning and visitor management plans designed for regions or natural areas that are slated to become eco-destinations
- Emphasizes use of environmental and social baseline studies, as well as long-term monitoring programs, to assess and minimize impacts
- Maximizes economic benefit for the host country, local business and communities, particularly peoples living in and adjacent to natural and protected areas
- Supports the economic empowerment of communities through training and hiring local people, paying fair wages and benefits, buying supplies locally, and supporting local ownership or joint ventures with outside business or NGO partners of tourist facilities and concessions
- Ensures that tourism development does not exceed the social and environmental limits of acceptable change as determined by researchers in cooperation with local residents

- Relies on infrastructure that has been developed in harmony with the environment, minimizing use of fossil fuels, conserving local plant and wildlife, and blending with the natural and cultural environment.

Because of the almost identical characteristics of ecotourism and sustainable tourism, it is not surprising that ecotourism has become a core component of tourism strategies of the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand.

Framework for ecotourism development
The 1991 Philippine Tourism Master Plan made mention of "niche markets" and "special interest tourism" whose definitions are similar to ecotourism. NGOs, local government units, and local communities have been undertaking their own versions of ecotourism even before the Government stepped in in order to establish a framework for its development. To chart its future development, former Pres. Estrada issued Executive Order 111 in 1999, creating the National Ecotourism Development Council (NEDC), which is composed of Cabinet secretaries, and representatives of NGOs. Chaired by the Secretary of Tourism, the NEDC, is the policy making body for ecotourism. The implementing arm is called the National Ecotourism Steering Committee (NESC) and Regional Ecotourism Committees (REC). The first national workshop to formulate a national ecotourism framework was held in 1999. The outputs from that workshop were later validated in the National Ecotourism Congress in 1999. In April 2002 the Philippines' National Ecotourism Strategy (NES) was presented to various tourism sectors. The NES identifies the strategic framework, institutional mechanisms, ecotourism programs, ecotourism network (of potential and actual sites) and action plans. The NES was crafted with technical assistance from the government of New Zealand.

In 1992, Malaysia Tourism Policy identified ecotourism as one of the forms of tourism to be expanded and developed. By 1995, a National Ecotourism Plan (NEP) was drafted. The NEP, which is being coordinated by MOCAT, will be in effect till 2005. Ecotourism is seen as a major tool for nature and cultural conservation, given that Malaysia has some of the biggest expanses of virgin forests, and the largest number of rare species of animals, and ethnic communities in Southeast Asia. The Malaysian NEP provides for the adoption of a clear definition of ecotourism, a definite development policy, implementing legal changes to support the Plan, and establishing a monitoring and evaluation program. The NEP's *Site Planning and Management* part covers the application procedures, establishment of a nationwide system of ecotourism areas, guidelines, marketing strategy, and fiscal measures to encourage ecotourism. The *Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building* part covers human resources development, local participation, accreditation scheme, product development, certification and standards of tourist information literature (NEP). The Government at the federal and state level provided funds for ecotourism development including 10 million Malaysian Ringgits for five ecotourism pilot projects between 1996 and 2000. About RM 100 million has been earmarked for 28 new projects (Daud, 2002).

The Tourism Authority of Thailand has set up a committee to establish policies and guidelines for ecotourism development as early as 1994. In 1995, TAT commissioned the Thailand Institute of Science and Technology Research to conduct an ecotourism study. The *Final Report on Operational Study to Determine Ecotourism Policy* recommended the establishment of a development framework for tourism resource with clear standards, observance of carrying capacities in various zones, and the establishment of concrete measures for stricter environmental protection and preservation. It also advocates the use of appropriate technologies to control environmental quality, as well to support the development of personnel in the process of planning and managing ecotourism resources and their environment. Furthermore, the report also underscores the importance of education, infrastructure, investment, marketing, and the role of local communities to ecotourism. In 1998, the Thai Cabinet approved the establishment of a National Ecotourism Committee, which formed subcommittees for tourism research and environmental management, environmental awareness, people's participation and marketing

promotion and tour guiding, infrastructure management and tourism services, and investment promotion. Thailand's ecotourism policy is situated within the framework of the Thai Constitution itself and in the Eighth (1997-2001) and Ninth (2001-2006) National Economic and Social Development Plans, which call for people-centered development (Leksakundilok, undated).

In support of its ecotourism program, TAT has provided support to Thai Ecotourism and Adventure Travel Association (TEATA) by running special training programs for ecotourism guides. The Thai Government has also invested in infrastructure and has designated 104 National Parks and Marine Parks. TAT has identified 600 attractions as suitable for ecotourism development. TEATA offers low impact travel activities, such as rafting, Mekong River tours, elephant safari, culture tours, birdwatching, biking, health packages, and off-road adventures (TAT, 2003).

Ecotourism plans in the four countries contain the following common elements

- Standardized systems and procedures
- Establishment of institutional mechanism for implementation
- Integration of concepts and principles into the educational system
- Establishment of policies, guidelines and standards for human resource development, networking, and resource mobilization
- Generation of awareness and appreciation of ecotourism principles and practices
- Identification and development of sites for ecotourism
- Enhancement of existing ecotourism sites and products
- Mobilization of communities as partners
- Promotion of ecotourism products
- Establishment of market database
- Establishment of local and international linkages, such as for funding purposes
- Conduct of special projects and activities
- Development of infrastructure facilities to support ecotourism development
- Development of alternative livelihood and entrepreneurial projects for host communities
- Enhancement of communities' capability in the management of ecotourism enterprise (Andrada, 2002).

With few remaining natural areas, Singapore does not have a national ecotourism plan like its neighbors. However, *Tourism 21* contains sustainable components, such as the promotion of community- and nature-based tourism. STB has made a development plan for the Southern Islands. Sustainable aspects of the plan include keeping 80% of the place in its natural state. Buildings will be of low density and structures will not to be higher than four stories. Energy-efficient and clean transportation systems will be used like tram, golf carts, and water taxis. Only the fire engines and police cars will be using combustion engines. The development will involve some reclamation to join the three islands and create a critical landmass needed for recreation and resort development. In order to conserve nature on the islands, STB has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National University of Singapore to study the islands' flora and fauna, prepare a feasibility study of creating a habitat for threatened species on the islands. According to the 1996 master plan, after the reclamation is finished in 2002, the land will be tendered to private developers. It is expected to generate S$460 million through land sales. Development costs is estimated at S$280 million. When completed in 2007, the site will be able to attract 500,000 visitors a year, up from the 2001 figure of 1,000 (Yeang, 2002).

With the end of conserving the few last vestiges of its Asian identity, Singapore has also come up with policies to reserve ethnic sections of the city like Chinatown, Little India, Kampung Glam and Boat (Chan and Smith, 2001). STB's cultural heritage restoration project involves restoration of shophouses and

construction of the Chinatown Heritage Center in Chinatown, renewal project in the Muslim quarter of Kampung Glam, and developing an arcade in Little India. Shophouses are traditional Chinese shops with residential quarters on the upper floors. STB and the National Heritage Board have converted three original shophouses in Chinatown into a museum where visitors may see period furniture, costumes and jewelry, charcoal-stained kitchens and a typical tailor shop (Dobbs, 2003 on STB web site).

Case studies in sustainable tourism development

Mt. Pinatubo Livelihood from Tourism Project. The DOT Regional Office initiated this project by assisting a community in Tarlac province establish a cooperative that will sell guided tours to Mt. Pinatubo's crater lake. The DOT helped the local community enhance its local capability by conducting training programs on tour guiding and hosting for the homestay program. Other aspects of sustainability include the creation of livelihood for the cultural community of the Aetas, who serve as guides and porters. Tourists pay user fees, which are used for conservation of the trekking route and maintenance of public toilets. The project has generated enough money to fund the construction of a multi-purpose hall for the local residents.

Butanding Interaction Tours. The Donsol River is a rich source of micronutrients for the whale shark (butanding in local dialect), causing them to congregate around Donsol's waters for a few months during the year. Previously caught for their flesh, the butanding were saved from certain extinction through the intervention of the local government units, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and the DOT. The municipality of Donsol and the provincial government of Sorsogon, passed ordinances that banned the hunting of the giant fish. The WWF provided training for the BIO (Butanding Interaction Officers) and encourage research-based interactions with the whalesharks. (The BIO is a guide, whale-shark spotter and first-aider in one.) The DOT helped by providing training in the homestay program. Tourism now provides an alternative livelihood to local homestay providers, BIOs, boat operators, and other service providers.

Kampung Desa Murni. MOCAT with the State Economic Planning Unit, helped established the homestay program in Kampung Desa Murni in 1995 by providing training to host families, developing promotional brochures, and helping the community learn how to organize the project on their own. The homestay program promotes sustainable tourism by letting the local community operate the project and engage in livelihood. Through this project, women are able to make money by operating seasonal craft businesses, thus developing their entrepreneurial skills. Visitors also get to experience culture through participation in mock Malay weddings, trips to *batik* factory, and demonstration of traditional martial art of *silat* and lantern dance. They can also watch a demonstration of gathering latex from rubber trees. Desa Murni homestay program has led to the creation of the Malaysia Homestay Association. Homestay programs have been replicated in the states of Johor, Kedah, Melaka, Pahang, Perak, and Selangor.

Kinabatangan Wildlife Safari. The Sabah State government, with funding from the federal government, established the Sepilok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Center in the sanctuary. The center is equipped with research and educational facilities, as well as accommodation for visitors. Aside from protecting the forest habitat, the center also promotes the welfare of the local community through ecotourism. WWF Malaysia, is involved through its Partners for Wetlands Program. Private investors built ecolodges, the best example of which is the Sukau Rainforest Lodge. Sukau has won the PATA Gold Award for its use of environment-friendly architectural design, and energy-saving technologies.

Umphang. In 1995, TAT set up an ecotourism pilot project in Umphang, a place known for its hill tribes and waterfalls. The local community was given control of the project through the Umphang Tourism Promotion and Preservation Club (UTPCC). The Club, composed of wildlife officers, local authorities, tour operators and village business, came up with its own control measures, such as

- Limiting the number of overnight visitors to 300 per night
- Requiring visitors to secure passes stamped by local tourist police
- Requiring guides to be registered under the Tourist Business and Guides Act of 1992
- Collection of conservation fee of ten baht (about US$0.20)
- Provision of security and protection to visitors
- Standardizing quality and pricing for raft, bus, and food
- Zoning for camping, cooking, and parking
- Installing signages and distributing information leaflets to guide visitors on proper conduct while in the community.

TAT has supported the UTPCC in human resource development, promotion of handicraft, preservation of traditional houses, upgrading of budget accommodation, product development and public relations. TAT also assisted UTPCC in the production of an ecotourism handbook containing a code of conduct and a map of the place's natural trails and rafting routes. Umphang won the PATA Gold Award in 1998 for Best Conservation Effort.

Ben Prasart. Ecotourism may also be based primarily on cultural assets, such as in Ben Prasart in the province of Nakhon Ratchasima. Ban Prasart is an important archaeological site because it features rare Khmer architecture. The site was home to an excavated settlement dating 3,000 years containing 60 human skeletons of different ages lying on top of each other from a depth of from one to five meters. Accessories found in the dug site included pottery, bronze, shell and marble bracelets, rings, glass beads, bronze axes and iron tools. TAT developed the site as a pilot project, providing assistance to the promotion of handicraft and sale of souvenirs, training the community in product design, quality improvement and marketing. TAT also promoted homestay for students coming from all over Thailand. The project has generated support from the Australian Embassy, which donated money for the housewife career development projects (Thavarasukha, 2002).

Singapore agritourism. Singapore's agritourism products depart from usual setting. With the help of the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore, STB has developed five agrotechnology parks. The farms showcase intensive farming techniques, such as raising bean sprouts through aeroponics, breeding of exotic and endangered birds, organic farming, raising of tropical orchids and ornamental fishes. STB provided grants through the Tourism Development Assistance Scheme to the five farms to defray the cost of improving visitor facilities like storyboards, briefing areas, sheltered walkways, lighting, rest and refreshment areas, and toilets. STB has also helped in the design of the farm tours and in the development of storyboards and signages.

In addition to high-tech farms, Singapore is also developing destinations noted for their rustic charms and natural settings. Examples of places that will be promoted along these lines are Sungei Buloh Nature Reserve, Pulau Ubin and Bukit Timah Nature Reserve. Sungei Buloh, a mangrove wetland known mainly for bird watching, has been cited by APEC as a model sustainable tourism product. Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, established in 1883, is suitable for mountain biking, trekking and nature walking. Together with the Central Catchment Nature Reserve, it is one of only two areas in Singapore that is legally protected from development (Yeang, 2002).

Singapore is by no means the only country to venture into agritourism. The DOT, Department of Agriculture and the UP Asian Institute of Tourism have just published *Philippine Agritourism Program Manual: A Guidebook for Developing Agritourism in the Philippines* (2002). Agritourism is defined as "…tourism that is conducted on working farms where the working environment forms part of the tourist product." The manual identifies pilot projects and provides a list of accredited tour operators. The pilot sites are Central Luzon State University in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, Oro Verde Farm in the Visayas, and Del

Monte Plantation in Bukidnon. It also prescribes sustainable practices, such as social acceptability of the project (the operation of the farm for this purpose will depend on the willingness of the farmer to accept visitors), adherence to sustainable techniques, and monitoring. Sustainability will be further promoted by having a regulatory mechanism. This include the formulation of guidelines for registration and incentives, and its inclusion into the 2000 Investment Priorities Plan, which will be done with the help of the Board of Investments (BOI).

In Thailand, the TAT and the Department of Agricultural Extension are developing agritourism in the Muslim village of Ko Maphrao near Phuket. The main attractions will be the rubber plantation, fishing activities and homestay. Tourists will be offered the opportunity to try their hands at collecting latex from rubber trees, join a fishing trip, visit the feeding beds of oysters, mussels and lobsters, and the mangrove forests where monkeys, crabs and birds may be observed. TAT is also developing agritourism in Krabi province's Ko Phi Phi and in the 140-year-old village of Bang Plee in Samut Prakarn province. The main attractions in Ko Phi Phi are the limestone outcrops, the Horticulture Center (for anthuriums, orchids and wild plants) and the swamp forests, which is noted for rare species and an emerald colored pool. Bang Plee, which has a sizeable population of ethnic Laos and Muslims, will feature floating markets, agricultural demonstration of mango and coconut agar preservation, and tiger and snake farms. Students will be utilized to conduct the guided tour of the village. Agritourism is also flourishing in the northern provinces. According to TAT (2000), tourism based on the region's agricultural resources (research and demonstration facilities, orchid nurseries, arboretum, homestays, nature trails and rice planting and harvesting), has generated enough money to a point where opium growing has been eliminated.

Making mass tourism economically sustainable
Mass travel still dominates the tourism industries of the Asean states. The NTOs do not control nor regulate businesses that cater to high-volume tourists because of the trend toward decentralization and the system of governance (e.g., federal). What has surfaced in this study though is that there have been adjustments made by the NTOs that have made mass tourism at least more economically viable.

One change is the bigger importance now being given to domestic tourism. The value of domestic tourism has been recognized by the Asean NTOs, especially after the global financial crisis in 1997, which resulted in dramatic dips in international tourist arrivals. Domestic tourism is particularly effective in distributing incomes to the rural areas, and stabilizing demand for tourism facilities and services. The DOT has initiated "holiday economics" in 2002. At the insistence of the DOT, the government moved the celebration of national holidays to the nearest Friday, effectively lengthening weekends, thereby encouraging domestic trips. Similarly, Malaysia has the First Saturday Off Ruling and Third Saturday Off Ruling, to encourage domestic travel by its citizens (Omar and Haslina, 2001). In Thailand, TAT has come up with an advertising campaign that tells its citizens that paradise should not be sought elsewhere because paradise is in Thailand itself. TAT has also provided discount coupons of five to 15 percent as incentive to domestic travelers.

Another is the shift from competition to complementation. The four countries are involved in one or more "growth triangles", which promote integration of tourism, transportation, and other industries (www.usaep.org). Transborder tourism is one of the possibilities within the growth triangles of Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand, Indonesia-Malaysia-Singapore, or in the bigger growth nodes of Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asean Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) or the Great Mekong Subregion (Brunei, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and China). Both Singapore and Thailand promote themselves as Tourism Capital, Tourism Hub, and Gateway to Asia. At the Asean level, the four states have already relaxed visa and immigration requirements for citizens of member states to promote regional travel.

Lastly, attention is being paid to diversifying tour product offerings, which has the effect of attracting new market segments. This trickles down to what are classed as sustainable products, such as ecotourism, rural tourism or village tourism, agritourism, health tourism, and heritage tourism. More and more areas in the countryside, which are endowed with nature, special economic activities or indigenous cultures, are being opened up for their tourism potentials.

Support for voluntary initiatives for sustainable tourism
According to a study done by the WTO (2002), voluntary initiatives play an increasing role in the regulation of tourism operations. They usually address issues related to sustainability (environment, economic and social concerns) and target specific tourism sector, industry associations or destinations. By nature, the initiators are not obliged to propose and run the initiative, and target groups are not obliged to apply or join. Voluntary schemes cover ecolabels and certification schemes, prizes and awards, environmental management systems, codes of conduct, charters for sustainable tourism, self-commitments, and self-declarations. VISTs aim to raise awareness of problems and the willingness for improvements, identify, stimulate and replicate good practices, and raise standards of performance in tourism. Ecolabels rely on voluntary participation, are not profit-oriented and promote open access. They are designed to reward environmental leadership, and provide a review and update of environmental criteria and categories. In addition they use legally protected logos (Hundloe, 2002). Codes of conduct refer to a voluntary set of guidelines outlining ethics, philosophies, principles and practices that the tourism industry or group could follow in its operation or behavior (UNESCAP, 1999). Some of the most widely known VISTs in the Asean are

- PATA Green Leaf Program/APEC-PATA Code for Sustainable Tourism - Started certifying in 1995, this is an ecolabel for all types of tourism companies. Originally implemented by PATA in 1992, it has now been merged with Green Globe 21. With help from the TAT, UNEP, NGOs, the World Bank, and the Asia Foundation, the Thai Hotels Association established the Green Leaf environmental certification program in 1998. The goal is to improve environmental quality, conserve energy and preserve natural resources in the hotel business. Green Leaf evaluates a hotel's sustainability on 11 areas. The program allows individual companies to use PATA's Green Seal label by signing a commitment and encourages tourism companies to establish detailed environmental guidelines for their sector of tourism industry (WTO, 2002).

- Green Globe - Established in 1994 by the WTTC, this ecolabel translates the principles of Agenda 21 into practical actions for accommodations, tour operators and destinations around the world. Like most ecolabels, it is based on commitment rather than actual performance. In 1999, its first year of certification, GG entered into a joint venture with Australia's Cooperative Research Center for Sustainable Tourism (CRC) to operate in the Asia Pacific. Green Globe Action plans have been made for Camiguin and Ifugao in the Philippines and in Ko Samui, Thailand (WTO, 2002).

- International Hotel Environment Initiative (IHEI) -founded in 1992 by a consortium of chief executives from multinational hotel groups (Princes of Wales Business Leaders Forum). This non-competitive platform encourages continuous improvement in the environmental performance of the hotel industry. The consortium has entered into partnerships with hotel associations, governments, NGOs, tourism bodies, and businesses. IHEI launched with the International Hotel and Restaurant Association and American Express the "Green Hoteliers Award" to reward hoteliers for their efforts to improve environmental performance. Member hotels now number 11,000 on five continents, representing over 1.9 million hotel rooms (WTO, 2002).

- Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism-initiated in 1998 by ECPAT Sweden and further developed starting 1999 by other ECPAT national organizations (in Austria, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the UK) in collaboration with tour

operators, travel agents associations, and the support of governments. The code, which uses six criteria, has been adopted and is now being implemented by 100% of Swedish tour operators and 70% of Scandinavian tour operators in six pilot destinations (Dominican Republic, Austria, Brazil, Costa Rica, India and Thailand). This project operates in close collaboration with the WTO, and is being co-funded by the European Commission (WTO, 2002). In Thailand, TAT supports ECPAT and Accor Hotels' poster campaign to educate hotel guests on the hotel chain's commitment to protect children, and on the penalties for unlawful behavior. Other codes of conduct in the Asean include the Philippines' Ecotourism Code of Ethics, which is contained in the DOT's *Primer on Ecotourism,* and Sustainable Tourism Code of Responsible Behavior for Tourists and Tour Operators by TAT's Conservation Division.

Ecolabels and certification programs

International ecolabels and tourism environmental certification programs have very low participation rates in the four countries. For example, only one percent of the 64 hotels in Bangkok have applied for Green Leaf accreditation in 2000 (Green Leaf, undated). The other countries do not even have their own ecolabels for tourism. According to a WTO study, a critical mass of 3% to 10% is needed to consider an ecolabel successful. STB encourages hotels to establish environmental management system in compliance with ISO 14001. ISO is the International Organization for Standardization. The ISO 14000 family of standards is made up of about 20 documents related to environmental management systems (EMS), and environmental management tools. ISO 14001 are documents that specify the requirements for establishing a new EMS, or improving on an existing EMS, which may be objectively audited for self-declaration or third-party certification or registration purposes. ISO 14000 promotes three types of accreditation, ranging from one that applies multiple criteria third party rating, to self-declaration, and one that applies quantified environmental data within preset categories of parameters (Hundloe, 2002).

Tourism awards

In order to encourage the adoption of best practices, the Asean NTOs have come up with their own tourism awards, in close partnership with industry. Tourism awards not only promote best practices that lead to financial viability in the industry. By incorporating environmental criteria, the awards aim to encourage better environmental management.

Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines have instituted tourism industry awards, which are cooperative projects of government and the tourism industry. The Philippine version called *Kalakbay Award* recognizes the best hotels, resorts, travel agencies, tour operators, tourism frontline workers, local tourism councils and ecotourism products. Environmental practices form part of the criteria for selection of best hotels and resorts, but the weights assigned to them are quite low. The award is given every two years. The Tourism Authority of Thailand initiated the biannual (not biennial) Thailand Tourism Awards in 1996 to promote Thai tourism industry. In 2002, in line with the objectives of conserving natural and cultural resources, the categories of ecotourism, agritourism and diving attractions were added to the categories. Malaysia Tourism Awards also promote nature conservation and culture by having categories for best natural attractions, and best restaurant in separate categories for promoting Malay, Indian, Chinese cuisine in addition to Eastern and Western ones.

Accreditation schemes

Accreditation programs in the Asean are intended for the various sectors of the tourism industry, particularly hotels and resorts. There are no accreditation programs for destinations.

Hotel and resort codes. To promote quality in tourism facilities, the Philippine Department of Tourism maintains an accreditation scheme for hotels and resorts. Hotels are classified as de-luxe, first class, standard and economy while resorts, are classified from AAA, AA to A, based on criteria that may be found in separate Hotel and Resort codes published by the DOT. Accreditation are based purely on the

quality of facilities and services and do not contain any environmental requirement. This is only voluntary on the part of tourism establishment.

Gold Circle Quality Programme. With support from the private sector and other government agencies, Singapore Tourism Board has developed the Singapore Gold Circle Quality Programme. The accreditation scheme sets benchmarks for fair trade practices, quality of service and management, facilities and equipment, product development, industry support and documentation (STB, 2003).

Star rating system. There had been no uniform rating system for Thai hotels until April 2002 when TAT in cooperation with the Thai Hotels Association and the association of Thai Travel Agents adopted the star rating system. The star rating system which ranges from five star (highest) to one star will be based on five major criteria: physical attributes like location and environmental quality, structure and systems related to safety and security, facilities related to comfort, service quality like cleanliness, hygiene and reputation, and ongoing maintenance of property.

Capability building, research, education and advocacy

NTOs run educational and training programs to support sustainable tourism effort. Educational materials are in the form of guidebooks, maps, leaflets, brochures, and exhibits. Advocacy work is carried out through training programs, and support for curriculum development on sustainable tourism. Target groups include students, frontline industry personnel and government officials.

A big component of training provided by the NTOs is related to improving the frontline service in the tourism sector. An example of this is the DOT's *Mabuhay* Host Program. The program aims to make taxi drivers conscious of their responsibility to make their cars clean, maintain professional physical appearance and be accountable for their passenger's safety. Rotary Club with the support of TAT is running a similar program for taxi drivers in Thailand. Called "Service Excellence 2000", the program covers basic Thai, English, Japanese or Chinese language course, refresher on traffic rules and regulations, and review of best driving practice and etiquette. The DOT also generates awareness and feedback about tourism policy issues through various community participation strategies, such as conferences, workshops, community consultations, public hearings, formation of special committees (Mena and Chon, 2002). There have been three Tourism-related Industry Conferences (TRICON) where the DOT launched its WOW Philippines! Campaign. The DOT also held a national conference in Tacloban in 2002 to get reactions from various sectors on the Philippine National Ecotourism Strategy. The DOT, through its implementing arm the Philippine Tourism Authority, financed the establishment of the Asian Institute of Tourism at the University of the Philippines Diliman and the Hotel and Tourism Training Institute of the Philippines in Intramuros. The former has a management-oriented curriculum while the latter has a skills-training based curriculum.

Some of the training programs being provided by the NTOs aim to increase the capability to handle new tourism product. STB provides a training programme called "Exploring the Nature Trails of Singapore" for tour guides. STB's Center for Tourism Related Studies has trained 100 tour guides as of 2000 for agritours. The STB conducts environmental awareness campaigns by

- Installing showcase exhibit and information on the natural environment, flora, fauna and natural habitats in Sungei Buloh, Pulau Ubin and Bukit Timah
- Producing printed materials on educating visitors' respect for natural environment which are also available at the Visitor Center (e.g. leaflets) in the places cited above
- Highlighting the country's "Clean & Green" reputation in STB's brochures
- STB also emphasizes Singapore as a gateway to a culturally diverse region rich in flora and fauna.

MOCAT, in cooperation with Malaysian state governments have published guidebooks on its protected areas: wildlife sanctuaries, forest reserves, national parks, cultural sites, and unique wetland habitats, as ecotourism attractions. Visitor/interpretation/information centers are available in 13 of the 42 national parks in West Malaysia (*Escape to the Great Outdoors of West Malaysia*). The DOT has also published newsletters, primers, guidebooks and manuals on tour guiding, ecotourism, and agritourism.

The STB in collaboration with the Singapore Environmental Council produced the Green Map of Singapore, showcasing agritour farms, nature trails and other green attractions. Part of the Green Map System (GMS) currently used by 110 cities in 35 countries, it features Sungei Buloh Nature Park, Pulau Ubin, Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, and Upper Pierce Reservoir. The Green Map provides information about the characteristics of these places; admission rates if the place is a paid attraction, things to do in the sites, telephone numbers, what to do and how to get there. The map is a very good resource material about sustainable practices. It has trekking tips, list of contacts and resources, list of ecotourism sites and agro-technology facilities. It also describes interesting plants and animals that can be found in Singapore. TAT's Conservation Division has published brochures about sustainable tourism, explaining the principles surrounding sustainable tourism, the different forms of sustainable tourism, and appropriate behaviors by tourists in different situations.

TAT's education and awareness building programs, include installing better quality information and directional signs at Kiriwong Village in Nakhon Sithammarat, which is known for its homestay visits and trekking. Another one is the fielding of 22 mobile resource centers to promote sustainable tourism. The TAT, with the support of the national parks, will produce ecotourism brochures for distribution to Thai and foreign visitors at the parks. TAT will likewise provide environmental conservation tools to local communities in collaboration with Chulaborn Research Institute and the Royal Forest Department. TAT' also maintains permanent conservation exhibition booths at major international airports and national parks. The major airports are Bangkok, Chang Mai, and Phuket. The national parks are Doi Ithanon, Huai Nan Dung, Had Chao Mai in Trang, and Had Nopparat Thara-Phi Phi Island in Krabi.

As part of the Amazing Thailand campaign TAT embarked on a program intended to build awareness of natural and cultural heritage conservation among local communities, which is critical to developing sustainable tourism under the TAT's long-term policy. The TAT joined with the National Economic and Social Development Board to develop a long-term plan to encourage local communities to participate in tourism development. The agency is working with many organizations, to educate students and monks about sustainable tourism. (Business Co. Ltd.). TAT conducts tourism courses for administration officials through the Ministry of Interior, and is promoting tourism education in schools and universities. Through its Foundation for the Protection of Environment and Tourism (est. 1992), TAT is able to educate the youth on the value of forest and marine conservation. Among its projects are tree-planting and promotion of garbage treatment.

Multi-stakeholder participation and inter-agency coordination
Tourism is a complex industry with economic, environmental and social dimensions. NTOs do not have control over all aspects of tourism development. Sustainability cannot be achieved by just one agency doing everything Ultimately, sustainable tourism will only be attained if the whole country is sustainable. Limitations in financial resources, expertise, geographic reach and jurisdiction make it imperative for NTOs to seek the help of other sectors. These include

- Various government agencies
- Private business
- Foundations

- Academic institutions
- Financial organizations
- NGOs
- Tourism industry associations
- Embassies and consulates
- Communities at various levels.

Among the government agencies that play prominent roles are national/federal/local/state departments and offices with control over the environment, land use, protected areas, forestry, fisheries, agriculture, local security, transportation, indigenous people, culture and women's issues.

These partnerships provide mechanisms for dialogues, which are useful in ferreting genuine concerns and issues, and establishing ownership of any policy, plan, strategy, or project that will be implemented in a given area. When such process is bypassed or not done properly, tourism master plans may languish for years for lack of support, funding or coordination with relevant authorities.

Tourism industry associations and local tourism councils, (made up of the private sector, civil society and government agency representatives and politicians) have joined hands with government in undertaking environmental and cultural projects in support of local tourism efforts in the Asean, including

- Formulation and adoption of local tourism master plans
- Creation of guidelines for the preservation of cultural heritage and making them into an ordinance
- Cooperative promotion and participation in travel marts
- Development of a code of conduct for tourists visiting indigenous communities
- Organizing conference-workshops
- Conducting training seminars for tour guides
- Preservation of ancestral houses
- Organizing homestay program
- Launching a sponsorship program (e.g., Adopt-a-Park or Adopt-a-*Barangay* program for beautification campaign)
- Establishment of museums and cultural centers
- Promoting cleanliness and beautification programs
- Conservation programs: captive breeding program for endangered species, mangrove rehabilitation, sea grass transplantation, coral reef recovery program, and bay watch (against illegal fishing), forest watch (against illegal logging), charging conservation fees in environmentally sensitive areas.

The Departments of Agriculture, Trade and Industry, Environment and Natural Resources, Science and Technology, as well as the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples are just some of government agencies that have cooperated with the DOT in various tourism projects. The planning for major tourism projects may involve regional and local offices of the DOT, National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), congressmen, governors, mayors, planning and development officers, representatives from tourism-related industry associations and local tourism councils. Tourism councils at the provincial and municipal levels (and sometimes even barangay level) are composed of influential people in the locality with interest in tourism development. These may include local politicians, relatives of politicians (e.g., wife of the mayor), civic organizations, and businessmen.

Malaysia's development of tourism relies on the smooth coordination among government agencies at various levels. MOCAT plans, implements and coordinates strategic policy decisions on culture, arts and tourism; manage development funds to provide basic infrastructure and facilities; performs regulatory

role, and conducts marketing and promotion though Tourism Malaysia. Being a federal republic, Malaysia's 13 state governments have jurisdiction over land use, and are directly involved in developing and promoting land-based tourism products. At the state level, a State Ministry of Tourism or Tourism Executive Committee controls tourism policy and provides the necessary funding to relevant state implementing agencies, such as departments of wildlife and national parks, forestry, and aboriginal affairs. State economic planning and development offices are also heavily involved. The Sabah Tourism Council and Sabah Tourism Promotion Corporation have taken the lead roles in developing ecotourism, which is one of the state's biggest industries. Conservation-oriented NGOs (e.g., WWF and the Wetlands Foundation) have been very active in supporting ecotourism and nature-based tourism in Malaysia. In Sabah the Sabah Foundation promotes ecotourism. Local government units such as the city government may be responsible at the implementation stage and are responsible for maintenance. Scarcity of funds necessitates calling on the private sector to build ecolodges, organize tours, and conduct marketing and training programs in the various states (Daud, 2002).

In Singapore, STB is responsible for tourism promotion at the national level but works with other government agencies for the planning and management of sustainable resources in the country. It capitalizes on the participation of several government agencies, such as the National Parks Board (NParks), Urban Redevelopment Board (which handles land use planning), the National Heritage Board, the Ministry of Environment, the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore, and volunteer organizations like the Singapore Environmental Council (SEC). NParks carries out the mapping and inventorying of natural resources and ecosystem characteristics in tourist areas. Singapore's sustainable tourism effort is likewise dependent on the support of non-governmental bodies. The SEC, an independent umbrella body, supports STB's efforts through its network of relevant institutions (e.g., Green Volunteer Network), solicitation of tax-exempt donations, and running of the Environmental Achievement Award.

In Thailand, the TAT and the National Environment Board are the main government bodies that are responsible for sustainable tourism at the national level. TAT's regional offices, the provincial authority, the regional offices of the Office of Environmental Policy and Planning and the Local Administration Organization take over at the local level. The regional offices of the TAT monitor tourism development and sustainability in the tourist attractions; the regional offices of Office of Environmental Policy and Planning do the same in their respective areas of responsibility. The Provincial Government and local administrative units, together with local people, monitor and manage tourist attractions in their areas. The Thai Government acknowledges that tourism objectives should be pursued through balanced and complementary course of action, requiring the participation of various sectors and government agencies. In Samui, TAT asked the local people what kind of future they wanted, and the local people chose a peaceful resort more attuned with the local way of life over an island with high rise buildings.

The need for consultation and coordination arises in part to the various provisions and laws that have ramifications on sustainable tourism development. These include environmental laws, rules and regulations on tourism investments, and institutional mechanisms for sustainable tourism initiatives.

The Philippine Tourism Master Plan (TMP) as well as TMPs for specific regions (e.g., Ulugan Bay in Palawan) are linked to other national or even international legislation and plans, such as Strategic Environmental Plans, the National Integrated Protected Area System, Environmentally Critical Areas Network, and UNESCO declarations of World Heritage sites. Investors are required to observe minimum environmental standards for structures to be built in tourist areas as mandated by local tourism master plans, local government regulations, and the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board. A Joint DENR-DOT Memorandum Circular 98-02 (*Guidelines for Ecotourism Development in the Philippines*) provides for the regulation, accreditation of developers and investors in ecotourism projects. The DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) conducts Initial Environmental Evaluation (IEE)

prior to the issuance of an Environmental Compliance Certificate on the following tourism projects

- Hotel inns and similar accommodation within or near urban centers or built up areas with less than 20 rooms with eating facilities
- Hotels, cottages, motels, and lodging houses with ten to 15 rooms with minimum facilities /amenities for resting and eating and some recreation activities located in rural areas, small islands, beaches and mountain areas with high scenic or outstanding and cultural features
- Ecotourism located in unique areas/historical-cultural sites/protected areas under National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act. Protected areas include strict nature reserves, natural parks, natural monument, wildlife sanctuaries, protected landscapes and seascapes, resource reserves, among others (Alejandrino, 2002).

Many tourism destinations in Malaysia are in protected areas. Composed of forest reserves, wildlife reserves, sanctuaries, wetlands and national parks, these are protected by laws, such as the Wildlife Protection Act, National Park Act, National Forestry Act, Fisheries Act, and are managed by the Departments of Wildlife and National Parks, Forestry, Fisheries and various state Parks authorities (Daud, 2002). The Tourism Business and Guide Law, passed by the Thai National Assembly in 1992, empowers TAT to take punitive action against tour operators who engages in activities that can ruin Thailand's international image, such as the exploitation of children for sexual purposes.

Providing financial support
On a limited scale, NTOs may also be involved in providing financial support to sustainable tourism initiatives. Without money, many potential sustainable tourism projects may not get off the ground.

The DOT donates money to NGOs involved in sustainable tourism programs, and biodiversity management, such as the WWF. TAT is cooperating with Small Industrial Finance Corporation to provide financial backing to tourism-oriented medium and small-scale businesses. With credit limits of up to a hundred million baht, payable in ten to 15 years, the loans will support expansions that will promote Thai architecture, cuisine and folk wisdom. The TAT also financed the wastewater treatment plants in Pattaya and Phuket. Singapore also supports tourism-oriented projects through the Tourism Development Assistance Scheme.

4. Problems and issues on sustainable tourism development
Thavarasukha (2002) noted the following stumbling blocks to ecotourism, which also applies to sustainable tourism development itself.

- The concept of sustainable tourism development is not thoroughly understood
- There is poor coordination among the various government agencies, with each agency only relating to each level along the vertical chain
- Tourism master plans had no local participation
- The information on ecotourism (sustainable tourism) are not organized
- There is lack of enforcement machinery, and the penalties (e.g., fines) for violating environmental laws are very low
- There is no follow-up, which can be used to adjust the strategies.

Furthermore, the bias of the NTOs as far as HRD is concerned is on training programs for frontline service personnel in the tourism industry. There is tendency among NTOs to focus on the skills aspect of tourism. Programs aimed at high-level skills of planning, negotiating, resource-generation, environmental monitoring, and market forecasting are sorely lacking.

The lack of understanding of the general philosophy of sustainable tourism leads to a tendency of NTOs to treat mass (high volume) tourism and ecotourism on an unequal footing, with most sustainable tourism development guidelines being applied only to ecotourism. This is a direct result of the mistaken notion that ecotourism automatically leads to sustainable tourism, and that mass tourism is tantamount to unsustainable tourism. This is a significant problem because the bulk of tourism efforts and investments is biased towards mass tourists. Thus the non-application of sustainable standards for mass tourism-oriented operations will tilt the balance away from sustainability.

Bureaucratic processes naturally slow down coordination (e.g., having too many agencies involved). Moreover, confusion as to their respective responsibilities, uneven skills level and varying degrees of readiness for sustainable tourism, across agencies and among the levels of bureaucracy also impede the implementation of sustainable tourism. The task of agreeing on a sustainable tourism agenda may take years of meetings and consultations. Sometimes, government agencies may not be aware of guidelines and structures that support sustainable tourism initiatives. Lack of coordination may also happen when influential leaders in tourism belong to opposing political parties or are political rivals.

The lack of local participation in the crafting of tourism master plans can result to mothballing of plans that took huge investments in time, money and human expertise. Lack of consultation with the affected communities can lead to a non-ownership of the plan. The usual top-down approach to planning oftentimes involves token consultation in the form of information gathering or dissemination.

The dissemination of information about sustainable tourism is critical in raising awareness and commitment among the public. However, the information about the concept, principles and practice of sustainable tourism are scant at the moment and are not readily available. This is because the cases are far too few and there is a need to intensify the systematic documentation and publication of such cases. Research in this field of inquiry in the Asean is just in its infancy stage. This also applies to tourism-related laws and legislation.

The inability of NTOs to enforce policies on sustainable tourism is a major stumbling block to sustainability. With the trend towards decentralization, the regulation of most tourism enterprises have been delegated to local government units. The form of government influences the way responsibilities are distributed. In federal Malaysia, for example, the burden of implementing sustainable tourism projects falls on the state authorities. Sometimes, line agencies tasked with enforcing tourism-related laws may have poor track record in their own areas of jurisdictions. Local government units may not have the understanding of the philosophy of sustainable development, nor the skills, money and people who can implement policies decided at the national level. In relation to this, local authorities, by sheer ignorance of sustainable development principles, do not even enact ordinances or laws that will serve as framework for development and enforcement. Worst of all, there had been cases of an NTO agency itself becoming a hindrance to sustainable tourism management. For example, the Philippine Tourism Authority built a resort in Balicasag where the agency practically took over the responsibility of protecting the marine sanctuary, thereby undermining the local community which used to do that through their management committee (Christie, White, and Deguit, 2002).

Reward systems and accreditation programs have also not been able to ensure compliance to sustainable environmental practices from the tourism industry. Compared to the number of establishments, participation rates for such schemes have been low. In Thailand, for example, only one percent of all hotels have signed up for the Green Leaf accreditation. WTO says a critical mass of at least three percent is needed to make such schemes successful. The reasons for this lie in the lack of understanding for application procedures, perceived high cost of membership or enrollment, the lack of appreciation for the benefits of joining, and overall low value attached to sustainability. Even with full compliance, there are

doubts as to the effectiveness of some accreditation schemes in producing sustainability. The Hotel Code and Resort Codes that the DOT use for accreditation, for instance, set criteria for facilities but none for environmental or cultural sustainability.

The problem concerning the lack of follow-up is the result of not being able to designate a monitoring body, and not having indicators that are specific to the environmental and cultural sustainability of tourism. Agencies that have involvement in tourism (e.g., environment, social welfare, or health) may not see tourism as a priority due to competing issues and demands from within the line agencies.

Sets of indicators (or indices) are important tools in setting targets for sustainability and evaluating the status of tourism from the standpoint of sustainability. A significant finding of the study is that the NTOs do not use and have not yet identified indicators for sustainable tourism development. For the most part, the Asean NTOs remain limited to traditional indices of tourism growth, such as tourist arrivals and departures, tourism expenditures (inbound and outbound), and secondary indicators like length of stay, hotel occupancy rates, air seat capacity, etc.

This not to say that there are no useful environmental and socio-cultural indicators. Over the years, various models of indicators have been proposed, but the variables used often proved to be too numerous, too broad, or too technical to be useful for monitoring tourism's sustainability. The UNEP/Earthwatch lists more than 20 indices for sustainable development, which have been formulated by UN agencies, international NGOs, and regional organizations. A sampling of the most popular models is shown below.

- Dashboard of Sustainability- developed by the Consultative Group on Sustainable Development Indices, the Dashboard is a software that indicates the sustainability of more than 100 countries on the basis of four sets of indicators, namely, environmental, social, economic and institutional. The program allows the user to see how individual countries score on each aspect of sustainability, and see how that country compares with other countries on the same criterion. Depending on the score, which ranges from 0 to 1000 points, a country's position on a criterion of sustainability is rated from critical to excellent. The Dashboard uses and integrates indicators that have been previously developed and published by other institutions, such as the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), World Health Organization (WHO), and the World Resources Institute (WRI), among others. This program can be downloaded from the Internet.

- Pressure-State-Response Model - created by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, this framework for environmental monitoring suggests that underlying pressures (e.g., increase in number of motorized vehicles) creates pressures on the environment (e.g., pollution), which in turn generate a variety of responses (e.g., Clean Air Act).

- Environmental Pressure Index - developed by the Netherlands for its National Environment Policy Plan, this index uses a set of aggregate indicators on six themes: climate change, acidification, eutrophication, dispersion of undesirable substances, disposal of solid waste, disturbance from odor and noise.

- Human Development Index (HDI) - developed by the UNDP, HDI is one of the best-known measures of social progress. It measures human development in terms of longevity (computed as proportion of a maximum value of 85 years old), knowledge (based on literacy rate and number of children of school age attending classes) and standards of living (computed as proportion of purchasing power adjusted gross domestic product (GDP) per head).

- Capability Poverty Measure - also by the UN, this index measures people's lack of accomplishment rather than average accomplishment, which was the focus of HDI. It is a composite index based on the unweighted arithmetic mean of the following indicators: proportion of children under five who are underweight, proportion of women aged 15 and over who are illiterate, and proportion of births unattended by trained health personnel. (Source of first four: Jackson and Roberts, 2000)

- Cost of Remediation (COR) - developed by Harvard University and the Asian Development Bank, COM is expressed as a percentage of GDP that a country must spend in order to move the country's environment from its present state to a more desirable state sometime in the future. COR is relatively data intensive and complex to estimate (Rogers, 1997).

Indicators for sustainable tourism development
The WTO published *A Practical Guide for the Development and Application of Indicators of Sustainable Tourism* in 1996, which identified a set of core indicators of sustainable tourism development. The set comprises of (1) site protection, (2) stress, (3) use intensity, (4) social impact, (5) development control, (6) waste management, (7) planning process, (8) critical ecosystems, (9) consumer satisfaction, and (10) local satisfaction. Site protection is based on International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) index. The WTO has also published guidelines, and best practice studies, that can be the basis for generating other indicators of sustainable tourism development. Its publications on the subject may be gleaned from *Sustainable Development of Tourism-An Annotated Bibliography* (1999, WTO).

Beyond the WTO, a review of literature (UNEP, *South Africa's Responsible Tourism*, *Fair Trade in Tourism*, English Tourism Council, Green Globe, WSSD, Trousdale and Gentoral, and many others) yields a substantial number of indicators shown below which may potentially be useful for monitoring sustainable tourism development.

Economic indicators
1. Tourism revenues
2. Average tourist expenditure
3. Taxes from tourism (direct and indirect taxes paid by business and workers in tourism)
4. Number of registered tourism-related business
5. Inflation/price index in tourist areas
6. Profitability of tourism establishment (occupancy rates of hotels and resorts, load factors of transportation units)
7. Stability and diversity of markets (international and domestic market demand for tourism; percentage of tourism in relation to other industries)
8. Tourism employment (direct and indirect)
9. Ratio of the average monthly wage of tourism industry workers and workers from other industries
10. Visitor satisfaction index provided by customer feedback

Environmental indicators
1. Presence of infrastructure to manage and minimize solid and liquid wastes
2. Water quality index for fresh water and marine/beach water
3. Air quality index
4. Percent of population exposed to noise and light pollution
5. Percent of population exposed to foul odors
6. Amount of water consumed, and percentage of leakage
7. Amount of fossil fuels used
8. Speed of motor vehicles during rush hour
9. Amount of packaging purchased with supplies
10. Adherence to codes of behavior that respect natural heritage

11. Compliance with best practice guidelines in designing, planning and construction of buildings
12. Adoption of technologies that reduce consumption of natural resources, production of wastes, and incidence of pollution (sustainable energy like solar power)
13. Use of local materials (where sustainable) and local architecture on a scale that does not create a negative aesthetic impact
14. Extent of use of soft transport (cycle routes, walking trails)
15. Use of sustainable trails, hides and interpretation
16. Use of sustainable materials (souvenirs not made from parts of endangered animal and plant species)
17. Use of environment-friendly chemicals (e.g. biodegradable soaps and detergents)
18. Park fees used to manage habitat and species
19. Percentage of profits invested in nature conservation
20. Average annual frequency and severity of natural disasters

Socio-cultural indicators
1. (Decent) livelihood opportunities; number of locals selling products to tourists or supplying stores
2. Number of tourism businesses operated and managed by local people's organizations and cooperatives
3. Number of private tourism businesses employing local people
4. Poverty incidence and alleviation in tourist areas (calorie intake, income levels, number of children attending school in tourism destinations, self-rated poverty (Mangahas, 1999), percentage of population living on less than PPP$ 1 a day, number of informal settlers (squatters), percent of underweight children, unemployment rate)
5. Local linkages as indicated by percentage of inputs, including souvenirs and handicrafts, obtained from within the local economy or x distance from tourism project
6. Percentage of staff employed from x distance (e.g., within 50 km) of the tourism project
7. Community's share of profits from tourism
8. Access to and provision of tourism facilities for disadvantaged groups, such as, the disabled, families with small children, the elderly and people with low wages
9. Percentage of goods, services, and labor procured from women, indigenous people, and the handicapped
10. Membership in voluntary organizations and NGOs involved in sustainable tourism
11. Incidence of prostitution
12. Number of sexual harassment cases
13. Safety for tourists (number of crimes against tourists, incidence of illness among tourists, and access to health facilities, tourist police per x number of tourists, civil unrest, wars, terrorism, insurgency)
14. Presence and proportion of local dishes on menus
15. Number of schools with courses or subjects on sustainable tourism
16. Number of research, conferences and publications on the subject of sustainable tourism and related topics
17. Amount of research funding on sustainable tourism development
18. Number of experts on sustainable tourism based on educational attainment, and years of experience
19. Budget for cultural heritage site conservation
20. Gap between rich and poor in tourism areas
21. Community involvement in the planning, research, and decision making processes
22. Community satisfaction with tourism
23. Leaders developed from within the community
24. Gender and ethnic equality in employment
25. Job accessibility to local community, indigenous people, handicapped and women for all levels (entry points to highest management level), expressed as percentage of total number of jobs available in the tourism industry
26. Provision of facilities for tourists and tourism workers to practice their religions and cultural practices

27. Respect for indigenous intellectual property as indicated by laws prohibiting the trading in these assets
28. Respect for ancestral domains
29. Existence of social tourism program; programs for the youth, students, senior citizens, and the handicapped
30. Provision of technical support to local tourism businesses (marketing, training, and managerial support)
31. Investment in human resources development as indicated by presence of in-house training programs, number of staff sent to training and study programs
32. Existence and quality of visitor information centers
33. Use of languages understandable to tourists in interpretation
34. Existence of domestic tourism program in schools involving trips to cultural heritage sites
35. Availability of interpretation materials and written information (information boards, labels, signs, books, maps, postcards, brochures)
36. Existence of partnerships for the exchange of information, skills and technology relating to sustainable tourism (e.g. access to resource centers on best practices; conferences and workshops)
37. Incidence of discrimination
38. Support for fairly traded products (e.g. wood products from sustainable forests, goods that are legally imported)
39. Percentage of unique, and naturally/culturally/historically significant places which are being preserved and protected by local government, NGOs, and international agencies
40. Percent of households and tourism establishments with access to safe water
41. Percent of households and tourism establishments with access to electricity

Institutional indicators
1. Presence of tourism master plans which incorporate sustainable principles
2. Number of sites with sustainable tourism master plans
3. Presence of inter-agency coordination and cooperation
4. Presence of land use and zoning plans
5. Percentage of establishments or LGUs adhering to environmental impact assessment system and institution
6. Presence of environment monitoring system (EMS) and funding
7. EIAS and EMS required for all business registrations
8. Presence of protected areas management system
9. Laws protecting ancestral domains
10. Existence of a tourism council/cooperatives or equivalent structure at various levels for discussing tourism issues
11. Presence of indicators and adherence to the same
12. Amount of research and development funding for sustainable tourism

5. Conclusions and recommendations
Based on the foregoing discussion, the following conclusions can be made

- The NTOs of the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand have incorporated sustainable tourism principles into their tourism master plans. This orientation in turn was brought about by the rising clamor for change in development paradigm from the international community. The tourism master plans have very strong resemblance to each other in terms of strategies for achieving tourism development.

- While there has been significant progress in the adoption of sustainable tourism paradigm at the national levels, the diffusion of such philosophy to the local level has been quite slow. This may be

attributed to the lack of understanding and appreciation of the concept of sustainable tourism development. There is the tendency to interchange the related concepts of ecotourism, community-based tourism and sustainable tourism.

- The operationalization of sustainable tourism principles has also been very sluggish. The scarcity of case materials on best practices and the lackluster participation in voluntary initiatives attest to the uneasy transition to sustainability.

In order to accelerate sustainable tourism development, it is suggested that NTOs

- Advocate the equal application of sustainable development principles on mass tourism and ecotourism, and other "niche" products

This will bring the countries closer to sustainability as mass tourists comprise the bulk of the tourist market. This orientation should be made part of the philosophy of the NTOs' organization from the national to the local levels. As advocates, NTOs must be able to demonstrate their adherence to sustainable tourism principles right in their decision-making processes, and in their management of visible resources, such as their own buildings and infrastructure projects.

- Form national and local steering committees on sustainable tourism development

Such committee will be responsible for determining the sustainable tourism agenda for both mass tourism and niche-market tourism (e.g., ecotourism) in the respective countries.

- Compile and document laws, guidelines, and best practices on sustainable tourism for dissemination and easy reference

Investment procedures for sustainable tourism projects should be part of this compilation. This may be done by the NTOs themselves or through commissioned work by academic institutions or research-oriented bodies.

- Institutionalize local community participation in the decision-making process, from conceptualization to implementation and control

Local participation is very important in obtaining a sense of ownership of tourism projects. Indeed, while getting the views of the local community may be a tedious process, to dispense with it means further delay or total non-implementation due to opposition from the community. Communities also appreciate being given the power to decide on matters such as determining the number of visitors that they will accept over a given time period. It is very critical to get the support of local leaders, but there is also a need to identify leaders who really represent the interest of the community.

- Connect tourism projects to poverty alleviation measures, including the formation of cooperatives, micro-financing for small businesses, and procurement of supplies and personnel from the local community.

Local communities show enthusiastic support for projects that have direct positive impact on their incomes.

- Integrate sustainability criteria in accreditation programs and tourism awards, and expand the coverage of awards to all sectors

Accreditation schemes may incorporate minimum criteria for the adoption of environment-friendly technologies, safety, and adherence to sustainable design guidelines like use of local materials and design whenever available. They may also require affirmative action measures requiring minimum proportions of women, indigenous people, and handicapped to be employed by an establishment, minimum proportion of goods that should be purchased locally or within the region. Moreover, the procedures for the awards may have to be improved. For example, there should be a nomination process for the judges of the awarding committee for each sector of tourism, which shall be disbanded after the awards have been given. The members of the award-giving bodies may benefit from having the opportunity to make on-site visits and interviews of the entities being nominated. Substantial financial incentives may be given to winners.

- Establish a program for the integrated development of human resources

This will target local government officials, NTO personnel, tourism industry professionals, and the academic sector. An initial step will be to conduct an awareness campaign for local communities, private tourism businesses, and for the general public to disseminate the concept of sustainability and its application to the tourism industry. Regular continuing education and professional development courses may be conducted for LGU (local government unit) officials and tourism industry managers. Incentives for the development of high-level expertise in tourism planning, policy formulation, environmental assessment and monitoring, resource generation, negotiating techniques, community-building, statistics and sustainable technologies should be put in place. Monitoring expertise is very important because indicators will be meaningless unless there are available people who can perform measurements and evaluations of technical variables such as extent of noise and light pollution. Along with HRD, it is suggested that governments invest in sophisticated monitoring equipment. NTOs may consider establishing scholarship funds for higher studies in tourism, all the way to the doctorate level to develop local experts and reduce dependence on foreign tourism consultants.

- Improve their research capability in order to provide timely and valid data and information for monitoring.

Research must be made an integral part of the policy-making process. To this end, NTOs may help establish national (perhaps even regional or Asean-wide) research centers on sustainable tourism. In the long-term, NTOs should endeavor to collaborate with one another to facilitate exchange of data and research outputs in sustainable tourism.

- Monitor sustainability by using indicators

From the review of literature, it became evident that the problem is not the absence of indicators that can be used for monitoring sustainable tourism development but how available indicators may be made more practicable by addressing these key concerns: (1) data availability, (2) comparability of the data across countries, and (3) integrativeness, or how the indicator reflects the interactions among environmental, social and economic issues (European Commission, 2000).

For economic indicators, one concern is how to provide a more realistic measurement of the value of tourism goods and services. This is being addressed by constructing a Tourism Satellite Accounting (TSA) System. The TSA, which is being advocated by the WTTC and the WTO, is an accounting system that will measure the demand for all travel- and tourism-related goods and services in a country (e.g., purchase of photographic films on trips). It is to be carried out parallel to traditional national accounting systems. The Philippine TSA classification of tourism goods and services will be presented for final approval in June 2003.

The Asean NTOs can benefit from the experiences of other countries, which are at the forefront of indicator usage, such as Australia (National Ecotourism Accreditation Program), Costa Rica (*Certificación para la Sostenibilidad Turistica*), Denmark (Blue Flag), United Kingdom (Green Globe), Canada (Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism), and South Africa (Fair Trade in Tourism). Detailed information about these and other voluntary initiatives are available in WTO's *Voluntary Initiatives for Tourism* (2002). Indicators may also be derived from guidelines published by NGOs, such as the WWF. Most of these guidelines are available online.

Sustainable tourism indicators for the Philippines and other Asean countries
Incorporating all of the previously cited indicators into a single sustainable tourism index will be very difficult indeed. However, the sustainable tourism index developed by the French NGO Groupe Developpement (GD) may provide the answer. The index, which has been developed with the support of the European Union, comprises only 16 main indicators, based on what GD calls the "least common denominators". (Available literature does not amply describe how the 16 indicators were selected but the term "least common denominator" implies that these indicators were distilled following a statistical technique known as principal components analysis.) Compared to other indices, these are tourism-specific, manageable and easily comprehensible. This index represents the state of the art in sustainable tourism indicator development and has been pilot-tested in Phuket in 2000 and is scheduled for global testing in the near future. The indicators used for monitoring sustainable tourism (and the possible parameters enclosed in parenthesis) include

17. Physical impact (damaged area, expressed as percentage of tourist facility to total surface area; percent share of primitive plants in vegetation cover; number of species and population per species of animals and plants)
18. Sewage treatment (percentage of treated to total sewage, and what kind of treatment)
19. Garbage treatment (percentage of treated to total garbage, and what kind of treatment)
20. Water consumption (water consumption per room; cost of water supply per tourist; percent of total water consumption to total available supply)
21. Visual impact (maximum building height)
22. New jobs (new jobs created per room per place; new jobs for women; new skilled jobs; average female salary to average male salary)
23. Staff continuing education (number of staff in continuing education; continuing education for female and continuing education for males)
24. Local frequentation (usage rate for hotel, restaurant, recreational and cultural facilities)
25. Law and order (misdemeanor rate per tourist; number of thefts, assaults and battery, serious crimes, and juvenile delinquency reported by tourists and local population)
26. Public health (distance to nearest physician, rate of sexually transmitted diseases [STD], food poisoning, and other prevalent diseases)
27. Local production impact (percentage of local to total purchase)
28. Development control (presence of joint environmental action)
29. Cultural tourism (percent of cultural budget)
30. Technology (Internet access)
31. Child welfare (awareness)
32. Labor laws and agreements (Vellas and Barioulet, 2000).

Chaisawat, a professor at the Prince of Songkla University (PSU), used the checklist developed by Groupe Developpement (GD), together with the WTO's Global Code of Ethics (GCE), as part of his 2002 study in order to provide the evaluation component of the proposed National Tourism Development Plan of Thailand (2002-2006). One of the steps in the evaluation process was to use basic indicators obtained from other studies in order to assess the quality and sustainability of Phuket as a destination. Because

GCE does not state the indicators quantitatively, Chaisawat decided to use the GD checklist, which stated the indicators in numerical terms to evaluate selected tourist sites in Phuket. The checklist is used to compare reference ratios and actual ratios for each tourist site. The comparison between the reference and actual ratios allows a classification of a tourist site into A (at least 12 variables being complied with; sustainable), B (six to 12 variables being met; average and needs improvement), and C (less than six variables being met; unsustainable).

In the Phuket study, fourth year hotel management students of PSU were utilized to survey the sites, which consisted mostly of beach areas. The students were assigned to nine groups with each group having 11-12 members. Each group was assigned to one site where they did field work twice a week for one month.

Reference values, which were determined by the local and national tourism authorities (TAT), were applied for each of the indicators, which then became the basis for scoring. The actual or measured values were plotted on the third column. A score of "1" was given if the actual measurement was within the reference value for a given indicator; "0" if the actual measurement was outside the reference value. Thus, a perfect score for one site would have been 16. The scores of the nine sites were then averaged. The result for one of the sites (Bang Tao Beach) is shown below.

Criteria	Reference values	Measured values	Score
1. % area tourist use/total area	Not more than 35	50	0
2. % liquid waste treated	Not less than 70	60	0
3. % solid waste treated	Not less than 80	80	1
4. Water consumption per room in liters	Not more than 1500	1200	1
5. Maximum building height in meters	Not more than 15	12	1
6. Number of jobs created per room per place	2	1.5	0
7. % of staff receiving continuing education	15	54	1
8. % of local frequentation	6.19	25	1
9. % crime rate per tourist	2	.057	1
10. Distance to nearest physician in km	0	0.5	0
11. % of local to total purchase	90	24	0
12. Presence of joint environmental action	Yes	Yes	1
13. % of cultural expenses	0.03	1	1
14. Access to new technologies	Yes	Yes	1
15. Information on child welfare/protection	Yes	No	0
16. Existence of labor agreement	Yes	Yes	1
Total score			10
Category			B

The process was replicated in the other eight sites and the average of the scores was derived. The result for Phuket showed a mean score equivalent to "B" rating or average sustainability.

This index is quite useful in the sense that the number of variables involved is manageable. In the Philippine context, agencies such as the DOT or DENR may choose which parameters to use per indicator. Moreover, the reference values will also be decided at the local level affording a high level of legitimacy and ownership. On the other hand, if each reference value was to be decided at the local level, the comparability of data across destinations and countries may be impossible. If comparability were to be desired, it would be necessary for Asean countries to decide at the regional level the ideal values for each indicator. Certain indicators, such as numbers 2 and 3, may have to be backed by legislation, which will require all tourism-related facilities to incorporate water and solid waste treatment infrastructure in the

plans.

The use of indicators as a tool for monitoring the sustainable development of tourism will have a greater chance of success if the indicators would be developed in consultation with all stakeholders, particularly with the local community representatives; the indicators address real issues in the tourist sites; there are qualified people who can do the technical measurements of the variables involved and institutional mechanisms, such as legislation, to ensure that tourist sites or destinations are subjected to regular monitoring.

In the Philippines, the most-often cited problems by tourists are garbage, crime, heavy traffic, lack of information, and poverty (DOT in Cruz, 2000). Other pressing concerns are the peace and order situation (cessationist movements and terrorism) in many parts of the country, the quality of beaches, the frequent occurrences of natural calamities which damage industries, including tourism, protection of indigenous peoples' rights to ancestral domains, weak institutional mechanisms for sustainable development. Indicators that address these concerns will therefore be extremely rele vant. In this connection, the following set of supplemental indicators is being suggested as a way of evaluating the state of tourism development in the country. Most of these indicators have already been cited earlier in the long list on pages 23-25 while some have been lifted from other indices, such as Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI) for air quality and water quality indices. They are being highlighted here because of their relevance to the Philippine situation. They are not meant to be a substitute to the one proposed by Groupe Developpement.

Supplementary Indicators for Sustainable Tourism Index

Economic
1. Average tourism spending
2. Number of registered tourism-related businesses
3. Amount of taxes paid by tourism-related businesses and workers in tourism industry
4. Ratio of the average monthly wage of tourism industry workers and workers from other industries

Environmental
5. Water quality index (fresh and marine water/beaches)
6. Air quality index
7. Percent of population exposed to foul odors
8. Percent of population exposed to harmful noise levels
9. Average annual frequency and severity of natural disasters
10. Speed of motor vehicles during rush hour

Socio-cultural
11. Poverty incidence in tourism areas
    - self-rated poverty (Mangahas, 1999)
    - percentage of population living on less than PPP$ 1 a day (WSSD, 2002)
    - number of informal settlers (squatters)
    - percent of underweight children
    - percent of children who are out of school
    - unemployment rate
12. Safety in tourism areas (civil unrests, insurgency, terrorism, wars)
13. Percentage of unique, and naturally/culturally/historically significant places which are being preserved and protected by local government, NGOs, and international agencies
14. Percent of households and tourism establishments with access to safe water

15. Percent of households and tourism establishments with access to electricity
16. Job accessibility to local community, indigenous people, handicapped and women for all levels (entry points to highest management level), expressed as percentage of total number of jobs available in the tourism industry

Institutional
17. Number of sites with sustainable tourism master plans
18. EIA and EMS required for all business registrations
19. Laws protecting ancestral domains
20. Number of sites with local tourism councils or cooperatives
21. Amount of research and development funding for sustainable tourism

It is suggested that the indicators be monitored at the level of the tourist site or municipality, where the impacts of tourism are directly felt. However, the practicality of these indicators will be contingent on primary data collection because of wide gaps in the present Philippine statistical system. The National Statistical Coordinating Board web site presents only two data for the tourism sector: (1) (international) tourist arrivals and (2) (hotel) occupancy rates. The institution of the Philippine Tourism Satellite Account will represent a significant leap in this direction. Aggregating the local surveys can then provide a picture of regional and national situations from the standpoint of tourism sustainability.

- End -

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