Development of Sustainable Tourism along the Asian Highway Network

"Exploring Possibilities in the Case of Thailand"

Chotika Tantisirirak

Supervisors

Mikael Backman

Naoko Tojo

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

Tourism is recognized as one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Tourism activities entail economic, social and environmental benefits as well as adverse impacts. 'The Asian Highway Network', crisscrossing 32 countries in Asia, has been promoted as a tourism-related and a transportation infrastructure. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has provided member countries with a plan of action to assist them with sustainable tourism development.

Thailand is heavily engaged in promoting tourism along the Asian Highway Network. Therefore, a plan of action for sustainable tourism needs to be integrated and implemented in the country. However, an examination of Thai policy and its implementation has revealed that the Thai government has only started to consider the importance of sustainable tourism. Existing policies related to sustainable tourism and the implementation of these policies appear to be insufficient. There are a number of stakeholders who have the potential to influence sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand. The engagement of these stakeholders in the sustainable tourism development process is an important component in helping to realize this goal. While this study has revealed a number of barriers which exist in regards to sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand, it has also revealed that there are a number of drivers that give Thailand a large potential to achieve the objective of sustainable tourism development along the Highway.

Executive Summary

In many areas around the world and specifically in developing countries, the tourism industry has drastically increased. The tourism industry in Asia and the Pacific Region has contributed to rapid economic growth over the last decades. On the other hand, these tourism activities have also brought with them negative impacts to the region.

The concept of sustainable development has arisen in order to reconcile the three bottom lines: economic development, social justice and environmental protection. In order to achieve sustainable tourism development, tourism needs to be planned and managed in such a way so as to minimise social deterioration and environmental impacts, while providing a variety of benefits that contribute to sustainable economic growth.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has recognized the significance of tourism and its impacts occurring in the region. Therefore, ESCAP has provided its member countries with a Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development (PASTA) to adopt into national policy.

The Asian Highway Network, which consists of highway routes crossing 32 Asian countries, has been promoted as a tourism-related as well as a transportation infrastructure. Unfortunately, no specific plan of action for sustainable tourism has been developed for this project. However, PASTA could be applied to this project in order to promote and increase sustainable tourism development.

Thailand has joined in promoting tourism along the Asian Highway Network. However, national policy appears to be inadequate in implementing a sustainable tourism approach. Therefore, this thesis explores the possibility of sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand by identifying the relevant stakeholders and examining related policies and their implementation. The relevant stakeholders, policies and implementation have been identified through a literature review. Additionally, interviews have been conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the stakeholders, the policies pertaining to sustainable tourism development, and the implementation of these policies.

PASTA is used by policy makers and implementers as a guideline to develop sustainable tourism. In the analysis, data gathered from the literature review and interviews have been compared with PASTA. Based on the analysis, it appears that PASTA has been integrated into the national policy but that there remain weaknesses in the policy implementation. Additionally, through the analysis, drivers and barriers regarding sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network are identified.

The drivers include: excellent economic opportunity for Thailand; a concrete legislation framework existing in the country; strong relationships between the government and ESCAP with regards to educational and training programmes; good business opportunities for tour operators; participation of stakeholders in providing education to local people; excellent geographical location; and the existence of numerous services to facilitate tourists. On the other hand, the following factors have been observed as barriers: economic and political fluctuation; inadequate accessibility to tourism attractions; lack of coordination between governmental agencies; insufficient tourism facilities (e.g. signage, maps and rest areas); and low recognition of social impacts.

Based on the work conducted here, it appears that while there are a number of barriers to the development of sustainable tourism along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand, there is

still a strong potential for the realization of this objective within the country. While this thesis has shed some light onto the issue of sustainable tourism development in Thailand there remains a need for additional research in this area in order to help gain a better understanding of the issues at hand.

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1 Introduction

Tourism is recognized as one of the fastest growing industries in the world. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council, in 2007 Travel & Tourism is expected to generate more than 231.2 millions jobs, representing 8.3 per cent of total employment worldwide, and contribute $1815 billion (3.6 per cent) to gross domestic product (GDP). In addition to those economic activities directly related to travel and tourism, there are activities indirectly related to travel and tourism resulting in the economic activities worth US$7060 billion in total. Over the next decade, the industry is expected to increase to US$13 232 billion (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2007a).

Tourism is anticipated to present major opportunities and major challenges for countries around the world. Many countries have encouraged tourism development in order to attract investments, income from foreign expenditure, and employment opportunities. In many developing countries, tourism is growing at a very rapid pace without proper planning. It is becoming the basis of the economic growth of these countries, while bringing drawbacks to society and the environment (Budeanu, 1999).

The recognition of the need for sustainable development has been building over the past thirty-five years. In the 1987 *Brundtland Report* of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), titled "Our Common Future", sustainable development has been described as "*Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (The World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). The concept of sustainable development is based on the idea of reconciling the three bottom lines: economic development, social justice and environmental protection. In order to allow tourism to continue to grow in a sustainable way, it is generally assumed that tourism is preferably planned and managed in such a way as to minimise social deterioration and environmental impacts, while providing a variety of benefits that contribute to sustainable economic growth (Sharpley and Telfer, 2002). Managing tourism in sustainable manner will assist countries in retaining the value of tourism for present and future generations.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)[1] is the regional development arm of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region (ESCAP, 2007a). ESCAP seeks to overcome some of the region's greatest challenges and achieve sustainable development. Particularly, tourism, which is one of the most vital industries in ESCAP region, represents a key area of concern. Tourism helps to generate economic and social benefits for communities. On the other hand, negative impacts may also occur as a result of tourism activities. It should therefore be emphasized that the potential negative economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism must be considered and addressed so that sustainable tourism will be maintained.

Establishing ways to achieve sustainable tourism in individual cities, areas and locations within a country is not uncomplicated. Developing and improving of tourism are challenges for all national tourism administrations and tourism stakeholders. In a destination country such as Thailand, the tourism industry is altered by stakeholders' interests and powers. The Asian Highway Network is promoted to be a tourism-related transportation system which

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[1] ESCAP found in 1947 in Shanghai, China and it moved to Bangkok, Thailand in 1949. It consists of 53 members and nine associate members.

links Thailand to the rest of the countries in Asia and the Pacific Region. Thailand desires to be a hub of tourism Asia by promoting tourism along this highway. Notwithstanding, any tourism promotion should be undertaken with sustainability practices in mind. This challenges the policy makers and relevant stakeholders to undertake the establishment of sustainable tourism along the Asian Highway Network.

1.1 Problem Definition

ESCAP has realized that development of sustainable tourism for an area as diverse and large as Asia and the Pacific involves a great challenge. Formulating policies and implementing initiatives for improving efficiency and enhancing participation in regional and sub regional agreements relating to sustainable tourism must be done. In addition, the gap between policy endorsement and policy implementation as well as policy intention in practice challenges both policy makers and users. Thus, policy makers have a significant role in selecting appropriate policy measures to be implemented. Other stakeholders are also key components in helping to achieve sustainable tourism development.

ESCAP provided the principles and plan of action for sustainable tourism development as an outline for operations at the regional and national level, and member countries have committed to cooperate in pursuing the development of sustainable tourism. The Asian Highway Network Project, the regional project promoted by ESCAP, has recently been taken into account as part of tourism development (ESCAP, 2004a). This project was initiated in 1959 with the aim of facilitating road transportation within the region and creating links to Europe. In addition, ESCAP intends to promote tourism along the highway to contribute to economic and social development and poverty alleviation. It is clear that developing tourism along the Asian Highway Network offers great opportunities to all participating countries in sharing a wealth of historical and cultural heritage, including unspoiled natural beauty. Even though sustainable tourism is not specifically addressed as part of the Asian Highway Network development, the member countries could probably adopt its principles to be integrated at a national level in order to maintain the values of this project.

Thailand is heavily engaged in tourism development within the country and its sub regions. The former tourism policy was principally formulated with a greater focus on enhancing economic viability than on social and environmental concerns. The governmental sectors in charge of tourism have only started to consider the significance of sustainable tourism recently and it seems that the existing policies related to sustainable tourism are insufficient.

1.2 Thesis Purpose

The ESCAP guidelines and principles for sustainable tourism development are well known and have been agreed upon by member states. However, in reality, the adoption of these principles at a national level may not be fulfilled due to a number of factors.

The main purpose of thesis is to explore the feasibility of developing sustainable tourism along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand by analyzing the views of stakeholders and the country's existing policy. This will be done by investigating the approaches of the Thai national policy compared with the ESCAP (regional policy) framework.

The study will be conducted in order to provide insight into national measures that can be taken in an effort to enhance sustainable tourism development. Recommendations regarding

Thai national policy will be made in order to help facilitate further improvement in sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network. This could be useful for policy makers of the relevant organizations who are involved in this project.

1.3 Research Questions

The primary research question addressed in this thesis is: How are sustainable tourism policies and principles integrated and implemented into national tourism development along the Asian Highway Network? In order to answer this question, the following sub-questions will be addressed:

1. How is sustainable tourism addressed in the Asia and Pacific region and in Thailand?

2. What is the current situation regarding sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network?

3. Who are the main stakeholders influencing the policy direction of sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network?

4. What roles and responsibilities do these stakeholders have in promoting sustainable tourism development?

5. What are drivers and barriers influencing the sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network?

1.4 Methodology

Initially, a literature review was completed in order to obtain an overall view of sustainable development and tourism, including its significance in Asia and the Pacific region. The review included relevant issues and examinations of the impacts of tourism activities on the environment, society and culture, and economy. Sustainable development and its principles were also reviewed in order to gain insight into the sustainable tourism perspective. Key actors in tourism were identified in order to understand their roles and responsibilities which could affect sustainable tourism development. Furthermore, information on potential policy interventions that can be used to support sustainable tourism development and the issues surrounding these interventions was gathered in order to gain a better understanding of the crucial issues related to policy making.

The background of the Asian Highway Network and its relationships with the ESCAP Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development were reviewed in order to gain a better understanding of the project and to clarify the main stakeholders meriting consideration in the case study.

The thesis used exploratory research to try and comprehend the current situation and adoption of sustainable tourism development policy along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand. Thailand was conducted as a case study due to its existing capabilities in tourism products and services, which have the potential to be further strengthened through appropriate policy support. Qualitative information was gathered from primary and secondary sources. The primary data collection was facilitated through e-mail correspondence and semi-structured interviews with Thai governmental officials, tour

operators, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), travel media, and an ESCAP official. (The personal contacts are listed in Appendix 1). These discussions helped to provide insight into the relationships and roles of various actors involved in the tourism field. The discussion with policy makers provided insight into the current state of sustainable tourism policy in Thailand. The secondary data was obtained from meeting reports, official documents, statistics, journals and web pages of international and regional organizations, as well as specific books on sustainable tourism development and management. The collected data was used to help provide a better understanding of tourism and sustainable tourism principles at the regional and national levels that could be used in the analysis.

Collected materials were analyzed using a stakeholder analysis framework and the plan of action for sustainable tourism development advocated by ESCAP. Drivers and barriers for the development of sustainable tourism along the Asian Highway Network were identified. An analysis of the stakeholders in both the private and public sectors can help to provide important input for the formulation of effective policy. The empirical data from the literature review and primary and secondary data sources were complied and analyzed in order to draw concluding statements and provide some recommendations for further research.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

This thesis focuses on Sustainable Tourism Development along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand. Thailand has been chosen because it wishes to be a potential regional hub of Asia for tourism and transportation and is currently strengthening its infrastructure and facilities to provide improved links between countries in the region. Yet, it appears that the Thai government has only recently started to consider the importance of sustainability in their tourism policy. The tourism industry calls for practical policies to be implemented in order to continue to encourage economic growth in industry while conserving environmental and social aspects.

The research area covers the study of sustainable tourism principles and its plan of action, including the current tourism situation in Thailand. The study examines Thailand's tourism policy and the major relevant stakeholders which have the ability to affect policy formulation and implementation with regards to the Asian Highway Network. The 4th-10th National Economic and Social Plan with Ministerial Laws and Acts related to sustainable tourism development were selected for review in order to provide the background of the policy strategies and plans. Additionally, the governance structure is presented so as to be integrated into the analysis. Stakeholder analysis is used as a tool which helps provide an understanding of how policies or institutions and people affect each other. In addition, the plan of action for sustainable tourism development is used as a guideline for policy makers to adopt its approaches into national policy.

The study considers the Asian Highway Network as a tourism-related and a transportation-related infrastructure which facilitates tourists and tourism activities. It includes the identification of attractions along the highway but not destination management because the attractions along the Asian Highway are varied and need to undergo specific area studies.

1.6 Thesis Content

This thesis work is further divided into several chapters.

Chapter 2 Tourism and Sustainable Development: A literature review on background information related to sustainable development and tourism is conducted in order to gain insight into the concept of sustainability. The economic, social and environmental impacts associated with tourism activities are briefly described to provide an understanding of benefits and drawbacks of the tourism industry. The key stakeholders in the tourism sector and the components of tourism which affect the development of sustainable tourism are identified in order to gain better understanding for the case study analysis. In addition, policy instruments that can be used to enhance sustainable tourism and the challenges associated with these instruments are considered.

Chapter 3 The Asian Highway Network and Tourism: The Asian Highway Network is presented at the regional level and the Intergovernmental Agreement concerning the Asian Highway Network that has been signed by ESCAP member countries is discussed. Tourism promotion along the Asian Highway is discussed. An analytical framework based on the principles of sustainable tourism and the plan of action for sustainable tourism development is developed.

Chapter 4 Case study—Thailand: An overview of Thailand's circumstances and political, economic and social structures is briefly described to provide background information which is used to support the analysis. The Asian Highway Network status and the tourism situation in Thailand are examined in order to gain insight into the relationships between tourism-related and transportation infrastructure. Furthermore, the development of sustainable tourism in Thailand is investigated to identify the relevant institutions and key stakeholders. The roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders which could influence the success rate of sustainable tourism development are discussed.

Chapter 5 Analysis of Empirical Data: The collected data is analyzed according to the analytical framework developed in Chapter 3. Based on the analysis, drivers and barriers related to sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand are put forward.

Chapter 6 Conclusion and recommendations: The main findings and recommendations are put forward.

2 Tourism and Sustainable Development

The World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has stated that "tourism is firmly established as the number one industry in many countries and the fastest-growing economic sector in terms of foreign exchange earnings, sources of employment and enormous investment in infrastructure, most of which also helps to improve the living conditions of local people and provides governments with substantial tax revenues". It is estimated to provide one in every ten jobs on the planet (UNWTO, 1998). Particularly in developing countries, most new tourism jobs and businesses are created in order to help to equalize economic opportunities and alleviate poverty. Additionally, tourism keeps rural residents from moving to overcrowded cities which helps to reduce social problems.

The role of tourism also fosters the intercultural awareness and personal friendships which are a powerful force for improving international understanding and contributing to peace among all the nations of the world (Edmonds, 2006). Tourism is a sensitive indicator for development of society in general. The growth of tourism was strongly connected with evolution and economic progress, being directly influenced by disturbances such as economic crises, social changes, etc. (Tepelus, 2000). Tourism is considered as an industry which can affect economic, social and environmental conditions. Tourism can create benefits at the same time that it can entail negative impacts, such as cultural devaluation, environmental degradation and social deterioration if it is not responsibly planned, managed and monitored.

This chapter will review of the meaning of tourism related to sustainable development, tourism impacts, and the significance of sustainable tourism. Furthermore, the key components of tourism will be presented in order to provide an understanding of the tourism industry as well as of the key stakeholders who could perhaps influence the development of sustainable tourism. Potential policy instruments which can be used to promote sustainable tourism, and the issues surrounding these instruments, are presented in order to gain insight into the issues related to selecting policy instruments.

2.1 The Concept of Tourism

No one definition is able to capture the different possible meanings of tourism to different people (Murphy, 1998). Mill and Morrison have claimed that it is hard to define whether tourism is an industry and to do determine what factors make a person who is travelling a tourist. Tourism is the term given to the activity that occurs when people travel. However, "All tourism involves travel, yet not all travel is tourism" (Burkart and Medlik, 1982). Travel refers to the act of moving outside of one's usual environmental for business or pleasure. This includes planning the trip, the interactions between the visitor and the host destination, and the return (Cooper, Fletcher et al., 1993).

However, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has recently attempted to define tourism as follows: "Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year of leisure, business or other purposes" (UNWTO, 1998).

Tourism is an industry which involves various actors such as tourists, local communities (people who live at tourist destinations), public sectors (e.g. governments), private sectors or tourist service providers (e.g. tour operators, travel agents, hotel companies, and

transportation companies). Effective interaction and the roles and responsibilities of actors inevitably influence the realization of successful and environmentally-sound tourism. In Section 2.2.4, key actors related to tourism will be discussed.

2.2 Sustainable Tourism Development

It is important to begin this section with the history of sustainable development, the definition of some principles and benefits of sustainable tourism, and a discussion of the positive and negative impacts of tourism in three dimensions – economy, environment and society. In addition, key stakeholders influencing the development of sustainable tourism and policy initiatives will be discussed. The last part of this section will present the policy instruments used in sustainable tourism. This includes the issues related to policy selection that should be considered by policy makers.

Tourism has the potential to make significant contributions to sustainable development. Firstly, this is because of the dynamism and growth of the sector, and the major contribution that it makes to the economies of many countries and local destinations. Secondly, this is because tourism is an activity which involves a special relationship between consumers (visitors), the industry, the environment and local communities. This special relationship arises because, unlike most other sectors, the consumer of tourism travels to the producer and the product, which could possibly bring benefits and costs (UNWTO, 2005).

2.2.1 Sustainable Development

The interest in sustainable development has been building over the past thirty-five years. In 1972, Danella and Dennis Meadows shook the world's complacency with their book 'Limits to Growth' (1972). They argued that the Earth's resources and ability to absorb pollution are finite which could lead to the experience of physical constraints within a century. After the first warning came more research and deliberation, which led to the publication of the World Conservation Strategy by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), which was one of the first reports to introduce the concept of sustainable development (IUCN, 1980). Seven years after this publication, the concept of sustainable development was placed at centre stage and promoted as a vehicle for deliverance to people around the world (Murphy, 1998). It will be presented here.

♦ **"Our Common Future"**

Sustainability is a focus for a new value debate about the shape of the future. It is a signpost pointing to a general direction that we must take, while the debate is engaged about the best path to lead us forward (Dunphy and Benveniste, 2000). Sustainability relates to sustainable development, which has been defined in the 1987 *Brundtland Report* of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), "Our Common Future", as:

   "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"

Sustainable development builds on the old principles of conservation and stewardship, but it offers a more proactive stance that incorporates continued economic growth in a more ecological and equitable manner. The report has stated the more specific implications and guidelines of sustainable development.

Sustainable development usually emphasizes the maintenance of environment or ecology above the economic and social aspects. Establishing ecological limits and more equitable standards requires the promotion of values that encourage consumption standards that are within the bounds of the ecological possibilities and to which all can reasonably aspire. Furthermore, it must not endanger the natural systems that support life on Earth, such as the atmosphere, the waters, the soils and the living beings based on resource conservation approaches. This approach includes the diversification of species of animals and plants, the usage of renewable resources and the minimization of the rate of depletion of non-renewable resources. Principally, the environmental quality needs to line up with economic viability. The corporate environmental policy is an extension of total quality management meanwhile the economic well-being must be pursued by recognizing limits to material growth. Redistribution and reallocation of resources are essentially managed and planned so as to minimize the adverse impacts of human activities (Murphy, 1998).

In 1992, the concept evolved notably through Agenda 21, the plan of action which emerged from the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)[2] and the plan of implementation from the World Summit on Sustainable Development (ESCAP, 2002). Agenda 21 primarily realized that we cannot have a healthy society or economy in a world with so much poverty and environmental degradation. Economic development cannot stop, but it must change course to become less ecologically destructive (Keating, 1993). Agenda 21 has proposed four important issues: 1) Social and Economic Dimensions 2) Strengthening the roles of major groups 3) Conservation and Management of Resources and 4) Means of Implementation which are listed in Appendix 2. This is the biggest challenge faced because it involves various facets regarding finance, consumption rates and population growth. In order to achieve sustainable development, these four issues need to be integrated into policy and implementation.

The developed nations demanded environmental sustainability while the developing nations argued that they should be given the chance to catch up socially and economically with the developed world. Consequently, the importance of balancing the dimensions (or pillars) of sustainable development is now recognized in order to benefit both developed and developing worlds (UNWTO, 2005). The three pillars consist of economic, social and environmental aspects (see Figure 1).

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[2] The "Rio Conference" which took place over 12 days in June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil was the largest environmental conference ever held, attracting over 30,000 people including more than 100 heads of states. The Rio Earth Summit declared that *"the right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations."* Sustainable Development is not just about the environment, but about the economy and our society as well. [http://www.ace.mmu.ac.uk/eae/Sustainability/Older/Earth_Summit.html]

ECONOMIC
EFFICIENCY

Economic Sustainability of tourism

Sustainable tourism development

SUSTAINABILITY
Tourism as part of
Sustainable Development

Ecological sustainable tourism

SOCIAL EQUITY

ENVIRONMENTAL
CONSERVATION
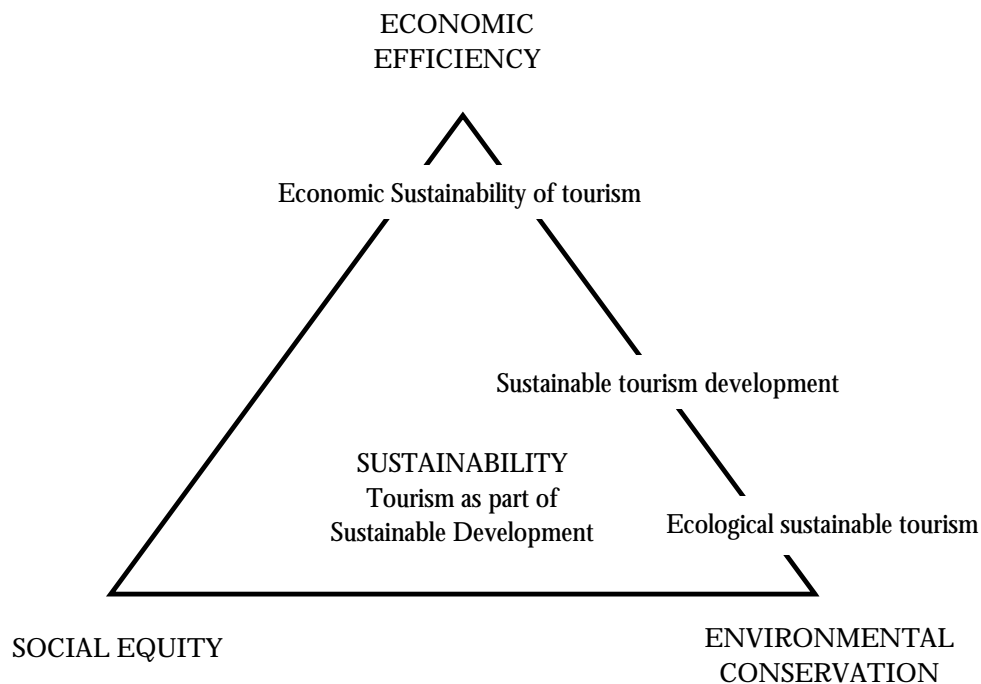
Figure 1 Three Pillars for Sustainable Tourism

Source: (Swarbrooke, 1999)

It is important to appreciate that these three pillars are in many ways interdependent and can be both mutually reinforcing or in competition (UNWTO, 2005). This means that any type of social or economic development is sustainable, provided that it protects and enhances the environment, social equity and human well-being (Dunphy and Benveniste, 2000).

Moreover, Agenda 21 has discussed the role for everyone - governments, business people and other relevant stakeholders – to correspondingly participate. This connotes that governments are called upon to adopt national strategies for sustainable development. These should be developed with wide participation and places most of the responsibility for leading change on national governments but also says that they need to work in a broad series of partnerships with international organizations, business, regional, state, provincial, and local government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and citizens' groups (Keating, 1993).

2.2.2 Sustainable Tourism

Over the past two decades, the inter-relatedness of all Earth and human systems has become abundantly clear. No human action ever occurs in total isolation from other natural systems and the reality exists that humans are dependent on the earth's limited resources. As aforementioned, tourism is one of the activities which significantly relates to natural resources and the environment. Not only are benefits given, but adverse impacts also occur as a result of this activity. Questions have been put forward such as: 'WHO is responsible for making sustainable tourism a reality?', 'HOW can we make tourism more sustainable?' and 'WHAT are the factors influencing sustainable development in tourism?'

At the outset, it is important to understand the definition of sustainable tourism. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines the concept of sustainable tourism as:

"Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing the opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading 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, and biological diversity and life support systems" (UNWTO, 2004).

This definition implies that the development preserves the ecological and social environments in the long term while maintaining or increasing the productivity of the tourism activities. Economic systems need to be managed in such a way that growth is achieved with the least amount of degradation of environment assets.

Accordingly, the sustainable tourism should be concerned to (UNEP, 2002b):

> 1) Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity. This requires action to minimize pollution of air, land and water, and to conserve biological diversity and natural heritage.

> 2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance. In addition, it requires people to respect human rights and equal opportunities and activities for all in society. This needs an equitable distribution of benefits, with a focus on alleviating poverty.

> 3) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation. Crucially, it is about the viability of enterprises and activities and their ability to be maintained in the long term.

There are many benefits which could result by doing this and it could be an incentive for stakeholders to adopt sustainable tourism principles. (See Box 1) Moreover, sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them. Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary (UNWTO, 2004).

Box 1 List of Benefits of Sustainable Tourism

- Sustainable tourism *encourages* an understanding of the impacts of tourism on the natural, cultural and human environments.
- Sustainable tourism *ensures* a fair distribution of benefits and costs.
- Sustainable tourism *seeks* decision making among all segments of the society, including local populations, so that tourism and other resource users can coexist. It incorporates planning and zoning which ensure tourism development appropriate to the carrying capacity of the ecosystem.
- Sustainable tourism *monitors, assesses* and *manages* the impacts of tourism, develops reliable methods of environmental accountability, and counters any negative effect.

- Tourism generates local employment, both directly in the tourism sector, and in various support and resources management sectors.
- Tourism stimulates profitable domestic industries—hotels and other lodging facilities, restaurants and other food services, transportation systems, handicrafts and guide services.
- Tourism generates foreign exchange for the country, and injects capital and new money into the local economy.
- Tourism diversifies the local economy, particularly in rural areas where agricultural employment may be sporadic or insufficient.
- Tourism stimulates improvements to local transportation, communications and other basic community infrastructures.

- Tourism creates recreational facilities which can be used by local communities as well as domestic and international visitors. It also encourages and helps pay for preservation of archaeological sites, and historical buildings and districts.
- (Natural) Sustainable tourism encourages productive use of lands which are marginal for agricultural, enabling large tracts to remain covered in natural vegetation.
- (Cultural) Sustainable tourism enhances local community esteem and provides the opportunity for greater understanding and communication among peoples of diverse backgrounds.
- (Environmental) Sustainable tourism demonstrates the importance of natural and cultural resources to a community's economic and social well being and can help to preserve them.

Source: (Swarbrooke, 1999)

While attaining the benefits of tourism, there are positive and negative impacts that could be generated through tourism activities. These impacts therefore must be considered so as to achieve the possibility of sustainable tourism. The challenges of tourism impacts will be discussed in the following section.

2.2.3 The Challenges of Tourism Impacts

Tourism activities can create both positive and negative impacts. Economic, environmental and socio-cultural aspects should be taken as imperative considerations in order to plan, develop and mange tourism successfully. The primary reason for developing tourism in most countries and regions is for its economic benefits, although there are often other reasons as well (UNWTO, 1994).

The benefits and costs of tourism accrue to two quite distinct groups of people – visitors and residents. The visitors themselves receive benefits and incur costs of taking a holiday. On the other hand, the resident populations of the host region benefit from tourism (not only financially) but at the same time bear costs of various types caused by tourist's activities

(Archer and Cooper, 1998). These costs can be categorized into economic, environmental or ecological and socio-cultural impacts. A great number of researchers[3] have studied the impacts of tourism and the subsequent sections will offer an overview of these impacts (Hunter and Green, 1995).

a) Economic Impacts

Although it is difficult to measure the economic contribution of tourism, economists can make calculations that are sufficient to indicate that tourism's economic impact generally tends to be positive rather than negative (UNWTO, 2004). This perceived positive economic impact to the host community is a reason why tourism has been put forward for facilitating development. Economic advantages provide the main driving force to the relevant stakeholders: profitability for tourism industries, tax revenue for governments, employment generation and income for the local community as such (UNWTO, 1980). Additionally, international tourism is an invisible export in that it creates a flow of foreign currency into the economy of a destination country. It is also the basis of the growth of many transnational corporations, attracting investment and establishment of industries. These are the economic benefits gained by a recipient country from tourism.

Against these benefits, the economic costs involved are offset. A cost-benefits analysis is used as a tool to identify the possible associated costs and benefits so that a rational decision can be made. There are various economic impacts occurring in the tourism process (See Table 1).

Table 1 The Economic Benefits and Costs of Tourism

Benefits	Costs
• Job creation • Injection of income into the local economy through the multiplier effect • Keeping local business viable • Regeneration and restructuring of the economies of towns and cities where other industrial activities are in decline • Stimulation of inward and industrial investment • Generation of foreign exchange for the country • Increased tax revenues for government • Financial support to improve road systems and infrastructure	• Many jobs are low paid and/or seasonal • Opportunity costs, i.e. money invested in tourism that cannot then be used for other purposes • Traffic congestion • The need to invest in expensive infrastructure which may only be required for part of the year • Over-dependence on tourism which makes the host economy vulnerable to changes in the tourism market • Inflated property values and higher property taxes could possibly be unfavourable for local residents • Affordability and availability of staff housing can be problematic

Source: Extracted from (Swarbrooke, 1999) and (ESCAP, 1999b).

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[3] See, for example Hunter, C. & Green, H. (1995), Archer, B. (1996), Cooper, C. (1997), Swarbrooke, J. (1999), etc.

Apart from the purchase of import requirements, the earnings of expatriate workers and the overseas expenses incurred by the foreign companies exist during both the construction and operating phases of the development. Neither of them benefits the local population and the country itself incurs considerable costs internally which are called 'economic leakages'. If a high level of leakage prevails in a region it could decelerate a region moving towards economic sustainability (Supradist, 2004).

Whether or not tourism creates greater net benefits to society than other forms of development depends primarily upon the nature of the country's economy and what alternative forms of development are practical. Also, in the interests of diversification it is sometimes considered desirable to promote several forms of development even though one or more of these forms of development may offer relatively lower net benefits (Archer and Cooper, 1998).

b) Environmental or Ecological Impacts

An important characteristic of the interaction between tourism and the environment is the existence of strong feedback mechanisms. Tourism often has adverse effects on the quantity – and quality – of natural resources. It is also affected by the decline in quality and quantity of such resources (Coccossis, 2004). Any form of industry development will bring with it impacts upon the physical environment in which it takes place. The environment, whether it is natural or artificial, is the most fundamental ingredient of the tourism product. However, as soon as tourism activity takes place, the environment is inevitably changed or modified either to facilitate tourism or during the tourism process (Cooper, Fletcher et al., 1993).

The environment is far more than just the natural landscape; it also includes wildlife, the built environment, farmed environment, natural environment and natural resources (See Appendix 3). A framework for the study of environmental stress created by tourism activities emphasized four main categories of stressor activities. It includes permanent environmental restructuring (major construction works such as highways, airports and resorts), waste product generation (biological and non-biological waste which can damage fish production, create health hazards and detract from the attractiveness of a destination), direct environmental stress caused by tourist activities (destruction of coral reefs, vegetation, dunes, etc. by the presence and activities of tourists) and effects on the population dynamics (migration, increased urban densities accompanied by declining populations in other rural areas) (Cooper, Fletcher et al., 1993).

When considering the environmental impacts associated with tourism development, these can be considered as direct, indirect and induced effects. The tourism impacts can arise through the construction and operation of tourist facilities or services and from the activities of tourists themselves. These impacts may be short-term or long-term, positive or negative, local, regional, national and even global. Table 2 will illustrate the environmental impacts occurring in the tourism process.

Table 2 Positive and Negative Environmental Impacts of Tourism Development

Positive	Negative
• The preservation/restoration of ancient monuments, sites and historic buildings • The creation of national parks and wildlife parks • Protection of reefs and beaches • The maintenance of forests • Environmental management to adapt areas for tourist use (e.g. sea walls, land reclamation) • The restoration, re-use of disused buildings • Provision of new infrastructure or upgrading of existing infrastructure • Re-use of disused buildings • Restoration of derelict buildings as second homes • Visual benefits: new architectural styles and beautification	• The impacts of tourism on the natural environment: Flora and fauna species composition, e.g. disruption of breeding habits, trampling and damage of vegetation by feet and vehicles, inward or outward migration of animals and killing animal through hunting • Water, air and noise pollution • Change in risk of occurrence of land slides/slips and avalanche occurrence, damage to river banks • Depletion of ground and surface water supplies, fossil fuel depletion and over-exploitation of biological resources, etc • Litter, sewage and facilities (growth of build-up area) • Change in residential, retail or industrial land uses, emergence of contrasts between urban areas developed for the tourist and host population • Overload of infrastructure

Source: (Cooper, Fletcher et al., 1993; Hunter and Green, 1995; Swarbrooke, 1999)

This diversity in range and type of impact partly reflects the characteristics of the tourism industry and makes the comprehensive appraisal of the environmental consequences of tourism development problematic (Hunter and Green, 1995). It is not possible to develop tourism without incurring environmental impacts, but it is possible with correct planning to manage tourism development in order to minimize the negative impacts while encouraging the positive impacts.

c) Socio-cultural Impacts

The social impact of tourism has generally been given less attention in the tourism debate than the environmental impacts. Perhaps this is because the socio-cultural impacts usually occur slowly over time in an unspectacular fashion. They are also largely invisible and intangible. Yet the social impact is usually permanent with little or no opportunity to reverse the change once it has taken place. The social impact of tourism has normally been upon the 'host community'. Therefore, there has been an almost paternalistic desire to protect host communities from the excesses and negative effects of tourism (Swarbrooke, 1999).

The socio-cultural impact of tourism is manifested through an enormous range of aspects from arts and crafts through to the fundamental behaviour of individuals and collective groups (Cooper, Fletcher et al., 1993). In reality, socio-cultural impacts tend to contain mixtures of both positive and negative strands and these impacts affect both hosts and guests. The problem is exacerbated because tourists are strangers in the destination. Their

dress codes and patterns of behaviours are different from the residents/hosts and, often, different from those that the tourist would display at home. Examples of social impacts of tourism are prostitution, drugs, gambling and sometimes vandalism.

In addition, the cultural distinction between residents and tourists from more prosperous countries and regions are strongly marked. Local culture and customs may be exploited to satisfy the visitor, sometimes at the expense of local pride and dignity. The changes often occur in community structure, family relationships, collective traditional life styles, ceremonies, and morality (UNEP, 2002a). It includes the skilled crafted work which gives way to cheap imitations to satisfy the needs of visitors and to obtain money with the least possible effort. In primitive and isolated areas, the arrival of too many visitors can even cause local people to leave their settlements and move to new areas where they can remain undisturbed. In more developed areas, in extreme cases tourism has disrupted completely the way of life of the local people (Archer and Cooper, 1998).

On the other hand, the merit of socialization between tourists and the hosts as a means towards fostering better understanding and good will between nations has been extolled as a major social benefit obtained from tourism. Positive impacts have been generated as tourism can serve a supportive force for peace, foster pride in cultural traditions and help avoid urban relocation by creating as local jobs (UNEP, 2002a). The main impacts of tourism in societies and cultures, both positive and negative, are summarized below (See Table 3).

Table 3 The Main Potential Impacts of Tourism on Host Cultures and Societies

Impact Aspect	Largely Beneficial	Largely Negative
• *Heritage*	- Improvement in the quality of museums - Greater attention paid to conservation by local communities and public sector bodies	- Construction of buildings using non-traditional architectural styles - Theft of artefacts by tourists - Censorship of heritage stories so as not to upset tourists
• *Language*	- Greater interest in conserving traditional languages if they are seen as an attraction for tourist	- Introduction of foreign words into vocabulary - Pressure on local languages if tourists are unable or unwilling to converse with staff in these languages
• *Religion*	- Growth in respect for the host community's religion from tourists	- Loss of spirituality at religious sites that become dominated by tourists
• *Traditional Arts*	- Development of new markets for traditional crafts and art forms - Renaissance of traditional art forms	- Pressure to replace traditional crafts with other products which tourists demand - Trivialization/modification of traditional art forms to

Impact Aspect	Largely Beneficial	Largely Negative
		meet desires of tourists
• *Traditional Lifestyles*	- Increased awareness of lifestyles elsewhere in the world	- Danger of move from self-sufficiency to dependency - Growing influence of foreign media - New eating habits, e.g. fast food
• *Values and Behaviour*	- Adopt positive aspects of tourist values and behaviour such as in the case of the treatment of animals	- Growth in crime - Loss of dignity as forced to behave in a servile manner towards tourists - Reduce level of personal morality
• *Host Population*	- In-migration of dynamic people to live and/or work in the community - Reduce depopulation	- Domination of the community by immigrants from outside the community

Source: (Swarbrooke, 1999)

Examining the impacts of tourism should take into account both the positive and negative sides. It is useful for policy makers, private sectors, and relevant stakeholders to prioritize the significance of such impacts. In order to realize sustainable tourism, it is necessary to understand the main stakeholders who could possibly influence the direction of policy and the successful implementation of tourism in a sustainable manner.

2.2.4 The Key Stakeholders Involved in Sustainable Tourism Development

Tourism is an integrated industry that combines various components, including facilities (accommodation), infrastructure (transportation) and human resources. The key actors should be investigated in order to understand their roles and responsibilities which could possibly affect the development of tourism in terms of regulation, management and planning of sustainable tourism.

The key sets of stakeholders are illustrated below.

♦ The Governmental Sector

The term governmental sectors mean bodies which are intended to represent the whole community/public interest, and which are supposed to act on behalf of the total population. They are not commercial organizations trying to make a profit. Instead, they spend the revenue from taxation to implement policies and projects which affect the whole population over which the authority has jurisdiction. There are different types of organizations under the governmental sector and there are different geographical levels at which the bodies operate.

The various types of governmental sectors are namely supra-governmental bodies involving cooperation between two or more countries, government department and ministries, quasi

non-governmental organizations which are publicly funded agencies that work on behalf of government but are managed semi-autonomously and nationalized organizations which can be subdivided into regional government and local government (Swarbrooke, 1999).

Governments have important roles and responsibilities, when it comes to tourism development in the third world, particularly if they are concerned about issues of sustainability (Brohman, 1996; Clancy, 1999). Sustainable development can only be achieved when tourism is managed in a controlled and integrated manner and is soundly based in careful and effective legislative restriction (France, 1997). Thus it is up to the governments to set the fundamental rules, or regulations, within which tourism takes place. And it is governments that have the power to establish policies which can determine whether a country follows a path of tourism development dictated primarily by overseas interests and capital, or one which seeks to achieve economic gains for local people and the state while preserving the integrity of social, cultural and environmental features of their country (Scheyvens, 2002). In addition, the governmental sector influences tourism development in a number of ways such as funding and fiscal incentives, land use planning, development and building control, including the role of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and the provision of infrastructure (the policy instruments will be discussed in Section 2.3).

The problematic issues in term of implementation of laws include the corporations which operate across national boundaries and lack of staff expertise in tourism. Moreover, in many governmental sectors planning systems are slow and cumbersome and incapable of responding to the rapid rate of change in the tourism industry. This effects the policy efficiency and the effectiveness of implementation at both regional and local level.

♦ **The Tourism Industry**

The tourism industry is a complex phenomenon. It has a number of dimensions in the range of tourism sectors and the geographical aspects of industry. By definition, the tourism industry means 'a group of businesses that provide services and facilities for consumption by tourists' (Swarbrooke, 1999). It also refers to an appropriate agent for facilitating the development and empowerment of local communities, largely due to its self-serving profit motive (Scheyvens, 2002). The tourism industry is deemed as the villain in the sustainable tourism melodrama. Tourism enterprises are often portrayed, rightly or wrongly, as being narrowly concerned solely with their profits and with short-term perspectives.

However, if the industry is a major cause of the negative impacts of tourism, it is obvious that the industry must also play a major role in any attempt to create more sustainable forms of tourism. There are several issues related to the tourism industry and sustainability, such as voluntary action by industry and the idea of self-regulation, the motivation for the tourism industry to take an interest in sustainable tourism, and competitive advantage. Moreover, it is important to note at this stage that some of the players are private sector rather than public sector. In order to achieve more sustainable tourism, it will require the support and cooperation of the private sector tourism industry and probably need pressure from governments and/or greater sincere interest in sustainable tourism on the part of tourists (Swarbrooke, 1999).

♦ The Voluntary Sector

The voluntary sector in this context consists of four groups: public pressure groups, professional bodies, industry pressure groups and voluntary trusts, group of private citizens who get together to achieve a particular purpose, with no individual making a profit from their activities (Swarbrooke, 1999). Voluntary organizations vary greatly in size and aims. They can support communities that wish to engage in tourism (Scheyvens, 2002).

The voluntary sector is varied in each country, and their roles and influences differently affect tourism development. Thus, it is important to understand the roles of voluntary sectors. Particularly, NGOs and local action groups can work with communities so as to be able to influence the nature of tourism development, or to protect the rights and well-being of people living in areas of extensive tourism development. Mostly, NGOs' strategies are divided into two categories: 1) actively supporting involvement of communities in tourism and 2) focusing on minimizing the negative impacts of tourism (Scheyvens, 2002).

There are links between the tourism industry (public and private sectors) and the voluntary sector. The voluntary sector is positioned to work directly with communities. Most voluntary sectors affect tourism development with regards to sustainability by building capacity, facilitating collaborative ventures with private sector partners, and providing technical support, training and information. This includes raising awareness of environmental, social and economic aspects.

♦ The Host Community

The host community is a fundamental component of any tourism system (Burns and Sofield). For the purpose of this study, the host community is that 'all those people who live within a tourist destination', including indigenous people, immigrants, majority and minority communities, and external residents with an interest in the community (Swarbrooke, 1999). The host community is an important element to consider in the concept of sustainability. Most researchers seem to agree that the most important aspect of tourism policy is the protection of the host community and its environment.

One of the cornerstones of sustainable tourism is the idea that the host community should be actively involved in tourism planning and should perhaps control the local tourism industry and its activities. Determining how to make a tourism attraction sustainable from the perspective of the host community requires an understanding of the interplay of elements affecting both the perception of, and support for, that tourism. At the same time, some of the issues have been studied in relation to tourism systems in general (Burns and Sofield).

Nevertheless, it is difficult to find effective mechanisms for involving the community as a whole in the tourism development process due to the fact that the local population normally consists of different interest groups, some of whom may be in conflict with each other. To avoid the conflict between tourists and the host community, the host community should seek to be involved in and/or to influence the public sector policy so as to become an active player in the tourism market and sustainable tourism through various means.

♦ The Media

The media plays a significant role in both shaping tourist behaviour and raising awareness of issues relating to tourism and sustainable tourism development. It is clear that the media

must make a contribution to tourism development. Media can basically be divided into two types: travel media and non-travel media.

Travel media are designed to directly influence or advise the tourist. Non-travel media indirectly influence or advise the tourist, without this being their real purpose. The main types of media relevant to sustainable tourism are guide books, television and radio programmes with tourism themes and specialist travel magazines, journals or newspapers (Swarbrooke, 1999). Currently, information and communication technology (ICT), such as internet and e-tourism, is perceived worldwide to have economic impacts related to the development of tourism (UNCTAD, 2005).

Even though the media is to be an important tool in promoting tourism development, it has negative side effects as well. This includes spreading tourism impacts to new areas where the media encourages tourists to visit. Few programmes or features ever look at tourism from the point of view of the host community and some programmes can lead to an upsurge in demand for destinations with fragile ecosystems which is not helpful.

♦ **The Tourists**

Tourists are often recognized as the cause of the environmental, economic and social impacts related to tourism. If sustainable tourism development is to be realized, the role of tourists should be emphasized. This means that tourists should take a genuine interest in and show commitment towards sustainable tourism.

Tourists must accept that they have rights as well as responsibilities toward tourism development and environmental conservation. Tourists have the following basic responsibilities with regards to sustainable tourism:

Box 2 Basic Responsibilities of the Tourist

- The responsibility for obeying local laws and regulations
- The responsibility for not taking part in activities which while not illegal, or where the laws are not enforced by the local authorities are nevertheless, widely condemned by society, such as sex with children
- The responsibility for not deliberately offending local religious beliefs or cultural norms of behaviour
- The responsibility for not deliberately harming the local physical environment
- The responsibility to minimize the use of scarce local resources

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However, sustainable tourism cannot be achieved by regulation or by lecturing tourists. Instead it will involve developing forms of tourism which give tourists a 'feel good' feeling and which reflect trends in social values and consumer tastes, in general, while maximizing the benefits and reducing the costs of tourism (Swarbrooke, 1999).

There is a need for partnership and cooperation between the various stakeholders in tourism. However, it must be realized that stakeholder groups, from the community to the international level, have different goals in terms of tourism development. This global-local

nexus can result in competition for limited resources, issues of (in) equity and distribution, and the need to balance the costs and benefits of various actions (Milne, 1998).

The key actors mentioned here are all interdependent in the process of sustainable tourism development. In order to achieve the target, the government needs to coordinate with the tourism industry and voluntary sectors by taking their interests and opinions into account when developing tourism policy. The idea of partnership also requires reciprocal relationships with other sectors such as the host community, tourists and media. Importantly, each of stakeholders has a number of rights and responsibilities to help make sustainable tourism take place. Because tourism is dynamic, its demand, supply and distribution are in a state of evolution. The scope of key actors in sustainable tourism development can be varied depending on the circumstances. Thus, determining the key actors in each case needs to be done in order to identify their interests in relation to policy and implementation. Another significant factor that can steer tourism development in sustainable direction is the tourism components. The following section will describe the importance of the tourism components that contribute to sustainable tourism development.

2.2.5 The Key Components of Tourism

Tourists choose a destination for one reason or another, such as leisure, business, visiting friends or relatives, health, education and the like. Considering tourism as an industry, various components provide the tourists, among others, with convenience, pleasure and access to destinations. These components hence influence the number of tourists travelling to a place. The tourism industry is made up of three major components – namely transportation, attraction and accommodation (G/Egziabher, 2001).

♦ **Transportation**

Lamb and Davidson mentioned that "Without transportation, most forms of tourism could not exist" (Page, 1999). The relationship between transportation and tourism development has traditionally been regarded as 'chicken and egg'. Adequate transportation infrastructure and access to generating markets is one of the most important prerequisites for the development of any destination. In most cases, tourism has developed in areas where extensive transportation networks were in place and the potential for further development was available.

Transportation is acknowledged as one of the most significant factors to have contributed to the international development of tourism. Moreover, transportation is an essential element of the tourist product in two ways: it is the means to reach the destination and it is necessary as a means of movement at the destination. Increasingly, transport is viewed as part of leisure; the journey is at least as important as the destination itself (Cooper, Fletcher et al., 1993).

In general, the visitor's choice of mode of transport is affected by several factors which will be illustrated in Box 3. There are four major modes of travelling –road, rail, water and air.

Box 3 Determinant Factors that Affect Visitor's Choice of Transportation

- Distance and time factors: speed and departure/arrival time
- Status and comfort: convenience, flexibility, luxury and prestige
- Safety and utility: ground service and terminal facilities
- Comparative price of services offered: price/cost
- Geographical position and isolation: locations
- Range of services offered: financial incentives, availability of services
- Level of competition between services: service quality and reliability

When comparing the determinant factors with four transport modes there are distinguished benefits of each mode. Notwithstanding, as this research focuses on the development of tourism along the highway, road transport would be considered as a focal point. Road transport could provide door-to-door flexibility, giving views of the landscape and a means of transporting recreational equipment. In addition, road transport is attractive to the tourist – for example the freedom to use the automobile once the tourist reaches the destination, the ability to use the vehicle as accommodation, the ability to carry baggage and equipment easily, and privacy.

♦ Attraction

Attractions are also the heart of the tourism industry; they are motivations that make people want to take a trip in the first place. It is clear that visitor attractions should have a central role to play in the development of more sustainable forms of tourism. There are four different types of visitor attraction: natural environment attraction, man-made attractions (designed to attract tourists), man-made attractions (not designed to attract tourists) and special events and festivals (Swarbrooke, 1999).

Many attractions, both natural and man-made, come within the domain of the public sector, while others are owned by voluntary organizations and the private commercial sector (Cooper, Fletcher et al., 1993). These attractions are developed to satisfy visitors educational, recreational, aesthetic needs etc. However, the hosts of attractions need to inform their customer and potential customers about their productions.

Moreover, information about the kind of attraction, where they are located and how to get there is of vital importance. This is in turn may give rise to conflict in popular destinations, where tourism is perceived to cause problems of crowding, traffic congestion, environmental damage and litter. Thus, attractions remain the focal point for new visitor management and control techniques which aim to alleviate the pressure of large numbers of tourists and to ensure natural resources are protected and sustained (G/Egziabher, 2001).

♦ Accommodation

Accommodation or lodging is, clearly, the largest and most ubiquitous subsector within the tourism economy. With few exceptions, tourists require a location where they can rest during their travels.

There is a great diversity in the size, type and organization of accommodation[4] (Cooper, Fletcher et al., 1993). Accommodations vary in their importance and contribution to both domestic and international tourism. There are also close links between accommodation providers and other sectors within tourism where the cross-sectoral characteristics of tourism organizations are increasing with integration in the tourism industry. For example, hotels have always been major providers of food service but this role has changed significantly in recent years. Hotels are also, however, major providers of leisure, sporting and entertainment facilities, as well as business and conference service.

Likewise, the relationship between accommodation and transportation is a long standing one but it is one that is increasing in its sophistication and complexity, as transportation providers

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[4] There are diverse types of accommodation, for example Hotels, Guesthouses, bed and breakfasts, and camping and caravan sites.

recognise that accommodation can be an attraction to guests in its own right and not just a necessary service to be provided *en route*. Accommodation is a necessary component in the development of tourism within any destination that seeks to serve visitors other than day trippers. The quality and range of accommodation available will both reflect and influence the range of visitors to a location. Furthermore, the accommodation therefore also assists in attracting investment in the tourism product at the locality; it also plays an important role in the overall economic contribution which tourism makes at a local and national level.

The three components obviously affect tourism development. They are dependent in term of products, services, and facilities. If one component is lacking, it could possibly hamper the development of sustainable tourism. Therefore, the relevant sectors should participate to increase tourism potential by fulfilling the three components. Additionally, human resources development is one of the significant components that should be strengthened to ensure the sustainability.

2.3 Selecting Policy Instruments for Sustainable Tourism

This section will consider the policy instruments that could be used by the government to enhance sustainable tourism. The gap between policy endorsement and policy implementation as well as policy intention and what the instrument actually achieves in practice could be influenced by selecting the proper policy instruments. Government interventions are guided by policies and are implemented using policy instruments, which are the specific mechanism or tools employed to put policy into practice. Often, public authorities are also confronted with an extensive range of policy instruments to put sustainable tourism policies into practice. These instruments include zoning, dissemination of tourism codes of conduct, taxing of energy use and waste treatment services, and public provision of traffic management infrastructure (Bramwell, 1998).

When selecting policy instruments it is important to consider the complete array of instruments and to select a mix of them which, in the particular circumstances, translates policy into action and meet the overall policy objectives. Deciding which instruments are appropriate depends on the specific goals, and deciding what goals are sought is influenced by social, economic and political processes that are affected by competing beliefs, values and ideology. However, public policy for sustainable tourism may be unsuccessful in practice if inappropriate instruments are used.

Policy instruments for governments or authorities in charge of tourism related activities encouraging sustainable tourism can be categorized into four types (Bramwell, 1998):

1. Government encouragement: this encompasses several instruments that facilitate the provision of information, education and general persuasion. The tourism operators, tourists or communities in tourist areas would be encouraged to voluntarily adopt sustainable behaviour through these instruments. Additionally, public participation in interpretation in publicly owned sites and moral appeal also apply to change behaviour.

2. Government financial incentives: this policy is about taxes or subsidies intending to make some resources more or less expensive than others, so that activities change. Moreover, user fees, charges and targeted subsidies are used to limit the activities which could possibly harm the environment.

3. Government expenditure: this policy is based on actions taken directly by government or state-owned agencies such as spending on public transport, land purchase and conservation measures in national parks, community development initiatives and waste management.

4. Government regulations: this policy is backed by the law and either prohibits or requires particular courses of action. However, the government regulations do not involve financial incentives or direct government expenditures. This policy instrument forces tourism businesses or tourists to comply, with non-compliance likely to involve judicial punishment (Jacobs, 1991). Examples of the instrument are bans, quotas, permits and standards.

Each policy instrument has diverse advantages and disadvantages. For instance, public policy instruments based only on encouragement through information and education perhaps have the least certainty of achieving sustainable outcomes as they depend on people understanding and accepting the information and responding voluntarily. On the other hand, encouragement to take voluntary action also has advantages if it encourages tourism businesses, visitors and host communities to be proactive in taking responsibility for initiating change (UNEP, 1995). The policies should be integrated with each other based on recognition of the interdependence of issues and policies. In addition, it is necessary to set achievable short-term targets for improvement. These targets should be increased steadily upwards over time in order to respond to changing situations.

2.3.1 Issues in Selecting Policy Instruments

There are many specific forms of public policy instruments within each of four types outlined above. It is useful to identify general issues related to policy selection which need to be considered for making sustainable tourism possible. These policy instruments should be adjusted to national and local conditions which usually differ depending on the circumstances. The following framework outlines factors to take into consideration when evaluating the applicability of general environmental instruments (Jacobs, 1991):

♦ Effectiveness: This refers to the degree to which a policy instrument is likely to meet the policy objectives of sustainable tourism. Among related considerations are the certainty and relative speed that an instrument will meet the objectives, and its flexibility of response to changing circumstances. However, the effectiveness of instruments is also affected by indirect benefits or costs they may have.

♦ Economic Efficiency: This involves comparing the cost involved with each instrument which has a similar degree of effectiveness in meeting policy objectives. The cost of public policy instruments includes the implementation cost for the public authority and the cost for tourism firms, tourists and host communities of changing their behaviour. Other things being equal, the lower these cost, the better. The more economically efficient the mechanisms used to meet sustainable tourism goals are, the more society can spend on other desirable initiatives.

♦ Motivational Effect: This involves the consideration of whether public policy instruments provide a continuing incentive to tourism business, visitors and host communities to behave in more sustainable ways. Here government regulation may be less effective than charges or taxes, as regulations only require polluters to meet specific standards, while financial incentives can encourage them to continue reducing their pollution in order to gain further cost reduction.

♦ Administrative 'Workability': Public policy instruments need to be considered in relation to their administrative 'workability' and institutional acceptability. This involves such issues as the simplicity, ease and cost in time required to set up, administer, monitor and police specific policy instruments.

♦ Distributional Impact and Equity: The distribution of positive and negative impacts resulting from different policy instruments varies between individuals, social groups and geographical areas. These distributional outcomes are affected by such factors as the choice of target group, whether intervention influences access to resources by ability to pay, and by how revenues raised are redistributed for sustainable tourism approaches (Kasperson and Dow, 1991; Hay, 1995). However, it is clear that evaluations of what is an acceptable distributional impact have to be made within a moral and political context.

♦ Respect for Cultural Differences: It is important to recognize the various cultures and traditions between developing and industrialized countries. It should be respected more fully in the complex conditions and difficult questions unanswered. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that local communities may not always decide to develop their resources in a sustainable manner, and this is not only because of the use of them to exploit their own resources (Adam, 1990).

♦ Freedoms and Fairness: When the effects of a policy may result in infringements on the freedoms of individuals or groups, it may therefore be seen as 'unfair'. Property rights and decision rights sometimes are enshrined in law and informally constituted through public opinion. Policy instruments will differ in their consequences for property and decision rights and in the perceived fairness of these consequences for different individuals and groups. These effects need to be an important consideration when selecting policy instruments. Clearly, such decisions about rights, freedoms and fairness are affected by ethics, values, ideology and politics (Harvey, 1992).

♦ Political Acceptability: Politicians may also be reluctant to implement officially adopted public policies if they are unpopular or may affect their political survival. Moreover, a policy tool for sustainable tourism has more chance of being implemented if it is acceptable to those interest groups and individuals likely to be directly affected and also to the general public. Liberty and fairness are obviously important for political acceptability, as are more pragmatic considerations of how easy it will be to implement the instrument.

♦ Balance and Compatibility Between Policy Instruments: Public policy instruments should be used in combination. Indeed, the types and mix of instruments should be carefully matched to the particular policy objectives intended to address specific problems or issues. Policy makers need to identify optimal combinations of instruments which will reinforce each other in particular circumstances in order to achieve the policy objectives. When selecting an appropriate balance between policy instruments it is essential to consider the overall balance between the four types of instruments outlined above. Decision on this balance will be influenced by attitudes to the extent to which government needs to require tourists, tourism businesses and host communities to change their behaviour as distinct from encouraging these groups to volunteer to do this of their own volition. These decisions will also affected by ethical considerations, social values, ideology and politics as well as practical experiences.

Any policy instrument will include an important role for information, education and persuasion in changing behaviour. It is argued that educating all actors concerned with

tourism – the industry, the public sector, local populations and the tourists – is still the best method for developing more sustainable tourism and that 'in the long term it is probably the only solution which is likely to be broadly successful'.

Nevertheless, the selection of policy instruments may be complicated by many factors. The selection of specific instruments by policy makers depends on assessments of strengths and weaknesses of specific instruments in different situations, including the involvement of ethics, social values, economics, ideology and politics (Bramwell, 1998).

2.3.2 Strategic Integrated Sustainable Tourism

There are several reasons why sustainable tourism development requires planning and management. The nature of sustainable tourism development needs strategic planning in order to seek the optimal fit between the system and its environment. Thus, the vision and goals are specifically identified; moreover the major actions to achieve the goals must be addressed. Strategic planning also requires a long-term perspective and a selection of options that are dynamic, flexible and adaptable for varying conditions. The steps of the strategic planning process are illustrated in Figure 2.
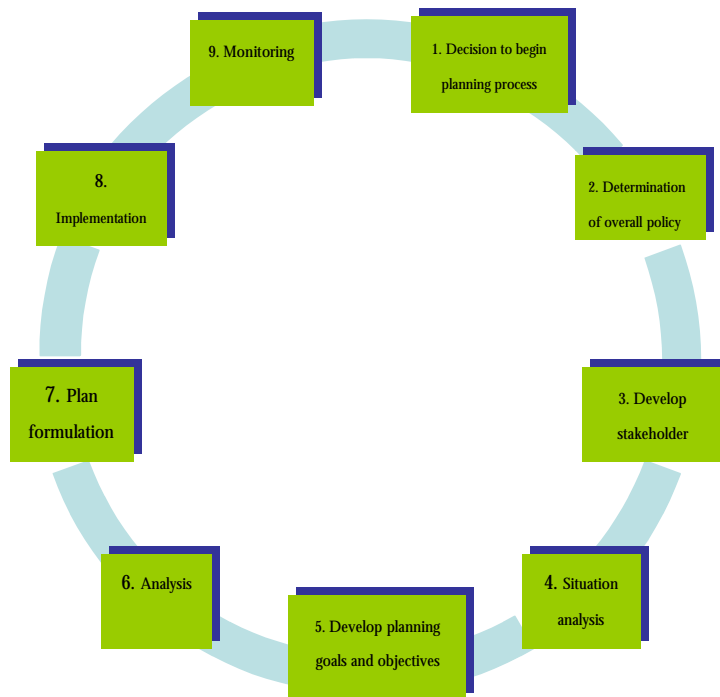
Figure 2 Steps for Strategic Planning for Sustainable Development

In addition, it needs to be ensured that the formulation and implementation of the strategic plan are not discrete processes, but are linked closely to constant monitoring, environmental scanning, evaluation and adjustment. Community participation and coordination with local and regional legislation and political structure should be closely linked in order to achieve effective outcomes.

The strategic planning principles require careful consideration of the goals and principles of sustainable tourism which include economic distribution, social equity, ecological

conservation, cultural protection and political acceptance. The strategic planning process is iterative with feedback loops connecting the various stages. However, it is important to note that each nation and/or destination may need to tailor this process to suits its own requirements, norms and values (ESCAP, 1999b).

3 The Asian Highway Network

Asia and the Pacific Region is the place where more than half of the world's population resides and where the most rapid economic growth has been occurring over recent decades. Despite that, as of 2004, 670 million people were still living in the region on less than $1 a day. From 1990 to 2004, economic growth helped 270 million people escape poverty (ESCAP, 2002). One of the vital industries that has brought many benefits to countries in Asia and the Pacific region is tourism. As mentioned in previous chapter, the three major components of tourism directly affect development and growth. A number of countries in the region consider tourism as an important vehicle for economic and social development as well as poverty reduction.

The development of tourism, especially in a previously under-developed part of a country, requires the development of an infrastructure, as well as hotel accommodation and other facilities specific to tourism. In many cases, these utilities are economically inseparable in the sense that in providing them for the development of the tourism industry, they, at the same time, become available for the use of local people.

In many countries highways constructed primarily to cater for tourism, also provide an access to wider markets for many locally produced goods. In addition, the attractions and accommodation should be encouraged in order to increase the tourism quality. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission realize the importance of transport links to tourism. Thus, the tourism-related land transport project, the Asian Highway Network[5], has been modernized by ESCAP and member countries' engagement.

3.1 The Asian Highway Network in Brief

"People throughout Asia -- leaders, businesspeople and ordinary citizens—have long dreamt of an efficient and reliable transport system that would link their countries in webs of prosperity and exchange. Today, with the signing of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, that vision is becoming a reality…"

- Message from Mr. Kofi Annan-
the Signing Ceremony for the Intergovernmental Agreement
on the Asian Highway Network (ESCAP, 2004b) [6]

A vast network of standardized roadways will link towns from one end of the continent to the other. The availability of transport linkages and services is a decisive factor if countries are to participate in the globalizing economy. Therefore, cooperative efforts to develop international road transportation in Asia were realized in 1959 as the *"Asian Highway (AH) Network Project."*

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[5] Intergovernmental Agreement on Asian Highway Network, Article 2 Definition of the Asian Highway network
The Asian Highway network as described in annex I consists of highway routes of international importance within Asia, including highway routes substantially crossing more than one Subregion such as: East and North-East Asia, South and South-West Asia, South-East Asia and North and Central Asia, highway routes within sub regions, including those connecting to neighboring sub regions, and highway routes located within member States.

[6] The message was delivered by Mr. Kim Hak-Su, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

During the first phase of the Asian Highway Network (1960-1970) considerable progress was achieved. However progress slowed down when financial assistance was suspended in 1975. Entering into the 1980s and 1990s, regional political and economic changes spurred new momentum for the Asian Highway Project. The AH project became one of the three pillars of the Asian Land Transport Infrastructure Development (ALTID) project, endorsed by the ESCAP Commission under the direction of the Transport and Tourism Division in 1992 and comprising the Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway and facilitation of land transport projects as key elements (ESCAP, 2007a) (see Figure 3).
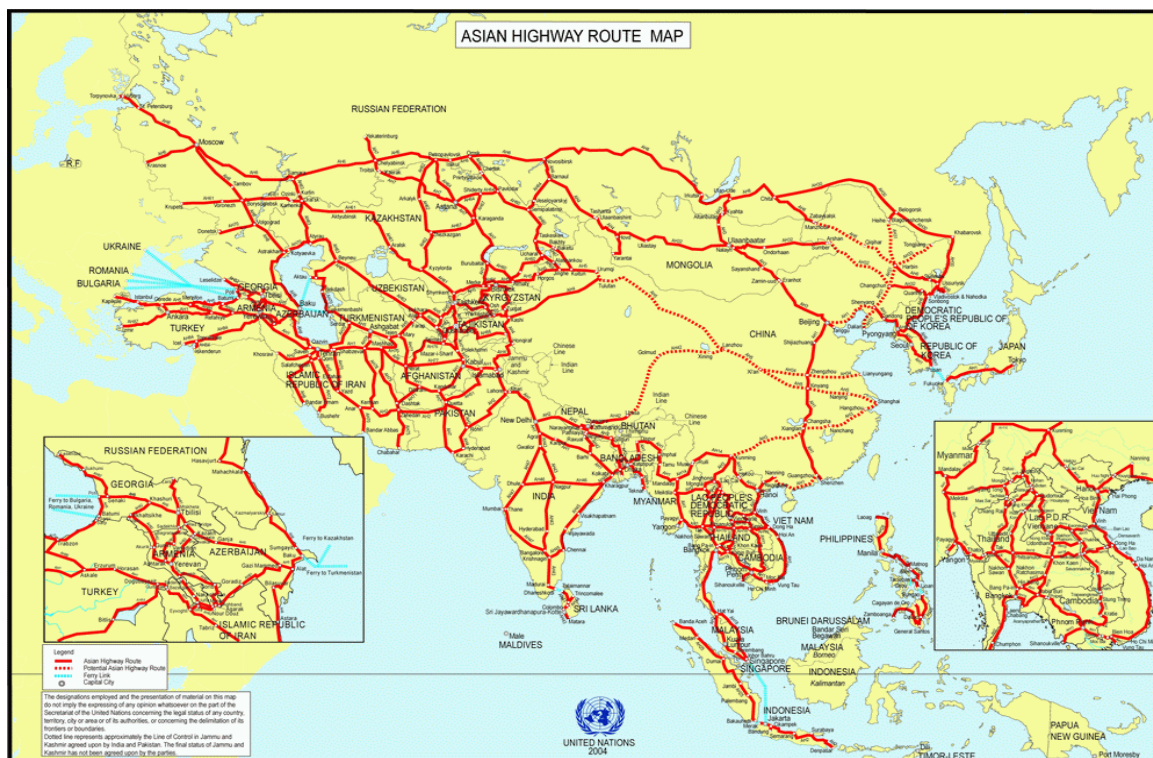
Figure 3 Asian Highway Route Map

Source: (ESCAP, 2007b)

The AH project has been included as a priority project in the New Delhi Action Plan for Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific (1997-2006). Initially, ESCAP, when considering the primary objectives of this project, emphasized potential benefits with regards to trade, transportation and tourism. These benefits were regarded as collective benefits for all member countries. The primary objectives are as follows (ESCAP, 2005d):

- To promote development of priority sections of the Asian Highway, including intermodal connections (for landlocked countries to access the seaport)
- To assist in providing a transport infrastructure linking Asia to Europe (Euro-Asian Transportation Linkage)
- To promote regional and international cooperation for the economic and social development of the region and opening of new potentials for trade and tourism
- To share a wealth of historical and cultural heritage and unspoiled natural beauty for countries linked by the Asian Highway

In terms of promoting tourism, the AH project specifically aims to enhance the efficiency and development of road transport infrastructure in Asia and to promote international

bilateral tourism and trade to encourage economic and social development which are the key tenets of the project.

3.2 Current Status

♦ **The Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network**

The Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network (IGA)[7] was the first treaty that was developed under the auspices of the ESCAP secretariat related to the Asian Highway Network and was deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Agreement is an important tool to facilitate international trade and tourism, promote regional integration and enhance international cooperation. It was adopted on 18 November 2003 by an intergovernmental meeting held in Bangkok, was open for signature in April 2004 in Shanghai, and entered into force on 4 July 2005. As of now, the Agreement has been signed by 28 member states of ESCAP of which 20 ratified it[8] (ESCAP, n.d.-c)(See Appendix 4).

The agreement provides a framework for coordinated development of the international highways in Asia, as well as between Asia and Europe, giving the member countries a platform to discuss technical and institutional issues to improve the quality of the network and increase the efficiency of its operation. Consequently, the main obligations of the Parties to the Agreement are outlined as (ESCAP, 2005e):

- Adopting the Asian Highway Network as a coordinated plan for the development of highway routes of international importance which they intend to undertake within the framework of their national programmes (article 1)[9]
- Bringing the network into conformity with the Asian Highway classification and design standards (article 3)
- Facilitating navigation along the routes through the placement of adequate signage along the Asian Highway routes on all routes within five years from the date of entry into force of the Agreement (article 4)

In accordance with the terms of the Agreement, a Working Group on the Asian Highway has been established. It provides a forum for countries to negotiate and discuss progress in development of policies and issues relating to the Asian Highway and to monitor implementation of the Agreement (ESCAP, 2007f).

♦ **Road Status**

The Asian Highway Network consists of highway routes of international importance within Asia, including highway routes substantially crossing more than one subregion such as: East and North-East Asia, South and South-West Asia, South-East Asia and North and Central Asia; highway routes within sub regions including those connecting to neighbouring sub

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[7] The Agreement provides for two types of signature, which are legally distinct: "definitive signature" and "signature subject to ratification, acceptance or approval." From *Signing Ceremony of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network*.

[8] The Agreement shall enter into force on the 90th day after at least 8 states have consented to be bound by the Agreement. (Article 6)

[9] See Appendix 5 List of Article

regions; and highway routes located within member states which are identified by several criterions as found in Box 4[10].

Box 4 Criteria for Asian Highway Route Identification:

- Capital to capital links
- Main industries and agricultural centres
- Major sea, river and airports
- Major container terminal and depots
- Major tourism destinations

Source: Annex I Asian Highway Network,
Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway.

The Asian Highway Network is now comprised of approximately 14 ,000 kilometers of roads passing through 32 member states. Linkages to Europe have been completed and a total of US$26 billion has already been invested in the improvement and upgrading of the Asian Highway Network. An overview of the length and quality of the Asian Highway is provided in Table 4.

Table 4 An Overview of the Length and Quality of the Asian Highway Network

Sub region	Total (km)	Paved		Unpaved	Ferry	Missing Link	Unknown	Common Section
		2 lanes or more	1 lane					
South-East Asia	23 674	19 917	1549	1289	190	45	684	1240
East and North-East Asia*	50 161	42 899	0	5942	0	0	1320	2219
South Asia	20 585	19 796	740	19	9	21	0	3043
North, Central and South-West Asia	46 185	42 260	224	3667	1	33	0	4822
Total	140 605	124 872	2513	10 917	200	99	2004	11 324

Source: (ESCAP, 2005d)

Notes: *Including all routes in the Russian Federation

The Asian Highway Network classification and design standards provide the minimum standards and guidelines for the construction, improvement and maintenance of the Asian Highway routes. It classifies the Asian Highway into four classes: Primary, Class I, Class II and Class III[11]. In particular, it specifies Class III as the minimum desirable standards. The Parties shall make every possible effort to comply with the Class III standards both in constructing new routes and in upgrading and modernizing existing ones.

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[10] Annex I Asian Highway Network, Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway. Available online: http://untreaty.un.org/English/Asian_Highway/English_text.pdf Accessed: June 13, 2007

[11] In Appendix 6 The characteristics of road quality of the Asian Highway are explained.

Based on the information in the Asian Highway database, out of 141 000 kilometers about 22 000 kilometers (15.7 per cent) of the network do not meet the minimum desirable standards (ESCAP, n.d.-c)[12]. The Parties must update the Working Group on their progress and plans for upgrading the Asian Highway routes (ESCAP, 2005b). As mentioned above in order to facilitate navigation, the Agreement requires the Parties to place the Asian Highway route signs as described in the Agreement within five years from the date of entry into force of the Agreement for the State concerned (See Appendix 6). Furthermore, in order to improve visibility and understanding of the Asian Highway routes, member states are encouraged to indicate the route numbers of the Asian Highway on national maps and encourage similar notation on commercially produced maps. At the regional level, the ESCAP secretariat would encourage international map publishers to indicate the Asian Highway routes and numbers on commercially produced maps.

♦ **Financial Scheme**

Regarding the Agreement, the contracting parties are required to upgrade and improve the network. It is one of the main obligations required of the contracting parties. The ESCAP secretariat completed the implementation of the Asian Highway Network to identify investment needs and development priorities for the project. The status of the network was reviewed and priority investment requirements were identified.

A consolidated list of 121 priority projects in 25 Member States indicates that about US$ 25 billion is currently being invested or committed for the development of various sections of Asian Highway routes in Parties and the working group meetings also identified a shortfall of US$ 18 billion in the funds required to upgrade and improve about 26 000 km of the Asian Highway. Member States are seeking support and assistance from bilateral donors or international financing institutions such as Asian Development Bank (ADB) and private investors to undertake these priority projects along the Asian Highway, including the support of capacity-building, infrastructure and facilities (ESCAP, n.d.-c). Some member parties such as Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea and Singapore are developing and upgrading the Asian Highway routes in their countries from national budgets[13]. Furthermore, the government of Japan supports the Asian Highway project through the provision of financial and expert resources.

3.3 Tourism and the Asian Highway Network

Progress on the Asian Highway project has developed with varied speed over the last 40 years, but since the late 1980s, the demand for reliable and efficient transport by road to facilitate tourism and trade has been growing. Facilitating travel along the Asian Highway for tourism purposes could clearly make a contribution to economic development, increased social interactions, and better understanding among a great number of Asian countries (ESCAP, 2007e).

Countries linked by the Asian Highway share a wealth of historical and cultural heritage and unspoiled natural beauty. These countries could join hands in promoting tourism along the

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[12] Currently 16 per cent of the network is below the agreed minimum standards which determined by UNESCAP and subregional expert meeting groups. Upgrading and improving the network to the requirements of Asian Highway Classification and design standards is one of the main obligations of the Contracting Parties within the Agreement.

[13] Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore are developing and upgrading the Asian Highway routes in their countries from national budgets. China and Kazakhstan have also indicated that they would mobilize national resources to undertake the priority projects. Information on investment requirements is not available for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Turkmenistan. (Source: ESCAP, the priority of investment.)

highway under a common tourism banner which, in turn, would offer excellent opportunities to strengthen regional cooperation and contribute to social and economic development. In this regard, the ESCAP Commission suggested that ESCAP should initiate activities to promote tourism along the Asian Highway. In pursuance of this suggestion, a questionnaire survey was conducted by the secretariat to identify major tourism attractions that are now accessible or have the potential to be accessible by the Asian Highway (See Appendix 7). The purpose of the survey is to analyze the various opportunities and obstacles encountered by various countries and suggest actions that might be taken at national and regional levels to promote tourism along the highway. There is also information on major problems related to the Asian Highway and access routes to important tourist attractions. Actions are also suggested for promoting tourism along the highway in the future (ESCAP, 2007e).

At the country level, government agencies responsible for road construction and tourism development could more closely coordinate their efforts in order to take the steps necessary to improve the Asian Highway Network and to promote tourism and facilities. Such inter-agency cooperation and coordination is important to improve road conditions and it represents a crucial infrastructure element for tourism development. In some countries, the governmental investment to support tourism development has already focused on improvement of road conditions through close coordination among tourism and road construction agencies. Moreover, the social and economic benefits from tourism could help to rationalize the government budget allocations that are required to improve road conditions (ESCAP, 1999c).

3.4 Sustainable Tourism Development along the Asian Highway

As mentioned in the previous chapter, tourism activities can generate positive and negative impacts. Tourism has become increasingly important for many Asian and Pacific countries that have opened their economies to the rest of the world. The significance of tourism has been growing in terms of the dynamics of national socio-economic development and the potential benefits for tourism stakeholders, while related risks have been created by complicated, new challenges (ESCAP, n.d.-d).

The major challenges of tourism development involve the role of the industry in socio-economic development and how it might contribute to poverty reduction (TTD, 2003). Generally, poverty reduction linked to tourism can be seen in terms of how to expand socio-economic benefits; how to distribute benefits to more segments of society, particularly poor people; how to minimize adverse impacts; and how to provide the necessary support to advance sound and sustainable tourism development (ESCAP, 2005c).

In order to promote sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network as a viable socio-economic activity within the process of globalization and ensure that its contribution to poverty reduction is effective, the three dimensions of sustainability must be balanced. Economic benefits may occur by promoting more tourist attractions and awareness of the Asian Highway routes by supplying maps and disseminating information through media. Moreover, host or local communities may enjoy the experience of employment. On the other hand, economic impacts need to be evaluated and analyzed against the adverse impacts. For the social dimension, the relevant governmental agencies should assess the impacts that may occur in rapid tourism expansion along the Asian Highway – for instance, the modification of indigenous tradition and growth in crime. Moreover, the environmental impacts of tourism must be taken into consideration when

designing and implementing policy at the regional and national level to minimize the adverse effects and maintain the natural environment for the future generations (ESCAP, 2001).

As described in Section 2.3, the policy makers and government agencies could decide which policy instrument should be utilized in order to improve the performance of policy and implementation. At the same time, in order to promote sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network, the planning, coordination, enforcement of legislation and more constructive governance is required.

ESCAP has launched the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism (PASTA) Phase II (2006-2012) providing useful guidelines in developing and promoting tourism (ESCAP, n.d.-b). Even though the action plan is not specifically addressed in promoting tourism along the Asian Highway Project, the plan may provide useful guidance to the development of the Asian Highway Network. Furthermore, PASTA advocates specific policy actions to be taken at the national and regional levels. ESCAP has been offering the principles of sustainable tourism development for policy makers to adopt the approaches and formulate policy and management planning. This is described further in the following section.

3.4.1 Sustainable Tourism Development Principles in Asia and the Pacific

Sustainable tourism is one approach to the development of the tourism industry designed to provide a context that can guide choices, bring together stakeholders so they act in the common interest and help decision-makers see more clearly how to balance the positive and negative impacts at present and in the future(ESCAP, 2001). Regarding the sustainable tourism concept, there are a number of imperatives that should serve as guides for action. Sustainable tourism shall make prudent use of the Earth's resources and preserve biodiversity and life support systems for all natural habitats. Sustainable tourism could help to enhance the quality of life and preserve indigenous knowledge and ways of life based on respect for different traditions. According to the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), tourism could help to reduce poverty and gender inequalities (UNWTO, n.d.). Maintaining tourism requires the encouragement of bottom-up responsibility for participation and enhancement of capacities for local level so as to support decision-making (ESCAP, 2001).

Many tourism areas and destinations are now pursuing strategies that aim to ensure a sensitive approach when dealing with tourism. Many of these strategies are based on a formal expression of principles for sustainable tourism. Planners and others can use the principles provided below as a basic guidelines when attempting to incorporate the broad vision of sustainability into local policies and practices. The main principles include the following (ESCAP, 1999b):

- Residents must maintain control over tourism development and planning requires broad-based community input.

- Quality employment must be provided for the community along with education and training programmes.

- Distribution of the benefits must be broad-based and cooperation among local stakeholders is essential.

- Intergenerational equity must be provided and tourism businesses and other tourism agencies must adopt long-term planning horizons.

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- Tourism strategies and plans must be linked to broader initiatives reflected in economic development plans of the community, region or nation and move away from the traditional growth-oriented model.

- Harmony is required between the needs of the visitor, the place and the community in order to promote appropriate uses and activities.

- The scale and type of tourism facilities must reflect limits of acceptable use, and this means guidelines are needed for tourism operations and impact assessments must be required.

- The community heritage and natural resources must be maintained and enhanced using internationally acceptable criteria and standards.

- Marketing for sustainable tourism must provide for a high quality tourist experience.

Even though a set of principles helps guiding sustainable tourism development, stakeholders still confront a number of challenges. These challenges for example are involvement of public and private sectors, funding resources, integration of tourism strategies and plans and requirements of impact assessments, monitoring and indicators (ESCAP, 2001). To help resolving the challenges, ESCAP has provided the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development for decision makers and implementators in order to design tourism development plans and strategies at the national level. The next section, the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in Asia and the Pacific will be discussed.

3.4.2 Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in Asia and the Pacific

The intergovernmental meeting held in Bali, Indonesia in December 2005 has adopted the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development (PASTA) Phase II (2006-2012). It is based on fostering the sound and sustainable development of tourism and enhancing its contribution to socio-economic development and poverty reduction, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)[14] (ESCAP, n.d.-b). As part of PASTA, a distinctive set of major challenges and issues related to tourism development are highlighted. The awareness and analysis of these issues would enable stakeholders to devise strategies, take decisions and plan actions that are appropriate at the regional, national and local level to meet the challenges facing the tourism sector (ESCAP, 2005)[15].

Within the framework of strengthening countries' capabilities in sustainable development, the plan of action and regional action programmes are structured around five theme areas presented below.

1) Enhancing the role of tourism in socio-economic development and poverty reduction

It is to recognize that tourism plays a crucial role in expanding their economic base, increasing foreign exchange earnings and providing employment opportunities. It is

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[14] The MDGs are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000. [http://www.undp.org/mdg/basics.shtml]

[15] Major Issues in Tourism Development in the Asia and Pacific Region, 15 November 2005, Noted by Secretariat

also contributing to poverty reduction by creating employment and expanding small scale business opportunities.

Therefore, relevant stakeholders, especially governments and private sectors are encouraged to take collaborative action to develop enterprises and employment opportunities for the poor. The proposed actions that should be taken into account to enhance socio-economic development and to alleviate poverty are initiated in the policy level and its implementations. The government shall improve national tourism statistics and indicators regarding socio-economic and environmental impacts. It should also undertake public relations programmes and media activities.

In addition, to develop tourism in a comprehensive and sustainable manner, the governments are required to integrate tourism into national development plans with a clear definition of its role in socio-economic development and poverty reduction as well as identify the potential contribution of tourism to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In order to support the pro-poor, small and medium-sized tourism related companies should be fostered as well as encouraging use of local resources and services in tourism-related operations, and collaboration among private sectors and stakeholders should be encouraged.

2) Facilitation of travel and development of transport and other tourism-related infrastructure

In many countries, facilitation of travel and development of transportation including tourism related infrastructure are inadequate. This may be an obstacle towards tourism development. In particular, modes of transport need to be improved in combination with upgrading tourism-related infrastructure to facilitate access to tourists.

Furthermore, the governmental officials should create an investment incentive condition for private sectors to facilitate further development of tourism-related infrastructure. The infrastructure requirements for tourism development should be integrated within a country's infrastructure development and investment requirements.

All member countries should take actions so that the development of tourism will take place by establishing coordinated organizations which are comprised of inter-ministerial committees or councils facilitating the procedures for the issuance of visas, border formalities and custom regulations, and creating joint efforts of government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to facilitate the travel of people with disabilities. They should also conduct training programmes for immigration and customs officials to improve efficiency and courtesy. Also, public private partnership should be created to participate in policy making and planning so as to develop tourism and infrastructure.

3) Socio-cultural and environmental management of tourism

As mentioned in Chapter 2, rapid growth and increasing numbers of tourists can have both positive and negative impacts on the environment, society and culture.

Particularly, the negative environmental impacts can affect the long-term sustainability of tourism because tourism is based on the diversity of natural, cultural and social resources which attract tourists in the first place. The principles of sustainable tourism can be reached through a combination of voluntary initiatives, more effective enforcement of relevant laws and an active role for civil society.

Participation of the stakeholders is a main approach when planning, coordinating and implementing tourism development. The participation should be enhanced at all levels in order to preserve environmental resources, protect cultural heritage and ensure equitable distribution of economic benefits.

Codes of ethics and conduct which apply to all stakeholders are useful tools for promoting greater awareness and understanding about environmental, economic and socio-cultural effects of tourism. For this consideration, the proposed actions are the establishment of a monitoring and assessment system for environmental conservation and socio-cultural protection. Additionally the countries should organize programmes to enhance the awareness of public and international tourists about the significance of environmental and socio-cultural aspects of sustainable tourism, including paying particular attention to the development and promotion of eco-tourism and culture-based tourism.

4) Crisis and risk management in tourism

Main crises and risks include unforeseen incidents such as terrorist attacks, health crises and natural disasters. Tourism is directly affected by such incidents, thus in light of the uncertainty and vulnerability of the tourism industry, it is recommended that all stakeholders give thorough attention to different types of crises and related risk management.

The actions to manage crises and risk are identified as:
- (i) Awareness building: it can help to reduce risk. The relevant organizations should evaluate existing crisis management and control programmes in order to determine the measures to handle the crises and risks when they occur. Additionally, the government should improve capacity and strengthen preventive management techniques.
- (ii) Planning (readiness): the development of strategic, tactical and communication plans are demanded to evaluate the crisis exposure. Additionally, a network of national and regional tourism crisis management centers could be established in order to manage media relations, information flow and other communication during respond and recovery phase.
- (iii) Responsiveness: an initial response during the event and in the immediate aftermath should be effective. This can be achieved by establishing media centers to disseminate accurate information on the situation at the destination.
- (iv) Long-term recovery involvement: there are several activities related to the recovery phase, therefore, the tourism related government agencies should collaborate with private sectors to take actions, such as development of recovery promotion programmes, extensive media campaigns, and promoting investment and public private partnership

in infrastructure development in tourist areas affected by crisis and disaster.

5) Human resources development in the tourism sector

The rapid growth of tourism industry has produced a higher demand for professionals, specific skills and related training and education facilities. The need to develop and   train the required human resources in various segments has been widely recognized. In addition, the ongoing need to develop and train the human resources required to   provide tourism services effectively and efficiently leads to the recommendation that partnerships and networking to support tourism education and training should be   strengthened.

The countries need to develop a national tourism training plan and actively participate   in the activities of the ESCAP Network of Asia-Pacific Education and Training   Institute in Tourism (APETIT). Moreover, the countries should consider establishing   policies to promote standards for human resources competencies in the tourism   industry (ESCAP, n.d.-b).

Eventually, coordination and cooperation are crucial factors for effective implementation of policies, plans and programmes to promote sustainable tourism development at the national level. Thus, the governments need to set explicit goals and develop the implementation strategies in order to carry out the proposals contained in the Plan of Action. In terms of monitoring schemes, the countries are invited to disclose their progress with regard to their national actions. There will also be a consolidated report on the activities and outputs produced under the Regional Action Programme. Public and Private Partnership (PPP) is an item which was widely mentioned in PASTA. According to PASTA, partnership will help to create opportunities to identify complementarities of experience, expertise and resources which could possibly lead to the realization of sustainable tourism. The plan of action must have the expected results and indicators to measure the accomplishments (ESCAP, 1999a).

4 Case Study: Thailand

Tourism industry in Thailand is dynamic and is continuing to grow in terms of economic benefits. On the contrary, environmental and social conditions are delicate. Consequently, tourism activities need to be examined to ensure economic viability while minimizing the environmental and socio-cultural impacts.

This chapter presents Thailand with regards to the national politics, economy and society. It includes the institutional and legislation framework related to tourism development. Additionally, stakeholders related to tourism are identified and their overall roles and responsibilities as well as their views and interests about sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand are presented.

4.1 Country Profile

Thailand is situated in the heart of the Southeast Asian mainland, covering an area of 513 115 square kilometres (composed of 99.6 percent of land and 0.4 percent of marine territory) and extends about 1 620 kilometres from north to south and 775 kilometres from east to west. Thailand borders the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Union of Myanmar to the North, the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Gulf of Thailand to the East, the Union of Myanmar and the Indian Ocean to the West, and Malaysia to the south. Bangkok is the capital and there are major cities such as Chiang Mai-Chiang Rai (North), Phuket-Hat Yai (South), and Khon Kaen-Nakhon Ratchasima (North East). The population is about 64.9 million (MFA, 2002-2006a).

Thailand is governed by a democratically elected government with H.M. King Bhumibol Adulyadej as Head of State. Under the constitution, the Parliament is comprised of 200 Members of the Senate and 500 elected Members of the House Representatives. The Prime Minister is an elected Member of Parliament and is selected from among the members of the House of Representatives (MFA, 2002-2006a).   Political instability has risen rapidly in Thailand since 19 September 2006 (FRD, 2007). Currently, Thailand is run by a military junta which staged a coup d'état that overthrew the former government which directly affects the national credibility and the government's administrative and managerial structure of Ministries and the Bureaucratic system. It is apparent that the national policy and its implementation have been moderately changed. Taking this into consideration, the governmental officials' coordination may be altered which could possibly affect the decision making and implementing process.

In general, the Thai government is comprised of administration at national, provincial and district levels. There are 76 provinces (Changwat), administered by governors (phuwarachakan) appointed by central government and 795 districts (Amphoe), 81 sub-districts (King-Amphoe), 7255 rural administrative sub-districts (Tambon), and 69 866 villages (Mu Ban), 1162 municipalities (tesaban), and sanitation districts (sukhaphiban) (LePoer, 1987). In addition, Bangkok Metropolitan is a special administration solely responsible for the management of the city of Bangkok (BMA, n.d.). This system is recognized as Administrative decentralization[16] which aspires to foster development policies and strategies suited to local

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[16] Administrative decentralization is a transfer of activities within the structure of governance to local outposts-but without ceding any real authority over decision-making or resource allocation (UNDP, 2002)

social, economic and environmental conditions (UNDP, 2002). In 2005, Thailand's central government budget was estimated at US$35.2 billion (FRD, 2007). In order to achieve the governmental policy target, the government currently applies a 'Strategic Performance Based Budgeting System' (SPBB). One of the main strategies for the national economic and social development plan that distributes the national budget is reformation of the tourism structure. This includes development of the tourism infrastructure to enhance accessibility, development of facilities and the promoting of ecotourism (BOB, 2006).

Thailand's economy is primarily based on agriculture but manufacturing and tourism are major sources of foreign exchange earnings (ESCAP, 2003). The tourism industry contributes to the main national income and is considerably motivated to continue growing in order to increase the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the employment rate and investment.

Roughly 20 percent of Thailand is covered by mountains and hills, the steepness of which generally precludes agriculture. As of 2005, rich arable land accounted for nearly 27.5 percent of the total area. About 6.9 percent was planted with permanent crops. Some 49 860 square kilometers of land were irrigated according to 2003 estimates. The environmental circumstances and the depletion of the water table around Bangkok have led to land subsidence. Other environmental issues include air pollution from vehicle emissions, water pollution from organic and factory wastes, deforestation, soil erosion, and wildlife population depletion from illegal hunting (FRD, 2007).

Thailand has an extensive network of roads and railroads. Rapid transit is burgeoning in an otherwise gridlocked Bangkok. Tourism and improved economic development led Bangkok to become a major regional air hub. New technology development has brought some improvements to the nation's telecommunications network. The estimates vary on the length of roads in Thailand. According to one estimate, in 2000, Thailand had 57 403 kilometers of roads, 56 542 kilometers of which were paved and 861 kilometers, unpaved. Streets in Bangkok are frequently gridlocked, with an overabundance of motor vehicles flowing into the central city via expressways. Railroads estimate 4071 kilometers of narrow-gauge track. According to figures provided for 2002, 55.7 million passenger journeys occurred. Thailand has some 4000 kilometers of navigable inland waterways, 92 percent of which, or 3701 kilometers, are navigable by boats with drafts up to 0.9 meters. Thailand's long coastlines lend themselves to inter-coastal trade. Thailand's ports in order of size are Bangkok, Laem Chabang, Pattani, Phuket, Sattahip, Sri Racha, and Songkhla. Thailand had an estimated 108 airports and three heliports in 2006. Bangkok International Airport at Suwannabhumi is an important regional hub for pass-through flights and as a destination. Other major airports are at Chiangmai, Hat Yai, and Pattani (FRD, 2007). In the next section, the author will refer to the existing situation related to tourism in Thailand.

4.2 Status of the Asian Highway in Thailand

The development of road transport in Thailand has substantially advanced not only domestically but also regionally. Considered as a transportation hub for the South East Asia region, Thailand needs to develop its own infrastructure comparable to international standards in order to link regional transport and tourism. In Thailand, transport is playing a large role in national development. Thus the improvement and development of transport infrastructure is a key strategy both at the national and regional level. The potential transport positively supports Thailand's competence in trade and tourism, particularly land-based transport which constitutes 80 percent of national transport (Choocharukul, 2005).

Thailand has made good collaborations with ESCAP in the development of the Asian Highway Project since it reached an agreement. In December 2003, the Thai government moved forward on a 5-year, US$ 38.5 billion budget for new infrastructure projects[17] which includes the Asian Highway Network (Santo, 2005). Thailand proposed the National Highways to be included in the Asian Highway Network based on the criteria for route selections under the Asian Land Transport Infrastructure Development (ALTID) project. A route was selected if it met at least one of the four criteria (provided in Box 4). The existing Asian Highways that pass throughout Thailand are divided into two categories: (as illustrated in Figure 4)

Figure 4 Asian Highway Routes in Thailand

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[17] 5-Year Infrastructure Budget: It consists of 1) Railway system - 900 billion baht (US$22.5 billion) 2) Bullet train - 140 billion baht (US$3.5 billion) 3) New roads & highways - 400 billion baht (US$10 billion) 4) Infrastructure for Bangkok's new satellite city - 100 billion baht (US$2.5 billion) 5) Investors in Thailand to Benefit from UNESCAP Asian Highway Agreement and 6) Trans-Asian Railway (Santo, 2005)

1) Main Asian Highways: AH1, AH2, and AH3

2) Secondary Asian Highways: AH12, AH13, AH15, AH16, AH18, and AH19

The Asian Highway routes are comprised of a total of 5113 kilometres linking Thailand to Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia and Myanmar and to the major seaports of Bangkok and Laem Chabang[18]. The Asian Highway Network in Thailand has well-developed roads (ESCAP, 2003). Most of them are in good condition or are above Class II standard. Only a few sections are under the Class II standard. This highway network is the central part of the East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC) between South and South-East Asia, as well as a North-South corridor linking the ASEAN countries to China PRC[19] (DOH, 2007a). The Department of Highways (DOH) under the Ministry of Transport gives priority in developing the Asian Highways under *the National Highway Development Plan* which is trying to expand and upgrade domestic highways, improve mass transit and integrate measures to connect with the Asian Highway Network (Santo, 2005).

Four tourist spots have been promoted and reported in the Asian Highway Handbook (2003): the Grand Palace, Bangkok (AH1/AH2), the Historic Town of Sukhothai (AH2), Golden Triangle, Chiang Rai (AH2/AH3) and Bang Pa-in Palace (AH1/AH2) (ESCAP, 2003). The Asian Highway fundamental statistical data provided by the DOH shows that the traffic volume (by vehicle type) is relatively high, especially for passenger cars (1 079 034 cars). Route no. 2 has the highest density of vehicle because this highway is the longest corridor which links north to south and passes through three countries (Thailand, Malaysia and Myanmar). However, the number of rest areas and refueling points are comparatively low which may hinder the development of tourism along this highway (See Appendix 9).

Apart from domestic transport development, Thailand is involved in international transport development within the region. Thailand and neighbouring countries have developed an Economic Cooperation Strategy (ECS) to fully harness the enormous economic potential among countries (MFA, 2002-2006b). Thailand, under the current government policy, provides financial and technical assistance to neighbouring countries in order to upgrade their transport networks link to Thailand as one destination. Such cooperation is expected not only to bring about a win-win situation for Thailand and neighbouring countries, but also to facilitate deeper economic and social integration. These outcomes would lead to increased trade and investment, enhance competitiveness, generate more employment, and improve distribution of income and quality of life in the sub-region (DOH, 2007a).

4.3 The Tourism Industry of Thailand

Many developing countries perceive tourism as a fast track to economic growth. As Thailand enters the 21st century, the tourism industry continues to play a major role in the economic and social development of the kingdom (MFA, 2002-2006a). The advantage of Thailand of having many natural resources which support the tourism industry as well as the development of infrastructure can surely be the fuel to drive the tourism industry further toward excellence (Sriyaporn, n.d.).

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[18] The lengths of each route will be listed in Appendix 8

[19] ASEAN comprises of ten South East Asian Nations, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. (ASEAN, 2007)

According to Bank of Thailand (BOT) and Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) data, during 2000 to 2004, the tourism industry accounted for about 7.7 percent of the GDP at the current price. Approximately 4.9 percent of this value was contributed by the tourism industry and 2.8 percent by other industries. The tourism industry has created, directly and indirectly, around 3.3 million jobs, accounting for 8.4 percent of the country's employment during 2000 to 2004 (Klongkumnuankarn, 2005). Furthermore, Thailand likely benefits in many other terms from tourism activities, including more foreign revenue contribution and some linking of industries (e.g. hotels, restaurants, transportation and retail). Particularly, various modes of transport play a crucial role in facilitating travel of a number of international and domestic tourists around the country and linking to other sub-regions. Table 5 illustrates the recent statistic data (2006) regarding the modes of transport that tourists used for visiting Thailand.

Table 5 Modes of Transportation used by Tourists

Region/Sub region	Air	Land	Sea
East Asia	5 715 567	1 738 958	167 719
Europe	3 244 818	185 497	60 482
The Americas	842 659	57 622	23 101
South Asia	607 357	5033	18 818
Oceania	596 954	26 349	27 959
Middle East	384 131	6594	1691
Africa	103 611	4036	2864
Total	11 495 097	2 024 071	302 634

Source: Data from Immigration Bureau, Police Department

While air transportation is largely tourism-related, other activities also make great demands on the transport system, particularly in relation to surface transport (Swarbrooke, 1999). Land transport seems to be flexible enough to reach many remote areas and destinations which would not otherwise be accessible to tourists and where the infrastructure is often not capable of accommodating them. Therefore, the organizations responsible for transport infrastructure, such as the Department of Highways, are anticipated to carry activities related to in development and maintenance.

Because the tourism industry is relevant to several sectors, governmental agencies are the major stakeholder responsible for integrating and coordinating the tasks of tourism which links all stakeholders so as to achieve sustainable national economic and social development (MOTS, 2006b). As mentioned above, the transport infrastructure provider is also the main actor directly related to the development of sustainable tourism. The Ministry of Transport (MOT) therefore has been engaged in many tourism projects in regarding road construction

and its facilities. Moreover, the environmental impact assessments (EIA) related to road construction are conducted by MOT itself in conjunction with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE). In Section 4.6, the main stakeholders involved in the development of sustainable tourism will be presented and their roles and responsibilities will be discussed.

4.4 Tourism and Sustainable Tourism Development in Thailand

Thailand has tended to promote the tourism industry as an economic accelerator which can help offset Thailand's current account deficit in the future. The question is whether Thailand can continue the tourism industry without the complement of natural resources, environment and culture. Many tourists have repeatedly visited the country and the inbound revenue has increased, but the environment has been degraded and the beautiful culture and tradition have been affected. Forest overexploitation, untreated water resources, and littering are examples of the adverse impacts of tourism (ENVIRON, n.d.2). Additionally, the ruin of cultural heritages, immigrants from outside the community, and growth in crime are obviously seen as social impacts of tourism. These issues likely impact the tourism industry negatively in the long-term.

Tourism revenue declines as environmental conditions worsen which may lead countries to emphasize the importance of developing a sustainable tourism plan, which calls for a balance of economic, environmental and social impacts. The thai government has well recognized the adverse impacts on environment and society of the tourism industry and has attempted to establish a plan to develop sustainable tourism. The plan shall benefit the country in several ways including economic benefits, social values and environmental protection (Kraiyoorawong, 2006).

Promoting Thailand as a 'Tourism Capital of Asia' motivates the government to form an effective strategy to strengthen Thailand's capacity to promote tourism in a more sustainable manner (OTD, 2007a). The task to complete such a mission can be seen as challenging for the government and relevant stakeholders. It also requires the necessary preparation as well as a comprehensive understanding of the tourism industry, both from the supply and the demand sides. Participation among stakeholders needs to be encouraged in policy making and its implementation. Furthermore, the basis of sustainable tourism development planning shall be undertaken under the scope of reconciling the three dimensions which are environment, economy and society. The impacts on environment and society should principally be considered alongside the impact on the economic growth.

The government's agencies play a central role in formulating policies and coordinating with relevant stakeholders to enhance sustainable tourism development. Focusing on various issues arising from tourism's involvement such as environmental degradation, social deterioration and natural disaster or risk, not only systematically comprehensive of sustainable tourism should be undertaken, but also the participation among stakeholders need to be encouraged in order to help solving the problems (STOU, n.d.-a). Other issues of policy-making, planning and management are being addressed in terms of opportunities for action and possible constraints that need to be overcome by rigorous efforts. Laws and regulations have been enacted as valuable instruments which could possibly lead to the achievement of sustainable tourism in Thailand. These developments are discusssed further in the following section.

Sustainable tourism plans and strategies in Thailand are gradually generated due to the various driving force as mentioned above. The governmental tourism agency, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, was assigned to formulate policy and implement it. Furthermore, other relevant agencies are encouraged to cooperate in promoting sustainable tourism. Several areas and destinations are a part of sustainable tourism development projects advocated by the government such as Ecotourism and Natural-based tourism in the Northern region, Homestay tourism in the central region and Cultural-based tourism in the Northeastern region. Notwithstanding, some tourism projects are in the transition period of studying and planning. The Asian Highway Network is one such project which will need to be well planned and managed. In order to understand the project's conditions all relevant components—institutions, legislations and stakeholders—are examined in Sections 4.5 and 4.6.

4.5 Institutional Framework and Legislation

The Thai government has realized that the tourism industry plays a large role in economic development. In return, the government has also recognized that it is necessary for tourism-related organizations to improve their policy and implementation to ensure the quality and quantity of tourism services and products inline with sustainable development.

Fundamentally, the Thai Constitution promulgated the significance of the tourism industry and stated that the State shall encourage tourism with other countries[20]. At the same time, the State shall carry out the policy on land use, natural resources and the environment in order to support, maintain, and protect the environment inline with the principle of sustainable development by involving the people, local community, and local authority in directing the operations (Thai Parliament, 2007)[21].

The tourism development plan has been initially included in the Fourth (4th) National Economic and Social Development (NESD) Plan (1977-1981) which aimed at resolving the major tourism problems, such as developing tourist attractions, upgrading tourism standards and services, and improving responsibility of tourism-related organizations. In addition, this plan incorporated other specific issues, particularly natural resources and environmental management. The plan in natural resources and environmental management included land use planning, building regulations and investment incentives so that it would help to reduce the unfavorable impacts (NESDB, n.d.). The governmental agencies were required to adopt its approaches into the ministerial legislative level in accordance with the plan. The new institutions have also been established to achieve the targets addressed in the plan effectively.

The 4th NESD plan additionally referred to community and public participation in formulating policy and implementation. The plan embraced human resource development in tourism sectors and marketing. Concerning infrastructure development, the plan required the relevant institutions to provide adequate tourism-related infrastructure for having

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[20] Chapter 5 Directive Principles of Basic State Policies Part 6 Basic policy on foreign affairs Section 81 'the State shall encourage trade, investment, and tourism with other countries, and take care and protect the interests of the Thai nationals abroad (Thai Constitution revised in 2007).

[21] Part 8 Basic policy on land, agriculture, and urban planning Section 84 states that The State shall carry out the policy on land use, natural resources, and environment (7) to support, maintain, and protect the environment on the principle of sustainable development by involving the people, local community, and local authority in directing the operations (Thai Constitution revised in 2007).

competitive advantages at the regional and international levels. Subsequently, the 5th to 10th NESD plan have promoted tourism development as a focal industry for national economic and social development. Environmental issues are included in these national plans to promote sustainable tourism development (NESDB, n.d.). Several policies and strategic plans adopted sustainable approaches into the Ministerial level and involved implementation at the local level.

As a result of the 4th NESD plan, the first Tourism Act was enacted in 1979. It focused on the establishment of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). The organization's main responsibility is specifically the promotion of tourism. Among others, the roles of TAT include dissemination of Thailand's tourism image in order to attract tourists as well as provision of educational programmes to develop human resources in tourism sectors. According to a Royal Decree transferring administration affairs and authorities and duties of government agencies of the Act Amending Ministry, Sub-Ministry and Department Act B.E. 2545(2002), the following laws shall be transferred to the Minister of Tourism and Sports. The Federation of Tourism Industry of Thailand Act B.E. 2544 (2001) and Touring Business and Tour Guide Act B.E. 2535 (1999) (amended in 2002) are related to the development of tourism sectors (MOTS, 2006a). Even though the Touring Business and Tour Guide Act tend to emphasize the duty of tour guides and the control of their licenses, it partially aids to promote good tourism manner which strengthens the tourism sector in the long term. On the other hand, the Federation of Tourism Industry of Thailand Act is more relevant to tourism development. The law concerns the systematic coordination between government officials and private sectors in tourism quality control and standards. It also promotes the uniqueness of culture, tradition and tourist attractions. Environmental conservation is also a major consideration in this Act.

For the purposes of environmental and natural resources conservation, the government has established a Ministry that is directly responsible for preserving, recuperating and controlling the natural resources and environment. Under the Constitution, activities related to the environment and natural resources are governed by natural resource laws and environmental management laws. These laws are implemented in several fields related to tourism. Land use—Water Resources—Forest, Mangrove and Wildlife—Fisheries—Energy and Mineral Extraction Laws are applied in order to formulate tourism plans and management (ENVIRON, n.d.). These includes pollution control, waste management, Environmental Impact Assessment, natural resource tourism, and cultural heritage laws that are employed to protect the environment against damages caused by tourism activities. Tourist attractions shall be examined during the process of development.

Currently, the government is trying to promote a variety of policy instruments such as regulation, incentives and encouragement. These policy instruments are used to stimulate relevant stakeholders to enhance sustainable tourism development.

Additionally, other stakeholders are taking part in developing sustainable tourism along the Asian Highway Network. Their roles and responsibilities will be described in the following section.

4.6 Relevant Stakeholders: Roles and Responsibilities

A consideration of the institutional and legislative frameworks as presented above can help to provide a better understanding of the overall policy approaches set forth by the Thai government which affect sustainable tourism, as well as a better understanding of how these

policies are implemented. Meanwhile, as discussed in Section 2.2.4, there are a number of actors whose roles and responsibilities have the potential to affect the development of sustainable tourism along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand.

In this section, the roles and responsibilities of the main stakeholders involved in the development of sustainable tourism along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand will be described. The views of stakeholders regarding sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network are derived from interviews and are also presented here.

4.6.1 Primary Stakeholders

♦ **Government Sectors**

Thailand has signed the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian highway Network and has committed to the promotion of tourism along the highway. There are various government agencies that have been assigned tasks to help promote tourism and enhance sustainable tourism along the Asian Highway Network. The governmental sector is the managerial unit that works to control the activities and execute power for satisfying stakeholders' demands (UNDP, 2002). The key governmental agencies presented below have different roles and responsibilities. Therefore, each of the agencies has its own influences on sustainable tourism development. The main institutions which have been established in order to develop sustainable tourism along the Asian Highway are the Ministry of Transport (MOT) (particularly the Department of Highway (DOH)), the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS) and its offices, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE).

1. Ministry of Transport (MOT): Department of Highway (DOH)

Tourism promotion along the Asian Highway Network requires the involvement of the governmental agency which is specifically responsible for highway construction – the Ministry of Transport. In particular, within the Ministry of Transportation, the Department of Highway plays a significant role in regards to the Asian Highway Network. The DOH is fully responsible for developing the Asian Highway Network through infrastructure development, strategy and planning. This Department is responsible for motorways, national highways and concession highways. In addition, the Department of Highway has duties involving the research and development of highway construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance. In order to strengthen the Department's capabilities, it collaborates and cooperates with local and international organizations such as the local government and ESCAP (DOH, 2006).

The DOH is involved in the upgrading of highways to meet the international standard. The Department's activities contribute to economic and social development and respond to stakeholders' demands. The DOH is responsible for the upgrading of national highways and the linkage of these highways to neighbouring countries. The Department develops area-based strategies related to road linkage by coordinating with other organizations and stakeholders such as ESCAP and ASEAN[22]. The Asian Highway Network in Thailand is partly developed in conjunction with other transport projects such as the ASEAN Highway

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[22] ASEAN is Association of South East Asian Nations

Development Project[23], the Greater Mekong Sub-Region (GMS) Cooperation[24] and several bilateral cooperation projects[25]. These projects intend to promote international transport, trade and tourism (DOH, 2006).

The highways' service level and users' satisfaction in respect to social and environmental aspects are also considered main responsibilities of the Department (DOH, 2007b). According to ESCAP's requirements, the DOH is responsible for reporting on the status of and plans for the highway in order to ensure ongoing monitoring and improvement of the highway. DOH responsibilities also include the harmonization of road traffic regulations and signage systems along the highway with other ESCAP member countries as well as the development of geographic information systems (GIS) to support end users (DOH, 2006; DOH, 2007a; DOH, 2007b). In order to increase road safety, DOH provides highway police working to monitor and facilitates road users.

During discussions and interviews with governmental officials, the relationship between the DOH and MOTS was defined. The department realizes that highways/roads play an important role in the economic and social development within the country and region (GOV-2). DOH works in close collaboration with MOTS to create mutual understanding and develop reasonable plans for road development, based on potential tourist attractions and feasibility of road construction. Ad hoc meetings are organized to allow a stakeholder dialogue between DOH and MOTS (GOV-2). Meetings include issues such as highway and sub-highway development through attraction areas.

In terms of environmental inspection related the Asian Highway Network, DOH usually makes use of Environmental Impacts Assessment (EIA)[26] and Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) to evaluate the outcomes of the project in both the short and long term (GOV-13). In addition, the Department focuses on creating evaluation systems for highway utilisation to increase the highways' potential usage. The completion of an EIA is required by law for both road construction and tourism attraction construction. However, the completion of EIAs for road construction activities falls under the responsibility of DOH, while the completion of EIAs for tourist attraction construction falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment who typically work in conjunction with MOTS.

According to the interviews and data gathered, in order to promote increased tourism, the DOH is currently undertaking some measures to facilitate tourism transportation along the Asian Highway. DOH has planned to widen the Asian Highway Network to a higher standard – for example, Route no.16 (East-West Economic Corridor links Myanmar, Thailand Lao PRD and Vietnam) will be increased from a 2-lane to 4-lane highway in the

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[23] The ASEAN Highway Development Project is the international highway development project. It aims at linking high potential areas of all ASEAN countries through road transportation which comprises 23 routes and a total distance 36 600 kilometers. ASEAN member countries have signed the ASEAN Agreement on Visa Exemption which shall exempt citizens of any other Member Countries holding valid national passports from visa requirements for a period of stay of up to 14 (fourteen) days from the date of entry ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) (2006). ASEAN Framework Agreement on Visa Exemption. Retrieved September 12, 2007 from http://www.aseansec.org/18570.htm.

[24] The GMS is comprised of Thailand, Lao PRD, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar and Southern China (Yunan). The Asian Development Bank provides the financial assistance for a total of 10 routes to be developed under land transportation development along part of the highways.

[25] For example Thailand-Lao PRD Cooperation, Thailand-Cambodia Cooperation and Thailand-Myanmar Cooperation

[26] imposed by National Environmental Quality Act B.E. 1992 (Article 46 to 51)

near future. These activities require foreign loans and funding via the Thai Ministry of Finance (DOH, 2007a)(GOV-2). In addition, several economic corridors such as the North-South Corridor (links Southern part of China, Myanmar, Lao, and Thailand) and the Southern Corridor (links Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam) which utilise the Asian Highway Network Routes are being further developed to facilitate tourism.

2. Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS)

The Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS) has the main authority to promote, support and develop the tourism industry, sports, sports education, recreation and other affairs as specified by law to be the authority of this Ministry or authority of governmental agencies under this Ministry (MOTS, 2006c). The intention of this organization is to lead Thailand to become the centre of tourism in Asia, providing quality and sustainable tourism. This will help with the fair distribution of tourism-related income to the involved communities. Moreover, the Ministry aims to help integrate and coordinate the tasks of tourism by systematically linking all tourism-related sectors, in order to achieve sustainable national economic and social development and to enhance the regional and global competitiveness of the tourism industry (MOTS, 2006b).

The Ministry consists of four governmental offices and two state enterprises[27]. In addition, there are two governmental divisions that help to facilitate tourists which are the Tourist Police Division and the Tourist Assistance Centre. Both of these coordinate with the public and private tourism sectors and provide support to other related or authorized agencies.

In accordance with the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, the Ministry has full responsibility to promote tourism along the highway recognizing sustainable tourism principles and approaches (ESCAP, 2005b). The Tourism Offices of the Ministry which are directly related to developing tourism are as follows:

♦ *Office of Tourism Development (OTD)*

The Office of Tourism Development (OTD), which was established in 2002, was chosen to be a core unit in developing Thailand's tourism industry as per the strategy of sustainable tourism development. Under this strategy, OTD has indicated that they will work with all fields of the tourism industry, including community organizations and stakeholders in the tourism process (OTD, 2007b). The Office has the duty and responsibility for the development of standards for the service industry in relation to tourism and tourist attraction sites. Currently there are 18 service standards and 7 site-related standards (GOV-4). The OTD provides operating licenses to tour businesses and tour guides in Thailand.

The Office of Tourism Development's is divided into five divisions as follows (OTD, 2007b):

1) General Affairs Division: This Division is responsible for general administration, correspondence and coordination, including law and regulation enforcement. This Division has the duty to formulate and coordinate its action plan in

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[27] Four governmental offices: 1) Office of the Minister 2) Office of the Permanent Secretary 3) Office of Tourism Development and 4) Office of Sports and Recreation Development Two State Enterprises: 1) Tourism Authority of Thailand 2) Sports Authority of Thailand

accordance with the Ministry Policy and Master Plan. It helps to evaluate the implementation measures of all units according to the work plans and projects. This Division is primarily responsible for working with international agencies such as ESCAP and UNWTO in regards to tourism development.

2) **Bureau of Tourism Services Development:** This Bureau is responsible for studying and analyzing the issues and problems related to tourism services in order to help with the development of service standards. It also coordinates, encourages and promotes other related agencies to operate in accordance with the standards. The Bureau is also responsible for coordinating with other agencies to address problems related to tourism services, tourist safety and facilities.

3) **Bureau of Tourism Sites Development:** This Bureau is responsible for studying and analyzing the issues and problems related to tourism sites in order to help with the development of site standards and the development of knowledge regarding site development and conservation. Furthermore, the Bureau helps to encourage film production, service and other related activities for the purpose of art and cultural promotion.

4) **Bureau of Tourism Business and Guide Registration:** This Bureau is responsible for the issuance, extension, suspension and cancellation of licenses for tourism businesses as well as for overseeing the operations of these enterprises. It is involved in the filing and updating of data related to tourism businesses and guides and coordinates, and encourages and promotes relevant agencies to ensure that tourism businesses are operating within the relevant laws.

5) **Thailand Film Office:** This Office has the duty to develop plans and measures to support film services business in order to generate national income as well as to promote tourism, culture and the arts in Thailand. It also considers the granting of permits and monitoring of film shoots to ensure that they do not adversely affect Thailand's image or damage its natural environment (OTD, 2007b).

In order to develop tourism along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand and promote linkages to neighboring countries, at least three divisions, the General Affairs Division, Bureau of Tourism Services Development and Bureau of Tourism Sites Development, are assigned to cooperate and support each other. These organizations look at the possibilities for new tourist attraction development along the highway. The General Affairs Division and Bureau of Tourism Sites Development play central roles in promoting tourist attractions along the Asian Highway Network by examining potentials, problems and needs related to the development of tourist attractions.

OTD cooperates with regional and sub regional governmental levels to promote tourism in community areas. This helps communities to participate in tourism development in a sustainable way. The development of tourist attractions is determined by focusing on the prominent feature of tourism areas. For example, Central Region is developed for historical and natural types of tourism, Southern Region for World Class and Holiday Destination and Northeastern Region for cultural heritage of Southeast Asia (OTD, 2007a).

During the interviews with governmental officials, it was confirmed that OTD attempts to develop tourism while helping to sustain environmental and natural resources. OTD works with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) to study environmental

impacts at specific tourist attractions. Currently, there is a joint project between OTD and MONRE regarding Ecotourism in national park areas (GOV-4). In addition, OTD is trying to promote alternative tourism such as Homestay and Cultural-based tourism in order to enhance socially friendly tourism to local communities.

In terms of socio-cultural development, OTD is trying to increase and restore cultural and traditional tourist attractions. There is an ongoing increase in local cultural and tourist information centers in order to help achieve this goal (OTD, 2007b). However, it appears, based on interviews, that the OTD places particular emphasis on increasing the total number of cultural and traditional tourist attractions rather than on evaluating the real social impacts of tourism (for example, changing of host community life style, the imitation of arts and craft and the reduction of personal morality).

In terms of human resources development, OTD initiated the national tourism training plan and participates with academic institutions such as the Asian Centre for Tourism Planning and Poverty Reduction (ACTPPR) and the Network of Asia-Pacific Education and Training Institutes in Tourism (APETIT) managed by ESCAP. The cooperation among OTD, ESCAP and academic tourism institutions helps to create educational programmes for people involved with the tourism industry such as tour operators/guides, local communities, tourists and governmental officials in order to increase skills, knowledge and capacities (OTD, 2007a). The relationship between OTD and ESCAP in terms of human resources development includes research & development opportunities, sharing of expertise, and member benefits distribution which helps to strengthen human resource competencies in the tourism sectors (GOV-4, GOV-9).

OTD recently coordinated with regional organizations such as the APEC International Centre for Sustainable Tourism (AICST) and the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (APDC) to organize the strategic plan for crisis and risk management, including a recovery plan in the case of natural disaster. At the same time, a joint operational team has been established to understand the strategic plan. The strategy has been open for public consultation amongst the public and private sectors and local communities. One intention of this crisis management programme is to help encourage tourists' trustworthiness to travel in Thailand (Express Data, 2007).

OTD conducts Cost-Benefit Analyses (CBA) in order to investigate the worthiness of tourism development for new projects. Furthermore, to facilitate tourists and tourism businesses, OTD provides geographic information systems (GIS) to help with the search for tourist attractions, route suggestions and transportation.

   ♦ *Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)*

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), which was established in 1960, is the first tourism organization in the country. TAT strives for excellence in tourism promotion and tourism market development. TAT's policy is as follows (TAT, 2006a):

   1. Promote the tourism industry to be an important instrument in tackling the country's economic problems, creating jobs for people as well as increasing income for the country. Moreover, promotion should be done to ensure that tourism plays a vital role in the development of the quality of life in all regions of Thailand as per the policy of the government.

2. Promote and develop proactive marketing strategies for increasing markets as well as niche markets in tourism. This is in order to attract tourists with greater economic potential (i.e. higher disposable incomes) to visit Thailand. At the same time, domestic travel for Thais should be vigorously encouraged.

3. Promote cooperation at all levels domestically and internationally to assist with the development of tourism markets. This aims to get rid of all barriers in the tourism industry in order to pave the way for Thailand to be the tourism hub of Southeast Asia.

4. Aim at organization and management development as well as development of the human resources to create a capable driving force for tourism development. Moreover, this aims at strengthening the potential of Thailand in light of international competition under good governance. The technical capabilities and knowledge of marketing should also be developed.

5. Accelerate the development of a tourism technological system for accommodating business activities information (E-Tourism) on the Internet. Also included here is the execution of electronic commerce as well as applying information technology in marketing. The necessary mechanisms for controlling and protecting data to ensure security must also be in place to ensure prevention of problems.

Although TAT has no specific division responsible for Asian Highway Network tourism promotion, there is an assigned department working to promote domestic tourism markets. The Department of Domestic Markets Promotion has the duty to promote tourism and tourist attractions in the country (GOV-12). This department is divided into regional and sub-regional offices. TAT cooperates with OTD to develop tourist attractions and increase tourists' awareness of tourist attractions.

Tourism promotion is implemented using marketing strategies and public relations through travel media at both the domestic and international level. In terms of the implementation of TAT's strategies, several marketing promotions have been organized. One example is the "Asian Highway Auto-Venture". This auto-rally is jointly organized by the Automobile Association of Singapore and the Tourism Authority of Thailand, under ESCAP sponsorship. This event takes place annually along the Asian Highway Route No. 1 and 2 through Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand and provides an opportunity to explore potential new tourism attractions and to create jobs and alleviate poverty for rural dwellers along the routes (ESCAP, 2003). In 2004, TAT initiated cross-border travel and tourism activities between Thailand and Lao PRD. The first bus service which runs between these countries has hugely boosted tourism along this section of the Asian Highway Network (TAT, 2004). Furthermore, TAT has signed several agreements to complete and link up critical sections of the Asian Highway Network with ESCAP member countries at sub-regional levels (TAT, n.d.).

TAT attempts to increase the amount of tourist information centers[28] at tourism locations. Other measures that have been taken to facilitate tourists are the 'Hotline TAT call center' which provides information for Thais and foreign tourists, the provision of maps and brochures at tourist information centers and on the TAT website, and the provision of

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[28] TAT Tourism Centers (Local office) are divided into 4 regions, North, Central, South and Northeast.

destination guides on the TAT website which include general information, accommodations, tourist attractions and events or festivals for each province in Thai and English (TAT, 2006b). TAT additionally collaborates with tour operators in helping them to create tour packages that utilize the Asian Highway Network as a tourism vehicle.

To promote sustainable tourism along the Asian Highway, TAT proposes alternative tourism programmes by cooperating with the Thai Ecotourism Adventure Travel Association (TEATA). One interesting programme which has been run is the 'Tourism Cooperation Bicycle Tour', that intends to increase awareness of the highway by encouraging participants and spectators to engage in cycling activities along the highway (TEATA, n.d.).

In order to gain a better understanding of the tourism situation, TAT maintains national tourism statistics regarding international tourist arrivals and receipts and modes of transportation (TAT, 2006c). Additionally, TAT has established the Thai Tourism Satellite Accounts[29] (TTSA) in coordination with the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) (TAT, 2006c). TAT has established one Eco-label and Certificate for tourism. Green Leaf, is recognized for their commitment to environmental conservation through the implementation of a stringent in-house programme that fosters environmentally-friendly practices, such as the efficient use of energy and water, water management, recycling, proper waste management, and policies that favour the purchase of products and services from equally committed environmentally friendly companies.

3.   The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE)

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) is responsible for preserving, rehabilitating and controlling natural resources and the environment. The Ministry is divided into six divisions: 1) Natural Resource Division 2) Water Resource Division 3) Environmental Division 4) State Enterprises Department 5) Office of Permanent Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment and 6) Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (MONRE, n.d.-a).

The tourism projects require MONRE to examine and monitor the environmental impacts. The one of the main strategies is create a natural-based tourism management standard and tourism resources in order to enhance the potential of ecotourism (MONRE, n.d.-b). Additionally, MONRE provides a Geographic Information System (GIS) database to support the carrying capacity management for land use allocation of transport and tourism development (ONEP, 2005).

In terms of administration, the Ministry divides the operational structure into 5 regions, 16 sub-regions and 73 provinces. This helps the Ministry in transferring strategic plans to local areas and distributing the budget (GOV-10). It also allows the communities to understand and solve the environmental problems in their areas. In accordance with legislation, MONRE coordinates with NGOs and communities in regards to projects related to tourism development. The Ministry creates a good collaboration between NGOs and local communities by establishing a network of public participation in all provinces (GOV-3). Furthermore, MONRE provides information and knowledge to local communities so as to allow them to preserve the environment in the area. MONRE realizes that public and private participation is a tool to promote sustainable tourism.

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[29] TSA is an instrument that helps to indicate the significance of the tourism industry in the overall national economy.

During the interviews, the officials mentioned that education is a crucial factor in encouraging sustainable tourism. MONRE provides environmental knowledge and information to people, particularly youth and local communities (GOV-11). Notwithstandin,g the national environmental policy is concrete in theory but the implementation may not be efficient due to lack of environmental knowledge and awareness. Another challenging issue is budget (re)distribution. Budget which has not been appropriately allocated could possibly be a barrier to becoming environmentally sustainable (GOV-10).

4. The Immigration Bureau

In order to develop sustainable tourism along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand, there is another crucial issue that needs to be recognized. This issue is visa issuance, and custom regulations and facilitation. According to the ESCAP report in 2001, the Thai government provided 26 permanent immigration checkpoints to facilitate land access at borders with neighbouring countries[30] (ESCAP, 2001). Therefore, the Immigration Bureau is involved in facilitating tourists. Based on interviews, some border-crossing checkpoints still lack adequate infrastructure and carrying capacity to serve tourists' activities (such as the Thailand-Cambodia border, which has a high rate of tourists and visitors per day) (GOV-1). Tourists' facilitation needs the coordination of the relevant governmental agencies to improve the situation as well as collaboration with ESCAP and its member countries to find the feasible solutions.

♦ **The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)**

ESCAP initiated the Asian Highway Network as a regional transport link between countries in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP, 2005f). The Transport and Tourism Division is a key actor responsible for supporting the Asian Highway Network project. As mentioned above, the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network advocated by ESCAP has called for regional cooperation to develop the standard of highways and to promote tourism. Being the regional coordinator, ESCAP mainly provides regional workshops for upgrading the routes and expert group meetings on the development of the Asian Highway Network. This helps to guide member countries to prioritize the requirements of highway development (ESCAP, 2007f). ESCAP requests that countries monitor and report in order to improve the road standard, to increase the road safety and to prioritize the investment needs (ESCAP, 2005d; ESCAP, 2006).

In addition, ESCAP organizes the database that gathers the information related to road transport and tourism sectors which includes the environmental, social and economic data for each member country. ESCAP officials have mentioned that sustainable tourism is not specifically addressed for the Asian Highway Network but ESCAP provides member countries with a Plan of Action for sustainable tourism development to adopt into the national tourism policy. Additionally, ESCAP helps member countries by enhancing the regional cooperation of transport and tourism (ESCAP, 2005a; ESCAP, n.d.-a).

ESCAP provided member countries with a questionnaire to identify the major tourist attractions in the country and to receive suggestions on how to promote tourism along the Asian Highway Network. ESCAP realizes that the Asian Highway Network would offer

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[30] Myanmar, Lao PRD, Cambodia and Malaysia (ESCAP, 2001).

excellent opportunities to member countries in strengthening regional cooperation. A shortage of personnel and high qualified personnel may impede tourism development. Therefore, ESCAP provides educational and training programmes to enhance human resources development in tourism sectors, This has been done by establishing the Network for Asia-Pacific Education and Training Institutes in Tourism (APETIT) (ESCAP, 2007c). As tourism is an integrated industry, ESCAP recognizes that methods and experiencesshould be exchanged in order to consider policy options and best practice as well as to develop tourism in a sustainable way. ESCAP provides information on measures which can be integrated and implemented to develop sustainable tourism –for instance, ecotourism development, community-based tourism and public private partnership enhancement (ESCAP, 2001). Efforts undertaken by ESCAP include the Asian Highway Route Map—'A Practical Guide to Motorists', the Asian Highway web page [31] and the Asian Highway Brochures[32] (ESCAP, 2003).

♦ Tourism Industry

The tourism industry consists of tour operators, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), hotels, restaurants and human resources in tourism sectors. The ourism industry has a wide-ranging power and interest in developing sustainable tourism. In Thailand, there are about 2,000 tour operators (recorded by TAT) which provided 1 842 000 jobs in 2006 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2006; WTTC, 2006).

According to the interviews with tourism industry representatives, the tour operators are less interested in promoting tourism along the Asian Highway Network, although they recognize the excellent opportunity to gain economic benefits. The tour operators want to create tour packages that open up new destinations along the Asian Highway and use it to its fullest extent (TOUR-2, TOUR-3 and TOUR-4). There are many interesting issues related to tourism development along this highway that have been raised. Tourism development along the highway focuses on increasing the number of tourist attractions (TOUR-3, TOUR4). Tour operators realize that the tourist attractions would contribute to the incomes of businesses and local communities.

The tour operators suggest that old and deteriorated tourist attractions should be rehabilitated in order to boost tourism's sustainability. Moreover, they recognize that the tourism industry cannot be continued if environment is damaged. Therefore, they require the government to solve the environmental problems (TOUR-3, TOUR4). Other challenges are the distribution of national budget for improving tourism's image. Dissemination of information should be encouraged to elevate people's awareness of the existence of various highway routes. Adequate facilities such as accommodations, rest areas, tourist information centres and gas stations should be established. Considering the Asian Highway Network as a means of transportation, the tour operators' view is that 'the government should improve the standard of highways and concentrate more on road safety (TOUR-1, TOUR-2 and TOUR-5).

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[31] It contains key information on the Asian Highway and the database, files related to the Highway, country data, tourism prospects and the Asian Highway study on the Northern Corridor (http://www.unescap.org/tctd/ah/index.htm).
[32] An Asian Highway brochure was published in English and Japanese. Another brochure has been published in the database as a useful handout for distribution to interested users in the Asian Highway member countries.

The requirement of the tourism industry is to control the quality of tourism products and services. This means zoning for shopping stalls and restaurants, tourism prices that are comparable to other countries and being service-minded (TOUR-5). In term of tourism product's facilities, tour operators request an adequate amount of signage and signposts in English and Thai versions so as to provide foreign tourists a convenience. Furthermore, the Asian Highway tourism routes map should be offered at tourist information centres and at the convenience stores at gas stations along the highway (TOUR-5). They also propose that the development of sustainable tourism could be commenced by encouraging all tourism industries to share experiences and knowledge.

Tour operators themselves realize that they have a responsibility to educate tourists about the environment and society, for example, by setting rules such as 'Do's and Don't's' for tourists during their visit and disseminating Thai culture and tradition (TOUR-1 and TOUR-4). Additionally, visa and custom regulations should be relaxed to provide travel convenience for foreign tourists. Investment incentives could motivate businesses and investors to spend money on building more infrastructure and facilities. Public transportation such as buses and coaches should be developed in order to reduce usage of natural resources (TOUR-2).

Based on interviews, another crucial problem currently occurring is an imbalanced allocation of economic benefits. The tourism enterprise owners gain relatively higher benefits than employees such as tour guides. The host communities are rarely given full incentives from the enterprise owners. In addition, the transnational tourism companies are considered as a critical issue that challenges the governmental policy and implementation (TOUR-5).

♦ Local/Host Community

Participation of residents in tourism planning is fundamental. It prevents narrow special-interests groups from dictating the development process. Thus a transparent, consensus-oriented approach, with public participation throughout and continuing after development, is required (Wight, 1998). In the old days, Thai people took no part in the decision making process because of a long history of Thailand administration and absolute monarchy (Nilprapunt, n.d). Nevertheless, the government has recently enacted law on public participation to encourage people to take part in the decision making process and implementation.

Local communities nowadays are invited to play a collaborative role in tourism business. The government encourage the community to participate in policy initiatives and implementation. The relationships between local communities and voluntary sectors such as NGOs and academic institutions are considered to be significant forces influencing the successfulness of tourism projects. Currently, the government persuades local communities to participate in tourism development strategies in order to explore the appropriate methods to promote tourism in a sustainable manner.

Regarding tourism promotion along the Asian Highway Network, local communities realize that sustainable economic benefits will be realized if all stakeholders participate in policy formulation and implementation. However, local communities also consider the impacts of tourism activities promoted at the areas where the highways pass through (COM-1). Significant issues of concern are environmental depletion, natural resources overexploitation, pollution and littering, as well as social issues such as migrants, cultural and traditional distortion and growth of the crime rate (Silanoi, 2006). These can cause conflict in the tourism industry in the future if there is an absence of planning and management.

Local community networks for tourism are currently established in all provinces. The main purpose of these networks is to stimulate local communities to organize and manage tourism appropriately. At the same time, the community networks will help the government to monitor the environmental and social impacts of tourism (STOU, n.d.-b). At present, there are various activities involving tourism initiated by local community networks such as Homestay tourism, cultural-traditional tourism and Agri/Ecotourism (COM-1)(DMCR, 2002; DNP, 2005).

4.6.2 Secondary Stakeholders

♦ Voluntary Groups/Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

In many parts of Thailand, damages from tourism as an industry has resulted in the involvement of NGOs in the tourism planning process. Voluntary sectors are usually for one of two reasons: 1) protection of biodiversity and environment, or 2) sustainable development for local/indigenous people (Wood, 2002).

In Thailand, voluntary sectors and NGOs play a prominent role in sustainable tourism development, particularly regarding the issue of environmental conservation. According to the interviews, it appeared that NGOs realize that education is a preventative approach; therefore they tend to provide the fundamental knowledge of sustainable tourism to youth, local communities and relevant stakeholders so as to initiate awareness (NGO-2). Moreover, they help to analyze the impacts of tourism in specific areas. There are various activities created by voluntary sectors such as area study of tourism, environmental and social impact evaluation and educational programmes.

The NGOs working directly for tourism and environmental conservation intend to promote tourism concerning with preservation of the environment and biodiversity. These NGOs have special relations with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in enhancing Ecotourism. Survey and research initiatives at specific tourism areas are another voluntary sector interest. This helps to explore the opportunity of tourism development with the least impacts (NGO-2). The results of surveys or research are used for supporting decision makers in formulating policy and in its implementation. Some voluntary sectors help to organize training programmes on environmental education, environmental standards and energy efficiency related to tourism. This helps to increase the awareness of environmentally friendly tourism.

There are 89 academic institutions that have been registered with the government in Thailand (OTD, n.d.). They instruct students on the tourism industry and hotel management. Currently, the academic curriculum includes sustainable tourism development and management. Practically, the Office of Tourism Development has coordinated with the university[33] to provide a distance training programme to community leaders under 'Community Cooperation Network Programme for Sustainable Tourism' as mentioned above. This programme disseminates useful academic information. It also promotes and develops the potential of community organization to widely increase the networks. The cooperation additionally generates a mutual understanding between governmental agencies and local community to develop sustainable tourism (STOU, n.d.-b).

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[33] Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University

♦ **Travel Media**

Government and private sectors increasingly consider that travel media is a significant tool to promote the tourism industry. Media helps to develop tourism in a sustainable manner. Travel media distribute news and information about tourism. Although the Tourism Authority of Thailand is the main organization promoting tourism along the Asian Highway Network, it requires another kind of travel media to disseminate events and campaigns related to tourism promotion.

According to the interviews, the media expressed views on the development of sustainable tourism that the media needs to inform people about their roles in supporting sustainable tourism. The media representative indicated that the concept of sustainable tourism for Thais is vague and that the media could possible contribute to shaping tourists' perceptions and behaviour. Media could also help to enhance awareness of environmentally and socially friendly tourism (MEDIA-1 and MEDIA-2). Media itself considers that they are both an instructor and a promoter of the implementation of sustainable tourism.

Presently, Information Communication Technology (ICT) is considerably involved in various tourism promotions. This includes tourism information online, tourist attraction e-guidebooks and e-reservation/booking. This kind of media is now playing a prominent role in assisting the tourism industry communicate internally and externally with other relevant stakeholders.

♦ **Tourists**

The groups of tourist in Thailand are categorized into domestic and international tourists/visitors. The most recent statistical information indicates that there were 11.52 million international tourists and 79.53 million domestic visitors to Thailand in 2005. For the last three years (2004-2006), since Thailand has signed the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, the number of international tourists using land transport has increased (TAT, 2006c)[34].

Tourists are a major stakeholder in the tourism industry. Tourists are not only active but also passive actors. They largely make tourism sustainable in terms of tourism expenditure which elevates the economic benefits. At the same time they can increase social uncertainty and environmental degradation. Both domestic and international tourists can influence the trends of tourism. This depends on several factors such as tourism products (destinations), prices, tourists' attitudes and provided information (Ratchano, n.d.). Thus, the relevant stakeholders should focus on and understand tourists' needs.

The new generation of tourists (Young Explorer) have a good education and access to information from school and media. They are self-travelled and demanding in terms of unspoiled surroundings. They are concerned with the impacts of tourism, particularly environmental and social impacts. These tourists are inspired to travel for learning and gaining experiences. Adventure travel, Ecotourism and Homestay are their tourism preferences (ThanNews, 2007). International tourists widely visit Thailand.

According to the statistics, East Asia is an active tourist market which travels to Thailand by land transportation (TAT, 2006c). According to the research about tourists' satisfaction, the

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[34] There were 1 697 714 tourists in 2004, 1 781 342 tourists in 2005 and 2 024 071 tourists in 2006 (Tourism Authority of Thailand statistic).

determinant factors that persuade tourists to travel by land transportation are standard of roads and vehicles, safety, and economic prices (BUU, 2004). Another tourist research has mentioned that relevant stakeholders should improve traffic signage and tourism sign posts, road cleanliness and standard of tour guides (NFE, 2005). Currently, there are various domestic tourist' groups that keenly coordinate with governmental sectors so as to protect the environment and maintain indigenous traditions and cultures. Tourists are pivotal stakeholders who can determine the direction of travel and tourism operation because they decide what, where and how to travel. This makes the government and private sectors take consideration in order to fulfil tourists' satisfaction.

Empirical data related to key stakeholders, their roles and responsibilities may be significant for the development of sustainable tourism in Thailand. In the next chapter, all relevant stakeholders will be analyzed in order to seek insight into sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network. This may directly or indirectly influence the commencement of sustainable tourism development in Thailand.

5 Analysis

Commencing, managing (planning) or developing the sustainable tourism process requires the identification of key stakeholders as well as the clarification of their roles and responsibilities. The previous section discussed the main stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities regarding policy development and implementation. This chapter will analyze the inputs provided from the stakeholders so as to gain insight into sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand.

In the analysis, the relevant stakeholders and policies and their implementation related to sustainable tourism development are compared to the ESCAP plan of action for sustainable tourism development in Asia and the Pacific (PASTA). Through the analysis, the author seeks to identify possibilities for sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway (see Figure 5).
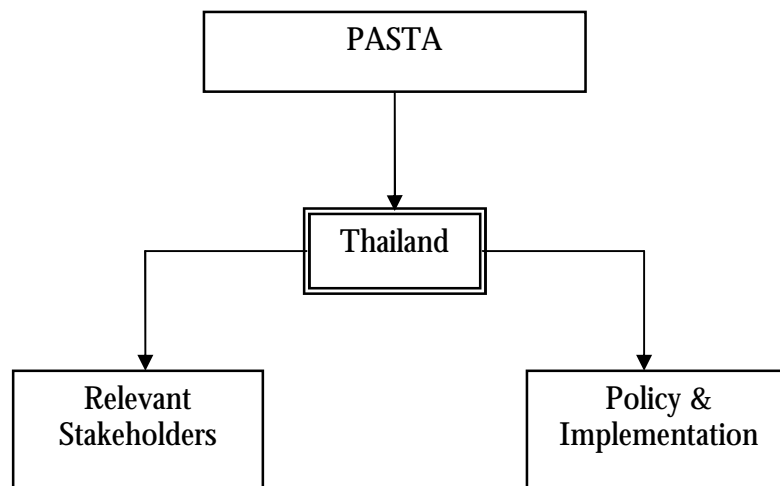
Figure 5 Analytical Framework

According to the analytical framework, ESCAP provides PASTA as a framework for strengthening countries' capabilities which includes five theme areas. These theme areas are: 1) enhancing the role of tourism in socio-economic development and poverty reduction, 2) facilitation of travel and development of transport and other tourism-related infrastructure, 3) socio-cultural and environmental management of tourism 4) crisis and risk management in tourism and 5) human resources development in the tourism sector. In the stakeholder and policies and implementation analysis in Sections 5.1 and 5.2, the roles and responsibilities of relevant stakeholders as well as the policies and their implementation are reviewed and compared with the PASTA framework in order to identify the main drivers and barriers to sustainable tourism development in Thailand. These drivers and barriers are discussed in Section 5.3.

5.1 Stakeholder Analysis

In this section, the rights, responsibilities and interests of various actors towards the development of sustainable tourism in Thailand are analyzed. Both the primary and secondary stakeholders have power to influence sustainable tourism development and drive and/or hinder the development of sustainable tourism along the Asian Highway Network. All relevant stakeholders are illustrated below (see Figure 6).
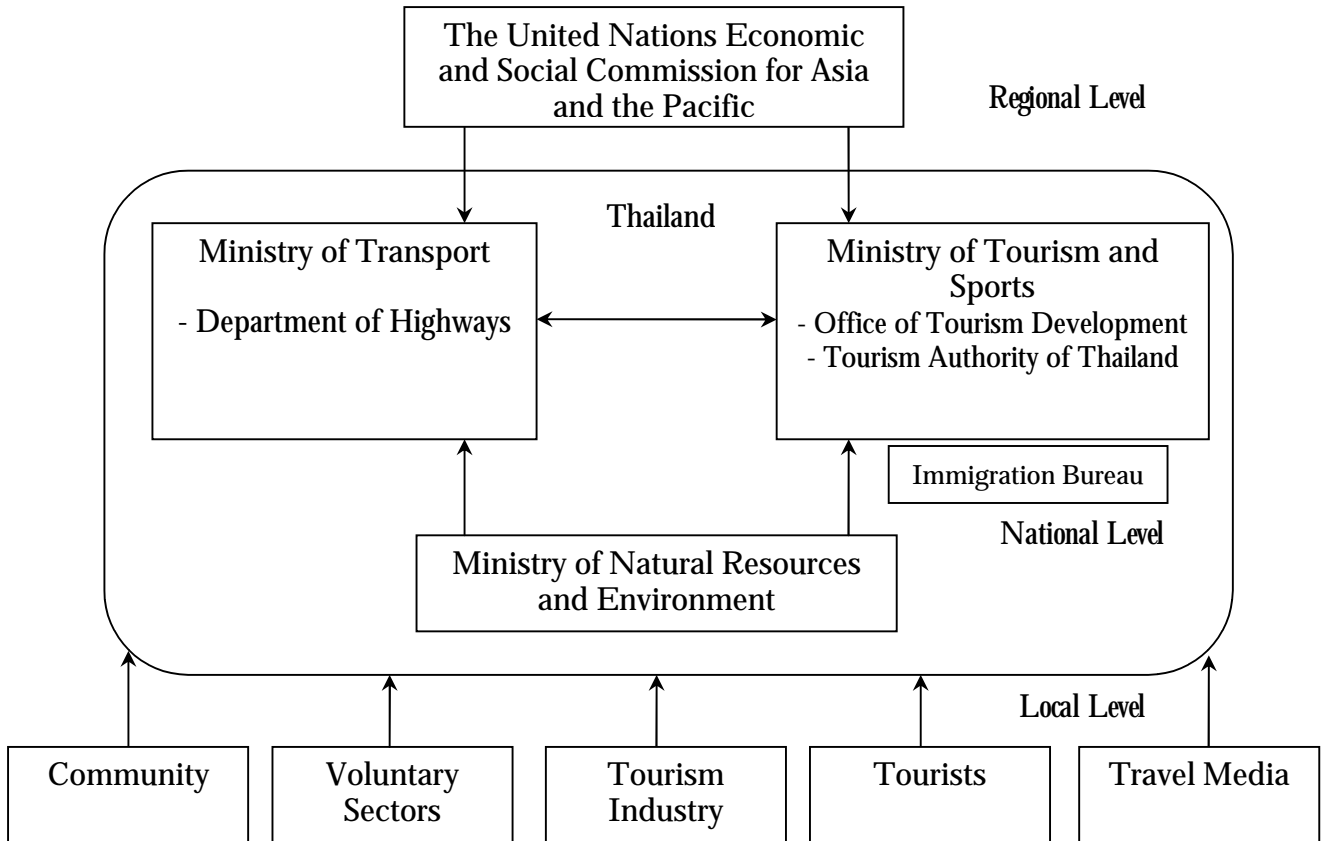
Figure 6 Stakeholders Related to Development of Sustainable Tourism along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand

The Asian Highway Network is a land transport project that intends to link countries in the ESCAP region and promote regional economic and social development, which are derived from international trade and tourism. ESCAP parties of the Intergovernmental Agreement are required to cooperate in developing and upgrading the highway standard. The benefits from this, for example, are increases in the number of road users/tourists, road accident reduction and tourism industry facilitation.

At the national level, the Ministry of Transport plays a fundamental role in developing and rehabilitating road infrastructure. The Ministry of Transport, Department of Highway has specific tasks to develop the Asian Highway Network by coordinating with ESCAP and its members. Currently, the Asian Highway Routes in Thailand are well developed and connected to neighboring countries in the sub-region. There are inter-ministerial committees established to coordinate with other member countries in developing highway standards and linking the highway to promote tourism.

The Ministry of Transport has included the Asian Highway Network in the National Highway Development Plan. The Department of Highway has integrated the ESCAP policy framework into the national level. The national budget has allocated financial resources for the upgrading and maintenance of the highway. The Environmental Impact Assessment which is required by law has been carried out for this project, and a monitoring system has been set up to examine the impacts of implementation for highway construction.

The Asian Highway Network helps to facilitate domestic and international travel and tourism. The Department of Highway has coordinated with the other tourism-related government agencies such as the Ministry of Tourism and Sports so as to support sustainable tourism. As mentioned in Section 2.2.5, the three key components of tourism are transport, attractions and accommodations. All three components must be integrated to promote sustainable tourism along the Asian Highway. The first imperative component is transportation. The Asian Highway Network in Thailand utilizes the existing Thai road infrastructure. However, the accessibility to tourist attractions, particularly attractions in remote areas, requires the development of sub-highways. Based on available literature, the measures facilitating navigation along the highway routes such as signage, symbols and signposts in Thailand are inadequate. Furthermore, the highway facilities such as rest areas, gas stations and restaurants need to be increased. This could possibly be a barrier for road users or tourists and affect the number of tourists and accidents.

According to the interviews with tour operators, the number of tourist attractions along the highway need to be increased in order to realize greater economic, social and cultural advantages for sustainable tourism (TOUR-1, TOUR-2, TOUR-3 and TOUR-4). The Ministry of Tourism and Sports has assigned this responsibility to the Office of Tourism Development. This organization has a direct obligation to develop tourist attractions along the Asian Highway, while taking into account economic and social development as well as environmental preservation.

Based on interviews, the Office of Tourism Development and the Department of Highway have arranged ad hoc meetings to study possible routes for tourism promotion. However, it seems that such meetings lack engaged coordination (GOV-2). The determination of tourist attractions along the Asian Highway requires a mutual understanding between the Department of Highway and the Office of Tourism development. Tourist attractions cannot be developed and increased if they are not accessible by road transport. This is inevitably related to the third component, accommodation. Accommodations which facilitate tourists during their travel can be both tourist attractions and service providers. There are a number of accommodations available along the Asian Highway. Notwithstanding, the accommodations need to be increased in the number and the quality of service standards should be enhanced. It seems that less attention has been paid to the development of accommodations than transportation and attractions which have specific organizations responsible for this matter. The government sectors should create investment incentive conditions in order to attract tourism businesses and investors. These incentives will help provide opportunities in building more facilities and infrastructure.

The government has promulgated the laws related to environmental inspection and preservation. This directly addressed, among others, the tourism sector. The Office of Tourism Development has worked with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in the provisions of environmental control and quality promotion. According to law described in Section 4.5, environmental and social impacts must be examined during the planning and preparation of tourist attractions. The Ministry of Natural Resources and

Environment (MONRE) has a direct responsibility for studying, revising and protecting against the adverse environmental impacts of tourism. There are several assigned department working in specific areas which are taking part in environmental preservation related to tourism. It appears that the Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment has a relatively strong policy. Not only environmental preservation and control but also the empowerment of communities and NGOs participation is supported by this Ministry. MONRE anticipates that the participation helps in promoting environmental conservation in local tourism areas or destinations.

NGOs have large roles in many fields related to tourism development. They are considered as a an important entity to educate people at the grass roots level as well as to conduct research and surveys regarding tourism activities in Thailand. These results provide useful information and knowledge to support governmental sectors in policy initiatives and to further tourism development. Another voluntary sector, academic institutions, has the potential to influence people's concerns regarding the significance of tourism and its impacts. The academic institutions are currently providing courses and training programmes in order to raise the awareness of sustainable tourism. They assist in defining the concept of sustainable tourism and in identifying the significance of developing sustainable tourism. Voluntary sectors are the support unit which helps in the sustainable tourism policy initiation. However, they are currently not largely involved in the policy formulation regarding sustainable tourism. Consequently, these sectors should also be encouraged to participate in the policy formulation process. The Asian Highway Network requires participation from relevant stakeholders to strengthen the action plans and strategies in order to establish sustainable tourism.

In Thailand, there are many voluntary sectors such as NGOs, academic institutions and specialists that largely work on environmental fields. Additionally, much attention is paid to economic issues. In contrast, however, the social impacts of tourism have received comparatively low recognition. Despite the fact that Thailand has a wide range of tourism products and services related to socio-cultural aspects of the society, stakeholders such as the governmental sectors, academic institutions and NGOs generally appear to pay lesser attention to the issue of social impacts of tourism. There are several reasons why social aspects are not largely recognized. The host communities are not adequately informed of the significance of their social rights. A number of cultural heritages are abandoned and require budget for restoration and recovery. There is inadequate research contributing to social indicators such as inter-cultural exchange, traditional values and life-quality. This calls for the collaboration among stakeholders to identify social significance in tourism sectors. The participation amongst the governmental agencies and the host communities should be increased in order to set up mutual planning and management in advance. Currently, the Office of Tourism Development is trying to encourage cultural-based and community-based tourism in local areas to raise the social awareness amongst host communities, tourists and tourism businesses.

The promotion of tourism in Thailand and activities related to public relations, tourism marketing and travel media are the responsibility of another governmental agency, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). It also coordinates with other public relation units and travel media to disseminate tourism products and services. Based on interviews and data collected, it appears that people have low awareness of the Asian Highway routes (TOUR-1, TOUR-3 and TOUR-4). The agency consequently requires additional publicizing about highway routes, attraction and activities. In fact, some events and campaigns related to the tourism along the Asian Highway have been internationally and domestically initiated such as

Auto-Venture and Bicycle Tour. These marketing strategies can help in expanding the awareness of highway routes and tourist attractions however, it appears based on interviews, that the endeavors undertaken thus far have not been highly effective in promoting tourism along the highway.

According to the interviews, TAT has no specific department working for the tourism promotion along the Asian Highway Network. However, there is a subdivision of the organization, the Department of Domestic Markets Promotion, which focuses on tourism promotion that could provide facilitation and services along the Asian Highway (GOV-12). Notwithstanding, tourism promotion along the Asian Highway requires an international tourism flow as well. The Department of International Markets should take part to open new international markets for tourism promotion along the Asian Highway. To facilitate domestic and international tourists, TAT should offer an Asian Highway Network route map and information regarding tourist attractions both in Thai and English (and probably in some other foreign languages) at tourist information centers and at stores along the Asian Highway.

TAT organizes the national tourism statistics and indicators to help decision making and provide a competitive advantage. At the same time, tourism statistics provide both positive and negative economic impacts. Regarding these economic impacts, the government attempts to use tourism as a tool to reduce poverty recognizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, this process needs some time to develop and requires community participation to identify the problems. Sustainable tourism is about local control, but also about working together. The government must reconcile the positive and negative economic impacts of tourism by empowering community participation to engage with other relevant stakeholders. This helps to provide opportunities to influence the development and management of tourism in communities as well as to strengthen and utilize the local democratic structure.

Sustainable tourism is not just supply side (e.g. tourism industry, the government and host communities) also about the demand side, or tourists. Tourists are the core unit of the tourism industry. They decide and influence tourism trends. Tourism businesses are both producers and service providers. They can also create tourism trends to influence tourists. Both tourists and tourism businesses play a significant role in influencing the types of tourism activities occurring along the Asian Highway Network. Tour operators could possibly participate through creating tour packages, educating and providing information about tourism along the Asian Highway Network. Nevertheless, during the interviews, the tour operators expressed a lack of interest in creating tour packages that use the Asian Highway Network as a destination – particularly, tour operators whose operations are focused on inbound tourism[35] (TOUR-3 and TOUR-4). Reasons for this lack of interest include tourist safety issues and the amount of time available for tourists. Additionally, the convenience of border crossing, visa issuances and custom regulations are significant barriers. This calls for government attention to these issues. On the other hand, in the case of outbound tourism[36] operators, tourism by land transport to neighboring countries (e.g. along the Asian Highway) is largely promoted (TOUR-2). One factor which supports this

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[35] Inbound Tourism involves non-residents traveling in a given country (UNWTO, 1998). In this thesis, specifically, this term refers to non-Thai residents traveling in Thailand.

[36] Outbound Tourism involves residents traveling in another country (UNWTO, 1998). In this thesis, specifically, this term refers to Thai residents traveling to other ESCAP countries.

outbound tourism approach is the fact that there are visa exemptions for Thai residents traveling to ASEAN countries.

Furthermore, the highways' linkages in the sub-regional levels are widely developed by ESCAP members' financial and technical assistance. The government has facilitated tourist travel by land transport by establishing highway police[37] and tourist police[38] offices (THP, n.d.; TTP, n.d.). Both agencies help to facilitate tourist travel along the Asian Highway Network. As mentioned in Section 4.6.1, Thai government assigned tasks to the Immigration Bureau to facilitate tourists traveling through land transport by providing permanent immigration checkpoints at borders with neighbouring countries. However, based on interviews, some border-crossing checkpoints still lack adequate infrastructure and carrying capacity to serve tourists' activities (GOV-1).

In addition, the governmental sectors have close relations with ESCAP through APETIT in providing education, training programmes, expertise exchange and experience sharing. This assists in developing human resources' skills and knowledge in tourism sectors. It also increases the tourism service standard and partnership engagement to promote sustainable tourism. According to the data gathered in Section 4.6.1, TAT has established the Eco-label and Certificate for tourism which helps increase the recognition of the tourism sector's commitment to environmental conservation.

In the next section, the national policies and their implementation will be analyzed through comparison with the ESCAP plan of action for sustainable tourism. This will be done in order to investigate the current circumstances that could possibly support or hinder the development of sustainable tourism.

5.2 Policy and Implementation Analysis

The national policy and plan of action stipulate that economic, social and environmental aspects need to be considered as part of sustainable tourism development. However, the implementation of the policy is done separately at a local level. According to the policy and planning approaches, the government and its agencies encourage short and long term implementation but the budget allocation does not necessarily correspond with the plan of action (GOV-10). It is often that the implementation measures undertaken are not sufficient to reach the target due to lack of financial support and competencies of human resources related to tourism.

According to the literature review, it appears that economic and environmental aspects are largely addressed in the policy related to tourism. The economic benefits are significant for Thailand, making this area a point of interest. On the other hand, however, it should be noted, that the economic benefits are not equally distributed to host communities. As mentioned in Section 4.6.2 (tour operators have provided this information) this has been partly attributed to the significant presence of transnational tourism companies in Thailand, who, while taking in substantial revenues pay only low wages to local people and Thai

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[37] The Highway Police has duty on highway traffic control and management (THP, n.d.).

[38] The Tourist Police coordinates with the Tourism Authority of Thailand and provides help for tourists who have experienced difficulties during their visit to Thailand. The tourist police offices are situated at 17 major tourist areas (TTP, n.d.).

employees. This requires concrete policy and stakeholders' participation to solve the problem.

In terms of environmental preservation and management, it appears that the legislation framework and institutions affirm the policy formulation. However, the policy endorsement and policy implementation usually leave some room for policy makers to monitor so as to measure the success and improve the policy. The key weakness in the policies related tourism is the absence of a constant monitoring and evaluation system for socio-cultural performance.

The government offers several policy instruments for encouraging sustainable tourism. The government regulations such as the Constitution, the National Economic and Social Development Plan and Tourism-related Acts help to initiate strategic policy for sustainable tourism development and implementation. These pieces of legislation distribute various authorities to different ministerial administrations to formulate strategic plans of action for enhancing sustainable tourism in reality. The relevant ministries attempt to put the national tourism policy framework into practical implementation. This practice can help to ensure that the socio-cultural, economic and environmental considerations will be taken into account.

The government is trying to encourage the awareness of sustainable tourism by the provision of education and information to the relevant stakeholders (especially tourists and host communities). The government also attempts to pursue multi-stakeholder engagement among voluntary sectors, tourism industries, host communities and tourists in order to seek participation and mutual understanding regarding the achievement of sustainable tourism. However, the voluntary initiatives among tourism industries and businesses should be pursued to a greater extent in order to help promote sustainable tourism. Financial incentives such as taxes, fees and permits (especially tourism tax for the environment) are in the process of being established to help control tourism activities and to reduce adverse impacts on the environment. However, this policy instrument is not widely accepted by stakeholders and is hypothesized not to function well due to several factors such as inadequate bureaucratic infrastructure, weak educational system and ongoing economic transition. The government expenditure is commonly used for public transport (e.g. buses and coaches) but it is not efficient enough to reach the tourists' satisfaction. In addition, the political and economic transition is an internal factor that instantly affects the policy continuance and implementation.

Ultimately, it appears that top-down formulation approaches are well structured. The national government formed the legislative framework to guide the governmental agencies so as to produce strategic plans and policies related to sustainable tourism. The government agencies which are both policy makers and implementators seek to engage the relevant stakeholders for achieving the policy's intentions. However, it appears that there are gaps which occur during policy implementation due to weaknesses in the bottom-up approaches. Furthermore, the lack of governmental coordination can substantially challenge the achievement of sustainable tourism development. It could lead to an incompetent implementation in the short and long term. Coordination should be encouraged among governmental agencies and other stakeholders in order to create mutual understanding. This would assist tourism to develop in a sustainable way.

5.3 Major Drivers and Barriers

In this section, based on the analysis of collected materials, the drivers and barriers for the development of sustainable tourism along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand are presented and discussed.

5.3.1 Drivers

♦ **Economic opportunities**

The excellent economic opportunities of tourism along the highway are obviously recognized. Based on tourism statistics[39], Thailand increasingly has a large proportion of tourists using the Asian Highway routes purely as a means to get to their main destinations. The government is attempting to increase a large number of tourist attractions along the Asian Highway within the country.

♦ **Increases in tourist attractions**

Tourism along the Asian Highway can be successfully promoted by increasing the number of tourist attractions. This is to enhance the greater economic, social and cultural advantages for sustainable tourism.

The government cooperates with neighbouring countries to identify the interesting tourist attractions where the highway passes through a region. The Tourism Authority of Thailand is taking part in promoting tourism along the Asian Highway by organizing tourism events and campaigns. Furthermore, the government enhances various alternative tourism options such as Cultural-based tourism, Ecotourism and Homestay tourism to combine with traditional tourism promotion along the Asian Highway.

♦ **Strong legislative framework**

Existence of the legislative framework helps policy makers to formulate a plan of action and assign the governmental agencies working in specific fields for the development of sustainable tourism in Thailand. The Ministry of Tourism and Sports and the Office of Tourism Development have the main duty to promote, support and develop the tourism industry. The Tourism Authority of Thailand is a key actor for marketing and promoting tourism organizations. The Department of Highway has established a monitoring system to examine the impacts of the implementation of highway construction. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, with its sub-agencies, works especially on environmental conservation and control. This Ministry also conducts examinations of environmental impacts of tourist attractions during planning and preparation. In addition, there are other government agencies such as the Immigration Bureau that coordinate with the main tourism agencies to support policy and implementation.

♦ **Well-Developed Highways**

Currently, the Asian Highway Routes in Thailand are well-developed and connected to neighbouring countries in the sub-region. There are inter-ministerial committees established

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[39] There were 1,697,714 tourists in 2004, 1,781,342 tourists in 2005 and 2,024,071 tourists in 2006 traveling through Thailand by land transport (Tourism Authority of Thailand statistic).

to coordinate with other member countries in developing highway standards and linking the highway to promote tourism.

♦ Thailand-ESCAP Relationships

The strong relationships between the Thai governmental agencies and ESCAP can bring several developments, especially the improvement of tourism-related infrastructure and increases of human resources competencies. Several working groups are established to harmonize their interests and create mutual understanding. Thailand has joined the educational and training programmes arranged by ESCAP (the Network of Asia-Pacific Education and Training Institute (APETIT). This educational cooperation helps to develop competencies of human resources for tourism sectors and elevate the tourism standard. In addition, the cooperation helps to strengthen Thailand's tourism capabilities by sharing information and experiences and exchanging expertise with other ESCAP member countries.

♦ Tourism Statistic and Indicators

Economic and environmental studies, statistics and indicators are widely provided by the Office of Tourism Development and the Tourism Authority of Thailand. The information helps with the identification of issues that need to be prioritized in planning tourism development. In addition, they help to develop tourism strategies, policies and plans to promote sustainable tourism along the Asian Highway Network.

♦ Community and Voluntary Sectors' Participation

The government is trying to enhance the participation of stakeholders. This participation is to create mutual understanding between the government and local communities, including the voluntary sectors. Currently, as mentioned in Section 5.1, NGOs and academic institutions are the support unit to help provide the educational and training programmes to local communities.

♦ Geographical Location

Thailand is located in the centre of sub-region (Southeast Asia) which enables it to be a hub of tourism. Fortunately, Thailand has rich tourism resources both in terms of products and services. Therefore, it will be easy to promote increases in the number of tourist attractions along the highway. Tourism infrastructure such as airports, roads/railways, and sea ports are provided to promote tourism activities.

♦ Tourist Facilitation Activities

In terms of implementation, there are several tourism-related activities have been done by the government. For example, the government has provided a number of cross-border check points and visa exemptions for ASEAN member countries. The Ministry of Transport, Department of Highway provides the highway police in order to monitor and facilitate road users. Additionally, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports is responsible for providing the tourist police so as to increase tourists' satisfaction.

5.3.2 Barriers

♦ Economic and Political Uncertainty

In general, the uncertainty of the economic and political circumstances in Thailand could possibly affect several dimensions related to sustainable tourism development. The bureaucratic structure and administration have undergone some struggles. This also affects the credibility of Thailand in the eyes of tourists who wish to visit the country.

♦ Accessibility Requirement

According to Section 4.6.1 (Department of Highway), even though the existing highways are well-developed and being utilized to promote tourism, many highway routes need to be upgraded and sub-highways need to be built in order to provide convenient accessibility. This issue is related to financial resources and budget allocation that are required for improving and rehabilitating highways.

♦ Tourist Facilitation Requirements

There are several tourism facilities that need to be improved both in number and quality, such as tourist information centres, rest areas, accommodations, restaurants and gas stations. In addition, the signage, signposts and symbols along the Asian Highway are inadequate to facilitate domestic and foreign tourists. The Asian Highway Network route map displaying tourism attractions is not widely published. This has led to a low awareness of the Asian Highway routes. In addition, the low awareness has indirect effects on low investment incentives.

♦ Lack of Coordination and Financial Support

The gaps between the governmental agencies themselves could possibly affect the development of tourism along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand. Furthermore, the government and private sector relations are increasingly strained due to conflicts of interest and policy that is separately implemented at local level. This also affects the creation of Public Private Partnerships (PPP). In terms of financial support, the budget allocation does not correspond with the policy which can result in insufficient implementation.

♦ Low Awareness of Social impacts

As mentioned in Section 5.2, the economic benefits are not equally distributed to host communities due to the significant presence of transnational tourism companies in Thailand. In addition, the social impacts of tourism have received comparatively low recognition and there is a lack of a constant monitoring and evaluation system for socio-cultural performance.

♦ Inadequate Bottom-Up Approaches

The top-down formulation approaches are well structured but there are gaps in policy implementation due to weaknesses in the bottom-up approaches. Policy and its implementation require the participation of all relevant stakeholders in order to create mutual understanding and to assist tourism to develop in a sustainable way.

The drivers and barriers presented here do not represent an exhaustive list of all stakeholders' perspectives. However, it is hoped that this analysis can be used for gaining a better understanding of policy and implementation at the national level.

6 Concluding Remarks

This thesis has indicated that the existence of tourism policy, its implementation and the engagement of stakeholders in the process are the pivotal factors influencing the success of sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network. Reviewing and analyzing the relevant stakeholders and tourism-related policies and their implementation has shed some light onto the potential for sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand. These elements have the potential to greatly influence the success rate of sustainable tourism development in Thailand.

The research has revealed that there is great potential for Thailand to promote sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network due to several reinforcing factors including: well-developed highways, existence of tourism attractions, and strong legislative framework. These factors are imperative components of tourism development. When considering the ESCAP plan of action for sustainable tourism development, or PASTA, the research indicates that the Thai government has integrated the plan of action into the national policy. However, in practice, the implementation of this plan appears to be weak in some areas and several barriers related to sustainable tourism development have been observed, as presented above. With this in mind, however, it also appears that there are a number of drivers which exist that can enhance the possibility of sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network in Thailand.

In order to help strengthen the development of sustainable tourism along the Asian Highway Network, several recommendations are put forward in Section 6.1.

6.1 Recommendations

Not only the government, but also all relevant stakeholders are required to participate in order to achieve sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network. Some of the concrete measures that can be taken are summarized below.

- Pursue Public-Private Partnership (PPP)

Public Private Partnership in this case is a tool that focuses on access to financial resources, implementation of policies to reinforce the maintenance of natural and cultural assets, as well as knowledge management through education, training and information provision. The private sector, local communities and the government have roles in building linkages, creating partnerships and encouraging local participation. The government needs to create a more supportive policy and planning framework enabling participation by all stakeholders. The government and private sectors can increase participation in decision making by ensuring that local people are consulted and have a say in tourism decision-making.

- Increase research and study related to sustainable tourism development

Strategic plans, tourism development and management need research and study. Research is an important tool to bring about a better understanding of the nature of tourism which could possibly leads to the development of improved sustainable tourism approaches in the future. The research and study related to tourism that should be conducted in this case is community-based research. As mentioned, the social impacts of tourism activities in Thailand have been given less attention than the environmental and economic aspects.

Therefore, more research and study focusing on cultural and traditional tourism and encouragement of public consultation/participation is required.

- Promote the use of more sustainable transport

Travel and tourism constantly come with the adverse environmental impacts related to transportation. Regarding this, tourism promotion along the Asian Highway Network requires the stakeholders to develop environmentally friendly transport such as public buses and coaches travelling along the Asian Highway Network. This includes the provision of a combination of tour packages – for example bicycle-tours, trekking-tours and elephant-riding.

- Create responsible traveller's guidance

Tourists need to be informed of the impacts of tourism activities in order to make prudent travel and tourism decisions. The government, private sectors and voluntary sectors could help by increasing tourists' awareness through traveller's guidance.

6.2 Direction for Further Research

From this research, the Asian Highway Network is a complex system which includes both tourism-related and transport infrastructure aspects that can affect the development of sustainable tourism along the Highway. More study is required to understand sustainable tourism development along the Asian Highway Network. This could be conducted by using a specific area study, which divides tourism into regions/provinces and types of tourism. In addition, a cluster study could be conducted so as to gain deeper insight and additional data (e.g. regarding the types of tourists travelling along the highway, including their age, intention, and travel period) that can be used for decision-making, selection of appropriate instruments and further development of the Highway. A cluster study involves the study of a particular tourism cluster in order to increase the competitive advantage of the cluster. A cluster is comprised of a variety of tourism-related activities and enterprises that interact with one another in a given area.

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Abbreviations

ACTPPR	Asian Centre for tourism planning and poverty reduction
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AICST	APEC International Centre for Sustainable Tourism
ALTID	Asian Land Transport Infrastructure Development
APDC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre
APETIT	Network of Asia-Pacific Education and Training Institutions in Tourism
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BOT	Bank of Thailand
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
DOH	Department of Highway, Ministry of Transportation
ECS	Economic Cooperation Strategy
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
EWEC	East-West Economic Corridor
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographic Information System
ICT	Information Communication Technology
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MOT	Ministry of Transport
MOTS	Ministry of Tourism and Sports
NGOs	Non-governmental organization
OTD	Office of Tourism Development
PASTA Pacific	Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Asian and
TEATA	Thai Ecotourism Adventure Travel Association

TAT   Tourism Authority of Thailand

UNEP   United Nations Environmental Programme

UNCTAD   United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNCED   United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

UNWTO   United Nations World Tourism Organization

WTTC   World Travel and Tourism Council

WCED   World Commission on Environment and Development

Appendix 1: List of Personal Contacts

The personal contacts (interviews and email correspondence) are illustrated below:

Interviews

Governmental Sector

(GOV-1) Imphong, C. Officer, Thailand Immigration Bureau. [Interviewed: September 3, 2007]

(GOV-2) Jitprasithsiri, S. (Dr.) Director, International Highways Development Group, Bureau of International Cooperation, Department of Highways. [Interviewed: July 20, 2007].

(GOV-3) Mankhong, P. Environmentalist (NGOs and Community Representatives Registration Coordination), Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. [Interviewed: September 4, 2007].

(GOV-4) Phakdeewanit, J. Tourism Development Officer, Office of Tourism Development, Development, Ministry of Tourism and Sports. [Interviewed: August [Interviewed: August 30, 2007].

(GOV-5) Public Relation Department, Thai Resources and Environmental Management Institute. [Interviewed: September 5, 2007].

(GOV-6) Public Relation Department, Office of Permanent Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. [Interviewed: September 3, 2007].

(GOV-7) Rattanakri, N. Public Relation Officer (Technical Support), Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. [Interviewed: September 5, 2007].

(GOV-8) Sornsit, W. Environmentalist (Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Volunteer Coordination), Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. [Interviewed: September 5, 2007].

(GOV-9) Tantasuparuk, P. Chief, International Cooperation Section, Office of Tourism Department, Development, Ministry of Tourism and Sports. [Interviewed: August 28, 2007].

(GOV-10) Thornsirikul, M. Environmentalist Level 8 (Academic Position), State of Environment, Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. [Interviewed: September 3, 2007].

(GOV-11) Thabungkan, W. Environmentalist Level 7 (Academic Position), Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. [Interviewed: September 5, 2007].

(GOV-12) Wijitrakka, A. Officer, Attraction Promotion Division, Tourism Authority of Thailand. [Interviewed: July 25, 2007].

(GOV-13) Yuthabundol, P. Senior Adviser, Daoreuk Communications Co.,Ltd. (Highway Consulting Company). [Interviewed: August 24, 2007].

Community

(COM-1) Bhuppamas, P. President, Thailand Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Volunteer (NEV). [Interviewed: September 5, 2007].

Voluntary sector

(NGO-2) Kraengthongkun, S. Coordinator (Leader), Pure Earth Foundation. [Interviewed: September 6, 2007].

(NGO-3) Visitchotiounggoon, J. Research Coordinator (Community-based Research), The Thailand Research Fund. [Interviewed: July 24, 2007]

Tourism sectors

(TOUR-1) Jirawongnirundorn, A. Travel Counselor, American Express Travel Co.,ltd. [Interviewed: September 1, 2007].

(TOUR-2) Pukahuta, K. Managing director, Travel for today (T42DAY) Ltd., and Partnerships (2004) [Interviewed: June 31, 2007].

(TOUR-3) Siriboonyasuk, P.R. Association of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA) Committee Member and Assistant General Manager, CBS Successive Tour Co., Ltd. [Interviewed: August 26, 2007].

(TOUR-4) Wenlen, W. Operation Supervisor, Cristal Travel Co., Ltd. [Interviewed: September 6, 2007].

(TOUR-5) Wongchindawet, S. Freelance (Guide tour). [Interviewed: September 1, 2007].

Email Correspondence

ESCAP

(ESCAP-1) Yamakawa, R. Chief of Tourism Unit, Communications, Tourism and Infrastructure Development Division, The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

Governmental Sector

(GOV-14) Awakul, P. Civil Engineer Level 7, Bureau of Planning, Department of Highways, Ministry of Transport.

(GOV-15) Damrongvadha, P. Tourism Authority of Thailand Staff Member.

(GOV-16) Sattayhatewa, P. Civil Engineer Level 7, Bureau of Location and Design, Department of Highway, Ministry of Transport.

(GOV-17) Udomsilp, A. Director of General Affairs Division, Tourism Development, Ministry of Tourism and Sports.

Media

(MEDIA-1) Keawtipayanate, B. Senior Programme Producer, Radio Thailand World Service.

(MEDIA-2) Thapanachai, S. Journalist, The Bangkok Post Newspaper, Post Publishing Plc.

Appendix 2: Issues Addressed in Agenda 21

Agenda 21 has proposed several dimensions that help development in a sustainable way

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS	STRENGTHENING THE ROLES OF MAJOR GROUPS
- International co-operation - Combating poverty - Changing consumption patterns - Demographic dynamics and sustainability - Protecting and Promoting human health - Promoting sustainable human Settlement development - Integrating environment and Development in decision-making	- Women - Children and youth - Indigenous people and their Communities - Non-governmental organization (NGOs) - Local authorities - Workers and trade Unions - Business and industry - The scientific and technological communities - Farmers
CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES	MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION
- Atmosphere - Land resources - Deforestation - Desertification and drought - Mountain Development - Agriculture and rural Development - Biological diversity - Biotechnology - Oceans, seas and costal areas - Freshwater resources - Toxic chemicals - Hazardous wastes - Solid wastes - Radioactive wastes	- Financial resources and mechanisms - Transfer of environmentally sound technology, co-operation and capacity-building - Science for sustainable development - Promoting education, public awareness and training - National mechanisms and international co-operation for capacity-building - International institutional arrangements - International legal instruments and mechanisms - Information for decision-making

Source: The Sustainable Development Agenda 2000, p.55 (UNCSD, 2000)

Appendix 3: The Scope of the Concept of Environment

The Natural Environment:
- Mountain areas
- Seas
- Rivers and lakes
- Caves
- Beaches
- Natural woodland

The Farmed Environment:
- Agricultural landscape
- Man-made forests
- Fish farms

THE ENVIRONMENT

The Built Environment:
- Individual buildings and structures
- Villages and townscapes
- Transport infrastructure, e.g. roads and airports
- Dams and resevoirs

Wildlife:
- Land-based mammals and reptiles
- Flora
- Birds
- Insects
- Fish and marine mammals

Natural Resources:
- Water
- Climate
- Air

Source: (Swarbrooke, 1999), p.50

Appendix 4: The Signatory Countries of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network

The list of countries which signed the Intergovernmental Agreement and which are required to cooperate in develop and upgrade the Asian Highway Network is provided below.

No	State*	Signature	Signed on
1	Afghanistan	Simple Ratification on 8 January 2006	26 April 2004
2	Armenia	Simple Ratification on 6 June 2005	26 April 2004
3	Azerbaijan	Simple Ratification on 5 May 2005	28 April 2004
4	Bhutan	Simple Ratification on 18 August 2005	26 April 2004
5	Cambodia	Simple Approval effected on 5 April 2005	26 April 2004
6	China	Definitive	26 April 2004
7	Georgia	Simple Approved on 9 December 2005	26 April 2004
8	India	Simple Ratification on 16 February 2006	27 April 2004 H. E.
9	Indonesia	Simple	26 April 2004
10	Islamic Republic of Iran	Simple	26 April 2004
11	Japan	Definitive	26 April 2004
12	Kazakhstan	Simple	26 April 2004
13	Kyrgyzstan	Simple Ratification on 30 August 2006	26 April 2004
14	Lao PDR	Simple	26 April 2004
15	Malaysia	Simple	24 September 2004, New York

16	Mongolia	Simple Ratification on 25 July 2005	26 April 2004
17	Myanmar	Simple, reservation Article 11 Ratification on 15 September 2004	26 April 2004
18	Nepal	Simple	26 April 2004
19	Pakistan	Simple Ratification on 19 October 2005	26 April 2004
20	Philippines	Simple	2 November 2005
21	Republic of Korea	Simple Ratification on 13 August 2004	26 April 2004
22	Russian Federation	*Definitive***	27 April 2004
23	Sri Lanka	Simple Ratification on 24 September 2004	26 April 2004
24	Tajikistan	Simple Acceptance on 10 April 2006	26 April 2004
25	Thailand	Simple Ratification on 13 March 2006	26 April 2004
26	Turkey	Simple	26 April 2004
27	Uzbekistan	Definitive	26 April 2004
28	Viet Nam	Simple Approval on 3 August 2004	26 April 2004

* There are 32 countries which are part of the ESCAP, but 28 member countries ratified the Agreement which 20 countries are Parties. The 4 countries which did not sign the agreement are Bangladesh, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Singapore and Turkmenistan

** The confirmation of the above action by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation was received on 16 November 2005.

Source: (ESCAP, 2007d)

Appendix 5: Excerpts of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network

Article 1 Adoption of the Asian Highway network

The Contracting Parties, hereinafter referred to as the Parties, adopt the proposed highway network hereinafter referred to as the "Asian Highway network" and described in annex I to this Agreement, as a coordinated plan for the development of highway routes of international importance which they intend to undertake within the framework of their national programmes.

Article 3 Development of the Asian Highway network

The routes of the Asian Highway network should be brought into conformity with the classification and design standards described in annex II to this Agreement.

Article 4 Signage of the Asian Highway network

1. The Asian Highway network routes should be indicated by means of the route sign described in annex III to this Agreement.

2. Route signs conforming to that described in annex III to this Agreement should be placed on all routes of the Asian Highway network within five (5) years from the date of entry into force of this Agreement for the State concerned, in accordance with article 6.

Appendix 6: Asian Highway Classification

The classification is a measurement of highway standard

Classification	Description	Pavement type
Primary	Access-controlled highways	Asphalt or cement concrete
Class I	4 or more lanes	Asphalt or cement concrete
Class II	2 lanes	Asphalt or cement concrete
Class III	2 lanes	Double bituminous treatment

"Primary" class in the classification refers to access-controlled highways. Access-controlled highways are used exclusively by automobiles. Access to the access-controlled highways is at grade -separated interchanges
only. Mopeds, bicycles and pedestrians should not be allowed to enter the access-controlled highway in order to ensure traffic safety and the high running speed of automobiles. At - grade intersections should not be designed on the access-controlled highways and the carriageway should be divided by a
median strip.

"Class III" should be used only when the funding for the construction and/or land for the road is limited. The type of pavement should be upgraded to asphalt concrete or cement concrete as soon as possible in the future. Since Class III is also regarded as the minimum desirable standard, the upgrading of any road sections below Class III to comply with the Class III standard should be encouraged.

Source: Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway network.

Appendix 7: Major Tourism Attractions in 32 Countries along the Asian Highway

Major tourism attractions along the Asian Highway proposed by ESCAP member countries will provide the background of tourism promotion.

No.	Name of Country (number of promoted destinations)	Destinations (Name of Asian Highway Route)
1	Afghanistan (2)	Kabul Museum Kabul (AH1/AH7) Herat (AH1/AH76/AH77)
2	Armenia (2)	Lake Sevan (AH83) Gumri (AH82)
3	Azerbaijan (2)	Baku (AH5) Ganja (AH5)
4	Bangladesh (4)	Dhaka (AH1) Chittagong (AH41) Sylhet (AH1) Cox's Bazar (AH41)
5	Bhutan (2)	Thimphu Phuentsholing (AH48)
6	Cambodia (2)	Phnom Penh (AH1/AH11) The Temples of Angkor
7	China (4)	The Great Wall, Beijing (AH1/AH3) Stone Forest, Kunming (AH14) The Yufo (Jade Budha) Temple, Shanghai (AH3) Xi'an (AH5)
8	Democratic People's Republic of Korea (2)	Pyongyang (AH1/AH6) Pohyon Temple
9	Georgia (2)	The Sioni Cathedral church, Tbilisi (AH5/AH81) Poti (AH5)
10	India (4)	Qutb Minar, New Delhi (AH1/AH2) The Taj Mahal, Agra (AH1) Ajanta Caves The Meenakshi Temple, Madurai (AH43)
11	Indonesia (3)	Jakarta (AH2) Borobudur Temple Mount Bromo
12	Islamic Republic of Iran (4)	Azadi cultural complex, Tehran (AH1/AH2)

		Persepolis, south of Tehran (AH1/AH2)
		Esfahan (off AH2)
		Mashhad (AH1/AH75)
13	Japan (4)	Mount Fuji (AH1)
		Imperial Palace, Tokyo
		Kiyomizu-dera, Kyoto
		Dazaifu, Fukuoka (AH1)
14	Kazakhstan (4)	Ishim River, Astana, (AH7/AH64)
		Almaty (AH5/AH60)
		Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi, Turkestan, (AH61)
		Köl-Say Lakes (AH5)
15	Kyrgyzstan (2)	Bishkek (AH5)
		Lake Issyk-Kul (AH61)
16	Lao People's Democratic Republic (2)	Vientiane (AH11/AH12)
		Louang Phrabang (AH12)
17	Malaysia (4)	Kuala Lumpur (AH2)
		Johor Bahru (AH18)
		Kenyir Lake, Kuala Terengganu (AH18)
		Penang (AH2)
18	Mongolia (4)	Ulaanbaatar (AH3/AH32)
		Amarbayasgalant Monastery
		The Gobi Desert
		Kharakhorum
19	Myanmar (4)	Yangon (AH1)
		Mandalay (AH1/AH14) Bago (AH1) Inle Lake, near Taunggyi (AH2)
20	Nepal (4)	Pashupatinath, Kathmandu Valley (AH 42)
		Patan (AH42)
		Royal Chitwan National Park (AH2)
		Lumbini (AH2)
21	Pakistan (4)	Islamabad (AH1) Takht-E-Bhai, Peshawar (AH1)
		Badshahi Mosque, Lahore (AH1)
		Karachi (AH4/AH7)
22	Philippines (2)	Manila (AH26)
		Davao (AH26)
23	Republic of Korea (3)	Seoul (AH1)
		Kyongju City (AH1/AH6)

		Pusan (AH1/AH6)
24	Russian Federation (4)	Moscow (AH6/AH8)
		St. Petersburg (AH8)
		Vladivostok (AH6)
		Irkutsk (AH6)
25	Singapore (2)	Sentosa (AH2)
		The Esplanade (AH2)
26	Sri Lanka (3)	Colombo (AH43)
		Sacred City of Kandy (AH43)
		Sigiriya
27	Tajikistan (3)	Dushanbe (AH7/AH65)
		The Pamirs
		Khojand
28	Thailand (4)	Grand Palace, Bangkok (AH1/AH2)
		Historic Town of Sukhothai (AH2)
		Golden Triangle, Chiang Rai (AH2/AH3)
		Bang Pa-in Palace (AH1/AH2)
29	Turkey (4)	Istanbul (AH1)
		Ankara (AH1/AH87) Izmir (AH87)
		Icel (AH84)
30	Turkmenistan (3)	Ashgabat (AH5) Parthian, Capital of Nisa (AH5)
		Merv Archaeological Site (AH5)
31	Uzbekistan (3)	Tashkent (AH5)
		Samarkand (AH5)
		Bukhara (AH63)
32	Vietnam (4)	Ha Noi (AH1/AH14)
		Ho Chi Minh City (AH1)
		Vung Tau (AH1)
		Hue (AH1)

Source: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) (2004) Available online:
http://www.ESCAP.org/ttdw/common/tis/ah/tourism%20attractions.asp

Appendix 8: The Asian Highway Network Routes in Thailand

The identification of the Asian Highway routes in Thailand. There are 9 routes, some routes are domestic highways and some routes are international highways linking to neighbouring countries.

Route No.	Itinerary
AH1	Aranyaprathet - Kabin Buri – Hinkong – Bang Pa-in (-Bangkok) – Nakhon Sawan – Tak – Mae Sot (700 km)
AH2	Sa Dao – Hat Yai – Bangkok – Bang Pa-in – Nakhon Sawan – Tak – Chiang Rai – Mae Sai – Tachileck (1,549 km)
AH3	Chiang Khong – Chiang Rai (117 km)
AH12	Nong Khai – Udon Thani – Khon Kaen – Nakhon Ratchasima – Hin Kong (511 km)
AH13	Huai Kon – Nan – Uttaradit – Phitsanulok – Nakhon Sawan (557 km)
AH15	Nakhon Phanom – Udon Thani (243 km)
AH16	Mukdaharn – Khon Kaen – Pitsanulok – Tak (770 km)
AH18	Hat Yai – Sungai Kolok (268 km)
AH19	Nakhon Ratchasima – Kabin Buri – Laem Chabang –Chonburi – Bangkok (458 km)
Total	5,113 km.

Appendix 9: The Asian Highway Fundamental Data for Thailand

The fundamental data related to the Asian Highway Network Status in Thailand. It includes transport facilities.

AH Route No.	Traffic Volume by Vehicle Type							Traffic Accident Data		Number of Rest Areas	Number of Refueling Points
	Passenger Car	Pick-up	Bus	Truck	Trailer	Motorcycle	Non-Motorized	No. of Accident	No. of Fatalities		
AH1	221,355	90,068	64,401	40,420	40,806	27,435	1,301	628	82	154	118
AH2	497,282	217,844	141,727	91,781	101,852	89,613	2,378	1,141	115	467	437
AH3	4,631	8,856	654	1,233	809	6,988	151	1	0	0	8
AH12	140,640	112,717	42,929	38,645	45,923	49,222	461	254	43	133	115
AH13	19,812	23,514	4,040	4,038	4,648	7,708	235	231	72	0	0
AH15	4,568	9,955	1,470	1,512	826	7,729	366	27	14	108	23
AH16	68,636	54,466	19,519	12,853	6,507	48,914	854	75	5	114	126
AH18	32,934	11,337	5,357	4,524	6,029	18,146	279	128	15	149	38
AH19	89,158	46,425	12,550	21,531	22,113	10,048	278	108	19	95	20
Total	1,079,034	575,182	292,647	216,537	229,513	265,803	6,303	2,593	365	1,220	885