

Promoting rural entrepreneurship for sustainable
tourism development: The case of Battambang,
Cambodia

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship in rural tourism has become an area of focus as it is a means to achieve sustainable rural development. The purpose of this study is to explore how tourism entrepreneurship could be encouraged in a rural community with suppliers, namely farmers and existing entrepreneurs. Taking a qualitative study approach, this study aims to gain insights of the current tourism entrepreneurship climate of one of Cambodia's remote areas in Battambang, and to identify viable development strategies for rural tourism businesses. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 key informants from the local residents, governments and non-governmental organizations. The findings revealed the challenges perceived by the participating stakeholders. The underlying cause of low entrepreneurship initiatives is due to missed opportunities created by the lack of communication, the accessibility to the physical infrastructure, and partnership with the private sector. The study concluded with suggestions for future research and noted that promoting partnership and collaboration both within and beyond the Ek Phnom area would boost the entrepreneurship climate necessary for sustainable rural development.

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List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CDC	Council for the Development of Cambodia
DoT	Provincial Department of Tourism
GDP	Gross domestic product
ICT	Information and communication technology
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LED	Local Economic Development
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoT	Ministry of Tourism
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NCDD	National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development
OVOP	One Village One Product
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
PIC	Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
UNESCO	United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
USD	United States Dollar
WB	World Bank
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor materials that to a substantial extent have been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Leakhena Tep

Research Ethics Approval

The approval from the AUT Ethic Committee (AUTEc) to interview human participants was received on 23 March 2018. Application number 18/95.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The change of tourist attitude and the pursuit for the authenticity of travel experience has resulted in an increase of demand in rural experience, which does not seem to be saturated yet (Pinkel, 2007). The rural tourism market shares a significant proportion of overall tourism demands. The decline of agricultural outcome and this emerging trend have made rural tourism a new potential approach to sustain rural development, which is embraced by many countries across the globe (Hummelbrunner & Miglbauer, 1994; Perales, 2002).

In Cambodia, agriculture, which includes farming, fishing, and forestry, is still one of the central economic pillars of the country. The industry shares 32.8% of total GDP and absorbs up to 44% of the total workforce or 53% of the rural workforce (World Bank, 2017). Battambang is one of biggest agricultural provinces in the country and 71% of its population are farmers. In 2015, this province produced a total of 713,747 tonnes of paddy rice, accounting for about 11% of the total country paddy rice production (Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia, 2016). However, the high dependency on agriculture, along with climate change and the despoiled natural environment has always posed a critical threat to the province economic development. According to National Strategic Development Plan 2014–2018, despite being one of the most crucial paddy-growing provinces and having a long tradition in farming, the Battambang poverty rate remains relatively high; 20.1% in 2011 (RGC, 2014). The diversification of the rural economy is, therefore, necessary for sustainable rural development.

Cambodia has recognised and embraced tourism as one of the priority sectors for poverty alleviation and sustainable development (ADB, 2014; MoT, 2012). The tourism-related industries are essential to the Cambodian economy (CDC, 2017) as they contribute significantly, through job creation, to the recovery of Cambodia's economy after three decades of civil war. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) (2018), Cambodia generated a direct income of 3,134.5 million US dollars and directly supported 13.6% of the total employment in 2017. This contributed 14.1% to Cambodia's GDP, which was an increase from 13.5% in 2016. The contribution of travel and tourism to GDP has steadily increased and is forecasted to grow by 5.9 % per annum and reach 12.1% by 2028 (WTTC, 2018).

Despite the noticeable development, this economic engine remains generally urban-focused (predominately concentrated in urban areas) with weak urban-rural economic links (ADB, 2012). For instance, out of the seven main tourism zones of the country, Siem Reap and Phnom Penh have always been the densest touristic destinations, absorbing a combination of 87.3% of total tourist arrivals, followed by the coastal zone capturing about 15 per cent (UNWTO, 2017). According to Neth (2011), the constant pattern of tourist arrivals in Siem Reap province has made destination management challenging, particularly its carrying capacity. Therefore, for sustainable tourism development, the Tourism Strategic Development Plan 2012–2020 also emphasises the need for tourism product diversification in the other tourism zones to support this Angkor zone (Ministry of Tourism, 2012). The over-concentration of tourism in the urban area and the increase in foreign-owned tourism enterprises has made the potential contribution of tourism in poverty alleviation questionable.

The need for diversification of the rural economy and tourism destination calls for consideration of rural tourism development. Battambang Province has presented its outstanding position, receiving attention from the government of Cambodia, which is well reflected in the Tourism Development Strategic Plan 2012–2020 (Ministry of Tourism, 2012). Currently, the tourism sector has gained momentum in this province due to a wide range of tourism products and potentials for rural tourism, including nature, history, livelihood, arts and crafts, lifestyle and religion (Carter et al., 2016). In 2017, Battambang was reported as receiving 98,304 international tourist arrivals and generated 10,813,440 US dollars (Department of Tourism in Battambang, 2018), and has received both national and international awards in tourism competitions. Moreover, the province has long been recognised as an important economic hub in the northwest of Cambodia due to its strategic location and supporting infrastructure, which offer opportunities for various economic activities (JICA, 2013; Ministry of Tourism, 2012). This appears to provide a favourable environment for further tourism development in addition to its strong performance in agriculture production (National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development, 2009).

Agriculture and its associated agro-industry form the bulk of the rural economy and the largest number of small and medium-sized rural enterprises (SMEs) in the country, accounting for 59% of all employment in 2008 (ADB, 2012). Key strategies for sustainable tourism development are agri-tourism and pro-poor tourism, where the linkage of tourism and Local Economic Development (LED) is strengthened, and SMEs is mainstreamed with well-structured law enforcement, and national strategies and policies (Centre for Sustainable Development Studies Studies, 2017).

Although Battambang has long been exposed to tourism, the government attention on its tourism development is still at an early stage compared to other main destinations. Tourism entrepreneurship could, therefore, be a huge transition for the rural population. Hence, to effectively and sustainably diversify economic activities and create links between tourism and agriculture, it is essential to look at the current rural SME and its ecosystem to ensure the readiness of the community for tourism development. Organizations seeking to make social contribution have played a key role in creating links of tourism for the rural economy through community-based tourism (CBT). However, this study argues it is essential to look at the entrepreneurial propensity and skills of rural individuals so that rural tourism entrepreneurship can be promoted to build a robust entrepreneurial community.

This research focuses on Ek Phnom District, which is one of the main tourist destinations in Battambang Province. Although the district is located not very far from the city centre, local entrepreneurial involvement in tourism appears to be relatively low. As part of a strategic move to sustainable rural development, this study proposes that the exploration of rural entrepreneurship at this initial stage is crucial for rural tourism development.

1.2 Research aim and objectives

The general research question for the thesis is: “What is the current environment of rural tourism entrepreneurship in Cambodia?” This research question covers a few underlying objectives:

1. to explore the entrepreneurial interest of rural residents in tourism
2. to assess their knowledge and skills associated with tourism entrepreneurship

3. to identify alternative strategies to encourage and enhance entrepreneurial initiatives in the rural tourism sector.

1.3 Conceptual rational and research gap

Despite its importance, the literature review shows the limited scholarship on the propensity of rural tourism entrepreneurship, especially in the context of developing countries. Previous studies draw focus on the challenges of rural tourism entrepreneurs (Lai, Morrison-Saunders, & Grimstad, 2017), their characteristics (Banki & Ismail, 2015; Koutsou, Notta, Samathrakakis, & Partalidou, 2009), and typology and motivation (Koh & Hatten, 2002). However, research on rural entrepreneurship propensity is limited to the work by university students or the agricultural sector, and most of them were carried out using quantitative research approaches (Chaudhary, 2017; Koh, 2014; Omid Najafabadi, Zamani, & Mirdamadi, 2016). Qualitative studies in rural tourism entrepreneurship are relatively low and are only undertaken in the developed countries (Kline, Swanson, & Milburn, 2011; Lai et al., 2017; Lordkipanidze, Brezet, & Backman, 2005; McGehee & Kim, 2004).

Furthermore, rural tourism and its entrepreneurial climate are broad concepts, involving internal and external factors. The current study pulls together different components and concepts of rural tourism development and explores entrepreneurial perspectives from both tourism and non-tourism entrepreneurs in the developing country context of rural Battambang.

1.4 Research methodology

The study adopts an interpretivist research paradigm and will, therefore, employ a qualitative research methodology. This approach allows the free flow of data to

examine which components of rural tourism entrepreneurship development are apparent in the context of the study area.

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with rural tourism development stakeholders. In total, thirteen participants, including tourism entrepreneurs, non-tourism households, and representatives from government and local non-governmental organisations, were interviewed. Snowball and purposive techniques were used in the selection of participants. Participants were approached by phone call, email or official governmental invitation. Each interview took approximately 60 minutes.

Secondary data were obtained from both academic and technical reports in order to perform a document analysis. Existing documents from local tourism organisations, government reports in the research site, annual tourism statistics and tourism planning policies were used and evaluated. All collected data were analysed using thematic analysis method.

1.5 Thesis structure

This thesis outlines six chapters. The first chapter is an introductory to the research topic, describing research aim and objectives, the problem statement, and a summary of the research methodology.

Chapter two is the literature review. It presents various previous research studies concerning rural tourism and entrepreneurship development.

Chapter three provides context details about the Cambodian tourism industry, tourism and local small and medium enterprise development in Battambang and, more specifically, in the case of Ek Phnom District.

Chapter four presents the research design used for the study. It discusses theoretical perspectives of research methodology, data collection methods, and data analysis tools that were used to reach research aim and objectives.

Chapter five details the key findings of the research from semi-structured interviews and document analysis. It analyses key policies and tourism plans and discusses the findings in comparison with previous studies presented in Chapter 2.

Finally, Chapter six provides a conclusion of the research with key findings, implications and potential significance, together with research limitations and recommendations for further study.

Chapter 2 Background to the study

2.1 Introduction to Cambodian Economy

Over the last 20 years, the GDP of Cambodia has enjoyed substantial growth from 3.13 in 1993 to 22.09 billion US dollars in 2017, where the GDP per capita was 1,379 US dollars. The maximum growth rate experienced was 19.84%, which happened in 2008, and then decreased to 10.20% in 2017, with an average growth rate of 7.0 per cent annually. Cambodia's GDP is composed of three sectors: services accounted for 41.9%, while industry and agriculture represent 32.8% and 25.3% respectively. The service sector covers government activities, communications, transportation, finance, and all other private economic activities that do not produce material goods. Industry includes mining, manufacturing, energy production, and construction. Agriculture includes farming, fishing, and forestry.

According to World Bank (2017), the recent growth was driven by the service industry, industrial construction, and clothes industry, and the trend is forecasted to continue for 2019. A slightly higher rate of 10.8% this year is expected for industry, followed by an expansion of 6.7% in the service sector, 1.8% for agriculture, and moderate growth in construction. Poverty reduction is also expected to continue over the next few years. This is underpinned by the continued expansion of the services and manufacturing sectors, together with increases in remittances.

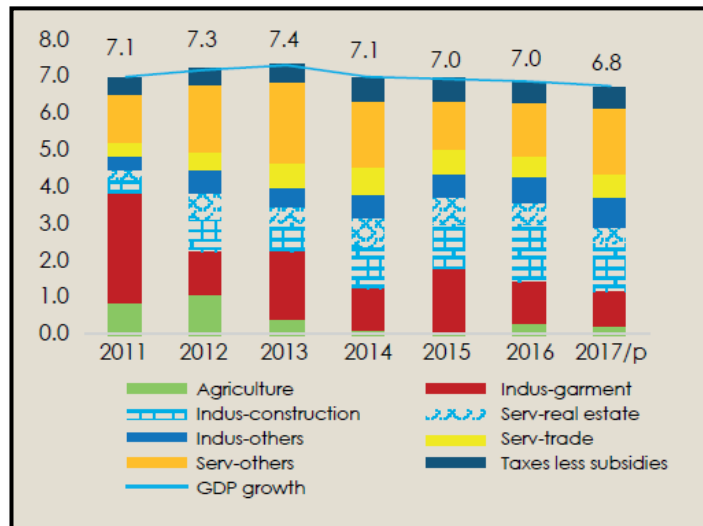


Figure 2.1: Contribution by sectors to Cambodia's GDP growth 2011–2017

Source: World Bank (2017)

2.2 Tourism in Cambodia



Figure 2.2: Map of Cambodia

Source: Adapted from Cambodia Association of Travel Agents (2016)

Tourism in Cambodia started in 1993. The industry experienced a remarkable growth annually, with exceptional cases in 1997 and 2003 due to political instability. The growth rate had somehow fluctuated and declined in recent years, showing a sign of stagnancy. However, in 2017, there was a sign of recovery when foreign tourist arrivals increased by 11.8% compared to 2016, reaching 5.6 million (See Figure 2.1). As a result of the government's "China Ready" initiative, China stands on the top of the list, occupying 21.6% of the total, followed by Vietnam and Lao PDR.

Years	Int'l Tourist Arrivals		Average Length of Stays (Days)	Hotel Occupancy (%)	Int'l Tourism Receipts (Million US\$)
	Number	Change (%)			
1993	118,183	-	N/A	N/A	N/A
1994	176,617	49.4	N/A	N/A	N/A
1995	219,680	24.4	8.00	37.0	100
1996	260,489	18.6	7.50	40.0	118
1997	218,843	-16.0	6.40	30.0	103
1998	286,524	30.9	5.20	40.0	166
1999	367,743	28.3	5.50	44.0	190
2000	466,365	26.8	5.50	45.0	228
2001	604,919	29.7	5.50	48.0	304
2002	786,524	30.0	5.80	50.0	379
2003	701,014	-10.9	5.50	50.0	347
2004	1,055,202	50.5	6.30	52.0	578
2005	1,421,615	34.7	6.30	52.0	832
2006	1,700,041	19.6	6.50	54.8	1,049
2007	2,015,128	18.5	6.50	54.8	1,400
2008	2,125,465	5.5	6.65	62.7	1,595
2009	2,161,577	1.7	6.45	63.6	1,561
2010	2,508,289	16.0	6.45	65.7	1,786
2011	2,881,862	14.9	6.50	66.2	1,912
2012	3,584,307	24.4	6.30	68.5	2,210
2013	4,210,165	17.5	6.75	69.5	2,547
2014	4,502,775	7.0	6.50	67.6	2,736
2015	4,775,231	6.1	6.80	70.2	3,012
2016	5,011,712	5.0	6.30	68.9	3,212
2017	5,602,157	11.8	6.60	71.3	3,638

Figure 2.3: International tourist arrival in Cambodia from 1993 to 2017

Source: MoT (2018)

The tourism-related sectors are the essential tertiary industry to the Cambodian economy. It contributes significantly to the recovery of Cambodia's economy after three decades of civil war, through job creation, investment and business opportunities along its value chains. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, in 2017, Cambodia generated a direct income of 3,134.5 million US dollars

and directly supported 13.6% of the total employment. This contributed 14.1% to Cambodia's GDP, increasing from 13.5% in 2016. The contribution of travel and tourism to GDP has risen steadily and is forecasted to grow by 5.9 % per annum and reach 12.1% by 2028.

In terms of connectivity, Cambodia can be reached by air, land and waterways. Fifty-nine per cent of the total of international tourists comes to Cambodia by air through three international airports: Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Kong Keng.

Under the commercial tourism slogan “Kingdom of Wonder”, Cambodia is home to globally significant tourism resources, both cultural and natural. The Tourism Strategic Development Plan 2012–2020 determined that six tourism zones have to be prioritise:

Table 2.1: Tourism Zones in Cambodia

Tourism Zones	Tourism attractions
Siem Reap-Angkor is linked to Preah Vihear temple, Great Lake and its peri-zone	Cultural and historical site.
Phnom Penh and its peri-zone:	Political, cultural and commercial tourism hub.
Southern tourism corridor (coastal zone) and the Cardamom Mountains	Rich in biodiversity, which is essential for ecotourism.
Northeast ecotourism zone	Disclose its uniqueness, including Mekong River dolphins, natural spectacles and the culture and tradition of ethnic populations.
Great Lake peri-zone	Ecotourism potential along with culture and tradition of local people's livelihood, particularly agriculture, fishery and traditional handicrafts.
Mekong River zone	Stretching to Great Lake and Bassac River, blessed with cultural and ecotourism potential, as seen the attractive waterway journey.

Source: MoT (2012, p.10)

Siem Reap and Phnom Penh, centres of Cambodia's cultural and historical heritage, have always been the most visited destinations, absorbing a combination of 87.3% of total tourist arrivals. However, tourism in the coastal zone is also growing, capturing about 15 percent (UNWTO, 2017).

There is a growing recommendation that Cambodia needs to diversify its tourism products to different destinations. The Great Lake peri-zone, which includes five provinces, has been receiving attention from the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC). For instance, Tourism Strategic Development Plan 2012–2020 also emphasises the key features of why this zone is an essential possibility for development:

- Firstly, the province has an existing good infrastructure and geography. It is an important link for Phnom Penh, Ho Chi Minh and Bangkok with existing roads, railways, waterways and airways, and further construction is in progress.
- Secondly, there is a possibility and need to arrange big cruise ships via The Tonle Sap. More tourism communities are needed to generate additional income. And Battambang has great potentials and resources for the community to make use of them
- There is a need in tourism product diversification that supports the Angkor zone, which has already reached its capacity.

2.3 An overview of the economy of Battambang Province

Battambang is one of the Great Lake peri-zones and the third largest province after Phnom Penh and Kandal provinces, and has a population of 1,205,050 people, which accounts for about 8 per cent of Cambodia's 15,477,422 population in 2015

(Commune Database, 2015). The province is situated in the northwest part of Cambodia (Figure 2.2), about 300 km from Phnom Penh via national road No 5. Battambang borders on Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap, and Pursat provinces. The western boundary is framed by the enclave of Pailin Province and the national border with Thailand. At its eastern tip, the province is connected to the Tonle Sap Lake. The province covers an area of about 11,803 km², comprising of 13 districts, one municipality, 96 communes, and 741 villages.

Agriculture is the primary economic sector in Battambang, absorbing 71% of the workforce in 2015. The province is recognised as the rice bowl of the country, ranking number three after Prey Veng and Takeo Province. Last year, this province produced a total of 713,747 tonnes of paddy rice, accounting for about 11% of the total country paddy rice production.

However, despite being one of the most important paddy-growing areas and having a long tradition in farming, according to National Strategic Development Plan 2014–2018, the Battambang poverty rate in 2011 remained relatively high: 20.1%. Furthermore, while the province highly on agriculture; climate change and the degradation of natural environment have put the province's economic development under threat. Therefore, in recent years, Battambang has reactivated its strategic location as an economic and trading centre. In addition to these geographical and demographical features, a well-developed transportation system connecting both international markets, such as Thailand and Vietnam, as well as domestic markets such as Siem Reap and Pailin, has made the province a vital business hub for western Cambodia (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2013). Battambang is ranked sixth on the Provincial Business Environment Scorecard (See Figure 2.4).

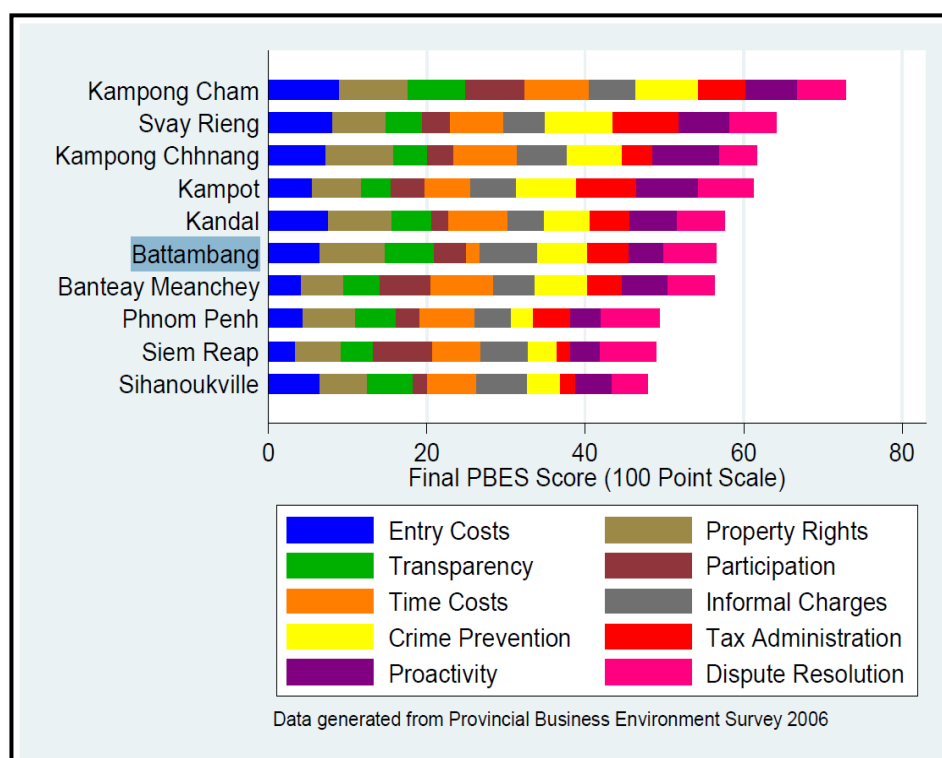


Figure 2.4: The Provincial Business Environment Scorecard (PBES)

Source: Hor and Quyen (2006)

Battambang's strategic location not only makes it an attractive and competitive city for trading and economic activities but also increases tourism through investments in urban infrastructure and capacity (ADB, 2015). Among other sectors, tourism is currently the province's third economic generator and is significantly growing.

Although Battambang's touristic status stands at number four compared to other touristic zones, the province attracts both national and international tourists. In 2017, Battambang received 98,304 international tourist arrivals, which is a growth rate of 1.36% compared with 2016, and has generated 10,813,440 US dollars. Tourist arrival has steadily grown; however, the growth rate has been gradually declining since 2012. (See Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Tourist arrival in Battambang Province 2012–2017

Description	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of national tourists	317,010	392,583	437,345	501,260	513,390	519,835
Growth rate	23.84%	11.40%	14.61%	2.42%	1.26%	
Number of international tourists	72,314	83,403	89,152	94,448	96,460	98,304
Growth rate	15.33%	6.89%	5.94%	2.13%	1.91%	
Total number of tourists	389,324	475,986	526,497	595,708	609,850	618,139
Growth rate	22%	10.61%	13.14%	2.37%	1.36%	

Source: DoT (2017)

The growth of tourist arrivals is mainly due to a variety of tourism assets and potentials, which are spread across this province. In the Strategic Guideline for Heritage Tourism in Battambang, the province tourism asset has been categorised into six themes for better management and marketing. They are nature, history, livelihood, arts and crafts, lifestyle and religion. (See Figure 2.5).

Currently, there are three main districts that are actively involved in tourism: Battambang City, Banan district and Ek Phnom district.

Theme	Sub-theme	Locations	Thematic links
1.0 Nature	1.1 Rivers and lakes	Sangker River, Tonle Sap, Kamping Puoy Lake	1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.0, 5.2, 6.0
	1.2 Plains	Limestone outcrops (Phnom Banan) Central Indochina Dry Forest (Phomn Sampeu) Wetlands and swamp forests (Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary)	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.0,
	1.3 Uplands	Cardamom Mountains rainfores: Phnum Samkoh Wildlife Sanctuary, Roniem Daun Sam Wildlife Sanctuary, Samlaut Multiple Use Area	
2.0 History	2.1 Pre-Angkorian	Laang Spean	
	2.2 Angkorian	Wat Ek Phnom, Phnom Banan, Prasat Bassaet and Prasat Sneung	1.1, 1.2, 2.4, 3.0, 4.0, 6.1
	2.3 French colonial	Heritage precinct – Battambang City	1.1, 1.2, 3.0, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.2
	2.4 Khmer Rouge	Wat Samroung Knong, Som-pov Mountain, Kamping Puoy Lake	1.1, 4.2, 5.2, 6.2,
	2.5 Intermediate periods & recent		
3.0 Livelihoods	3.1 Agriculture	Tonle Sap flood plain, around Sangker River	1.1, 1.2, 2.3, 2.4, 5.1,
	3.2 Fisheries	Tonle Sap, Sangker River	1.1, 5.1, 5.2,
4.0 Arts and crafts	4.1 Traditional	Villages, Heritage precinct – Battambang City	3.0, 5.0, 6.0
	4.2 Contemporary	Heritage precinct – Battambang City	2.0, 3.0, 4.1, 5.0, 6.0
5.0 Lifestyle	5.1 Cuisine – traditional & contemporary	Villages, heritage precinct – Battambang City	2.3, 2.4, 3.0
	5.2 Celebrations – religious & secular	Wats, temples, heritage precinct and riverside – Battambang City	1.0, 2.0, 3.0, 4.1, 5.1, 6.0
6.0 Religion	6.1 Historic	Wats	2.2, 2.3
	6.2 Contemporary	Temples, churches	2.3, 2.4, 6.1,

Figure 2.5: Tourism assets and potentials by theme in Battambang Province

Source: Carter et al. (2016)

Noticeably, Battambang has seen significant growth in accommodation. Report from UNWTO (2017) showed that in 2015, the Battambang zone accounts for 8.9per cent of hotels and 7.9percent of hotel rooms, ranking number four after Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Sihanoukville (See Figure: 2.6).

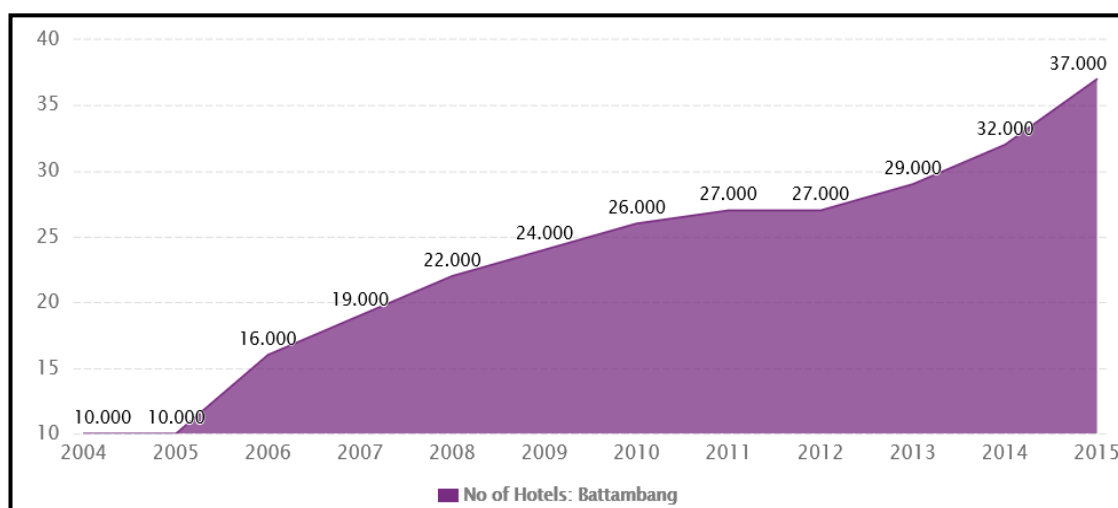


Figure 2.6: Number of hotels in Battambang Province 2004–2015

Source: World Bank (2017)

Battambang City itself has received the most attention due to its role as a business hub and tourism promotion for the whole province. With ongoing efforts, the city received the Certificate of Recognition for Clean Air on the sidelines of the 15th Informal ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Environment (IAMME) in 2014, followed by first prize in the National Awards on Cleanliness for Cities in 2015. In 2017, under the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) plan, the city committed itself to reducing short-lived climate pollutants from waste management. In addition, the Ministry of Tourism has been working on the process of including Battambang City in the list of UNESCO Heritage cities.

2.4 The general profile of Ek Phnom district

2.4.1 Geography

Ek Phnom is in Battambang Province, which is located in the northwest of Cambodia. It is approximately 8 km northeast of the city centre and is bordered by two important touristic destinations: Siem Reap Province and the Tonle Sap Great Lake.

The district, which covers an area of 635 square kilometres, consists of 7 communes, which are divided into two groups: land-based (5 communes) and water-based (2 communes).

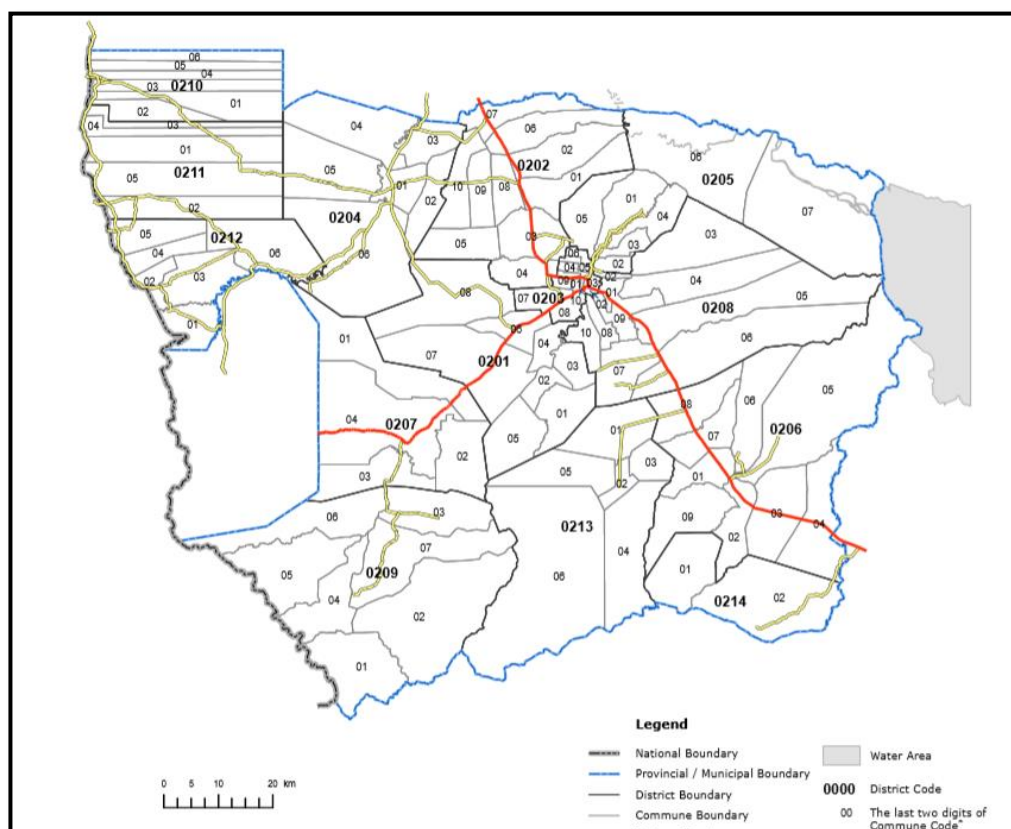


Figure 2.7: Map of Ek Phnom District
Source: National Institute of Statistics (2013)

The total population was 85,407 in 2017, and the average density was 134 people per square kilometre. There were in total 18,843 families. Of these, 16.7% of families were headed by females, and the average family size was 4.6 persons (See Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: Summary of the demography of the Ek Phnom District (2016)

Description	Ek Phnom District	Peam Ek Commune	Samrong Knong Commune	Prek Kporp Commune
Land size (hectare)	63,500	5,752	2,384	2,784
Number of villages	45	8	5	5
Total population (person)	82,602	15,468	13,156	9,879
Women (person)	41,826	7,946	6,770	5,141
Annual growth rate (%)	1.8	2.9	0.3	13.8
Total families	18,205	3,364	3,145	2,580
Female household head (%)	16.3	14.4	18.5	20.3
Average family size	N/A	4.6	4.2	3.8
0-17 years old	N/A	31.2	27.5	32.6
18-60 years old	N/A	54.6	59.3	59.4
61 years old up	N/A	14.2	13.2	8.0

Source: Adapted from Battambang Provincial Department of Planning (2017) and District Investment Plan (2016)

2.4.2 The socio-economy of Ek Phnom district

Although Ek Phnom district is located not far from the city centre, it is considered as a rural area with its economy depending heavily on the agriculture sector. In 2015, a large population of 75% had agriculture as their primary occupation, while only about 25% were in craftwork and the service sector. Agriculture includes rice, short-term and long-term crops, vegetables, livestock farming and fishing. Craftwork includes weaving, rattan, wood furniture, plastic products, metal carving and food packaging. The service sector includes small retailers, traders, repairers, transportation service providers, workers in agriculture and construction, staff in private sectors and NGOs, and public civil servants in government. In addition to low self-employment or business activities, there is a high rate of migration, both inside

and outside of the country. The record does not cover the details of migrants. However, according to local authorities and residents, the majority of the migrants are those in the active labour age group, between 25 and 45 years old.

2.4.3 Tourism development in Ek Phnom district

Table 2.4 presents a tourism community project implemented in Battambang Province. Ek Phnom was one of the three districts participating in this project. Further information regarding tourism in Ek Phnom is presented in Section 5.1.

Table 2.4: Local Economic Development (LED) Project

<p>Local Economic Development (LED) Project</p> <p>With funding from Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development of the Government of Canada (DFATD), and cooperation with two levels of government agencies of Cambodia, national and local, LED was introduced in Battambang Province as a demonstration project, through which communities spearhead new tools to develop their communities' economies. Having identified tourism as a key economic driver, the project was implemented under two fundamental stages:</p> <p>Stage 1 (2011–2012): the supporting Battambang municipality in developing LED strategy, through which an administrative organisation, the LED committee, was established to guide the implementation of the project on the ground, and an association of local tourism operators was created.</p> <p>Stage 2 (2013–2015): cooperating with local governments (LGs), the municipality proposed “Traditional Tourism Paths of Battambang Province” (TTPBP) as a regional tourism strategy. The strategy included the concept of “Tourism corridor” linking three districts, including Ek Phnom, to offer coherent</p>
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tourism activities with the emphasis on cultural heritage, agri-tourism, handicrafts and cultural events.

Objectives

The main objective of the project is to enhance tourism contribution in the local economy. This included creating tourism jobs and employment opportunities for communities, enhancing capacities in tourism policies development, and increasing capacities in tourism human resources development and infrastructure maintenance.

Partners and stakeholders

The project included two groups of partners and stakeholders. The first group was led by the provincial LED committee, and members included provincial chamber and relevant departments, a university, and commune councils in the target communities. The committee plays a critical role in sharing information, providing intervention with a higher level of authorities, and acting as a communication vehicle to raise awareness among other government bodies about the initiatives. The second group is the board of governors of the three districts, who are responsible for giving authority to the establishment of community groups.

Project results for Ek Phnom district

1. Development of a Tourism Guidebook and Webpage
2. Preservation of traditional houses
3. Establishment of association of tourism operators: initial steps were taken. However, some challenges were pointed out in regard to formalising this association and the modalities.

4. Promotion of local food and products: food-producing and souvenirs production groups were established.

Several factors were identified as success factors for the project, including adequate financial and technical support, the establishment of the LED committee, which helped to improve the relationship between stakeholders, raising awareness among LGs through the planning process, and participation of stakeholders.

By the end of the project, several commitments were made to ensure the sustainability of the results, including:

1. the development and implementation of an action plan to evaluate the achievements.
2. Integrate the plan into the local five-year development plan and the three-year rolling investment plan.
3. mobilise human and financial resources and allocate funds for LED priorities.
4. ensure the active practice of established groups and mechanisms.
5. assign the municipality staff to maintain and update the webpage.

Source: Federation of Canada Municipalities. (n.d)

Chapter 3 Literature review

The proposed study is conducted in three rural villages and is involved in small tourism-related businesses. This chapter, therefore, reviews three streams of literature. The first two are rural tourism and rural entrepreneurs, with a focus on tourism business and its development approaches. The chapter will first establish a picture of rural tourism by providing a definition and its related forms, with an emphasis on developing countries. Next, literature prominent to tourism entrepreneurship is reviewed, focusing on factors contributing to entrepreneurial propensity in rural tourism. The third body of literature is concerned with the concept of public-private-partnership, which has been identified as a key starting-point for tourism development in a rural setting. This provides a foundation to fulfil the final objective of this study, which is a possible model of rural tourism entrepreneurship.

3.1 Defining rural tourism: location, activities and sustainability

Rural tourism is receiving growing global attention for its title as both a new form of travel and a new vehicle for sustainable rural development. However, the question of "What is rural tourism?" has remained a topic of debate for decades. Primarily, it is due to the ambiguity of the definition of "tourism" and "rurality". Literature shows several key aspects, which can help in providing a more comprehensive understanding of rural tourism.

"Rural tourism is tourism which takes place in the countryside." This is the pioneering attempt of (Lane, 1994 p.9) to define this emerging form of tourism. With an emphasis on the geographical features, Lane suggests three components to distinguish ruralness from urbaness : (1) *population density and settlement size*; (2)

land use and economy and the dominance of agriculture and forestry; and (3) traditional social structure and issues of community identity and heritage. It is clear that rurality definition is contextual. For instance, ruralness in Cambodia refers to the area with a population density that is less than 200/sq.km and male employment in agriculture is more than 50% of the area population (UNFPA, 2014).

On an activity-focus, Lane (1994, p.9) argued that rural tourism is “*“a complex multifaceted activity”, it is not just farm-based tourism, but it also includes special-interest such nature and ecotourism, adventure, sport and health tourism, educational travel, culture and ethnic tourism etc.* Similarly, (Sznajder, Przezbórska, & Scrimgeour, 2009)also state that rural tourism is related to recreational activities, such as relaxation in a village, which is combined with an introduction to local culture, traditions and customs, and that its ethnographic features first of all distinguish it.

Moving from the supply side as an attempt to provide further explanation of rural tourism, Sharpley and Sharpley (1997) argued that the scope of rural tourism is restricted by not only *location, type and size of attraction or facility, and forms of activities*, but also *individual perception of tourism and rurality, purpose of travel, and the length of stay*. Rural tourism has moved from a traditionally domestic day visit to a more extended holiday abroad. Rurality is perceived as the antithesis to urban life (Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997). Sharpley and Sharpley (1997) argue that tourists are motivated by the desire to experience the rural environment rather than by certain activities.

However, defining rural tourism has been criticised as a developed country bias. In a recent study of Nair, Munikrishnan, Rajaratnam, and King (2015) on rural tourism definition, the similarities concerning *location characteristic, the purpose of travel,*

attraction/activities were found; however, the consideration on sustainability is more commonly mentioned in the context of the developing world. They argue that ensuring socio-economic benefits of the local community and natural resources preservation are its emphasis. For these reasons, Nair et al. (2015) propose a new definition of rural tourism as follows:

Rural tourism is functionally rural and provides the opportunity for tourists to directly involve, experience, enjoy and learn the unique cultural, natural and historical attractions and activities provided by the local communities in rural areas, with cooperation from the government and businesses to provide socio-economic benefits without exploiting the environment.

Nair et al. (2015)

Notwithstanding differences in definitions of different authors, it does seem clear that the three defining characteristics of rural tourism pertain to its location, the activities tourists are involved in within this location, and the concept of sustainability, which lies beneath it. In addition, the emphasis on sustainability in defining rural tourism might suggest that tourism has gained attention in the developing world for its potential role as an engine for rural development and sustainable development.

3.1.1 Sub-types of rural tourism

Rural tourism encompasses a wide variety of activities, attractions, amenities and facilities, which can be either natural or manmade (Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997). There are different classifications of rural tourism activities and attractions. Lane (1994) distinguishes rural tourism activities based on location, as described in the earlier section. Sharpley and Sharpley (1997) suggest three forms: agri-tourism, green tourism and eco-tourism.

Similarly, Sasu and Epuran (2016) maintain that rural tourism is an umbrella term, which encompasses different forms of tourism, including agri-tourism, ethnic tourism, eco-tourism, creative tourism and culinary tourism. Nair et al. (2015) noticed that the term “rural tourism” has been used interchangeably or interrelated with other forms of tourism, such as green/nature-based tourism, agri-tourism/farm tourism or culture tourism. They, therefore, classify rural tourism activities based on three main attributes: *culture, nature and history*. These authors provide different rural tourism-related activities. Table 3.1 provides possible sub-types of rural tourism by summarising these activities based on two ways of classification, attributes and forms, while showing how these two ways share overlapping aspects.

Table 3.1: Sub-types of Rural Tourism and its attractions

RT attractions	Cultural Attributes	Natural Attributes	Historical Attributes
Agri-tourism	Farming customs Farm/ agricultural produce	Rural landscape	
Ethnic tourism	Local lifestyle/ village tour Accommodation		Rural historic, architecture, historical, heritage sites, archaeology
Ecotourism		Natural environment Wide open spaces Hunting and fishing Walking in the jungle Nature-based activities Rural adventure/ wilderness, Safari drives, nature study in outdoor settings, bird-watching	
Culinary tourism	Local food products Cooking methods		
Creative tourism	Local handicraft and arts Local festivals / rites Local languages Local music and dances Local educational travel Traditional agricultural practice Cooking methods	Local sports, relaxing, camping, sightseeing, health enhancement Climbing, riding, walking, canoeing, rafting, skiing, snow-shoe tours, cycling, beach, water sport	Folklore, festival, events

Source: Lane (1994); Sharpley and Sharpley (1997); Nair et al. (2015); and Sasu and Epuran (2016)

3.1.2 Roles of rural tourism in sustainable rural development

The relationship between rural tourism and sustainable rural development has long been discussed and conceptualised. Tourism has been recognised for its potentials to benefit local communities economically, socially and environmentally.

Rural tourism could be a driver for economic growth through employment creation and wealth generation, sustainability and diversification of the rural economy by reducing the need for state subsidy of farming or even decreasing its dependence on agricultural production (Sharif & Lonik, 2014; Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997), and has a strong potential for poverty alleviation (UNWTO, n.d.) and business stimulation.

In regard to social dimension, a number of previous studies in Namibia (Mbaiwa, 2004), Kenya (Bruyere, Beh, & Lelengula, 2009), Malaysia (Falak, Chiun, & Wee, 2016), Australia, South Africa and Turkey (Arslan & Ekren, 2017) have proven its benefits in local services maintenance and support, facilities and attractions development, the increase in opportunities for socializing, greater awareness and cultural identities revitalisation, the re-population and migration solution and the role of women development.

For environmental dimension, tourism could lead to the provision of both financial resources and the stimulus for the conservation, protection and improvement of the historic built environment, re-development of redundant buildings in the countryside, and improvement and better regulation of the environment. Arslan and Ekren (2017) found that it relieves the burden of coastal tourism by creating new places for tourists and also plays a vital role in preserving natural heritage.

Despite the potential benefits, in some practice, rural tourism growth does not necessarily translate into sustainable rural development, which profits rural residents. Some previous case studies have shown how external enterprises, which have more resources in terms of capital and business experiences, absorbed the majority of tourism benefits, creating a substantial economic leakage (Mao, DeLacy, & Grunfeld, 2013). Koh and Hatten (2002) and Lordkipanidze et al. (2005)

emphasise that to develop a significant and sustainable tourism industry, it is necessary to stimulate the growth of rural tourism enterprise, for which the increase of tourism entrepreneurs and the fostering of entrepreneurial climate is vital. In addition, Henderson (2002) point out that locally-based entrepreneurs have a connection with the community and will reinvest financially and emotionally in the local area. This is seen as a favourable contribution to the sustainable growth of the community.

3.2 Rural entrepreneurship

To understand entrepreneurs and their entrepreneurial process, the influences of internal and external environments must be taken into account. As motivating new tourism enterprises is as crucial as sustaining existing ones, it is important to explore what can possibly encourage a tourism start-up. Therefore, the following section will explore the concepts of entrepreneurial climate and essential conditions needed to promote and flourish rural tourism businesses, and motivational factors of rural tourism entrepreneurs.

However, before proceeding, the definition of several keywords is given to assist the comprehension of the following literature review. Entrepreneurship is the pursuit of opportunity, by which new business are ventured as a means of wealth creation (Carton, Hofer, & Meeks, 1998). *Entrepreneurial intention or entrepreneurial propensity* is defined as an individual's favourable inclination or tendency to become an entrepreneur by venturing into a new business (Cristian, Brashear, Osmonbekov, & Zait, 2008). It is a strong indicator of becoming an entrepreneur (Yaseen, Somogyi, & Bryceson, 2018) because it is a decision-making factor that influences entrepreneurial behaviour before and after the start-up stage (Liñán,

2004). *Entrepreneurial climate* (e-climate) or entrepreneurial environment refers to a set of conditions coordinated in such a way that they prosper entrepreneurial initiatives and operation within a particular territory (Hingtgen, Kline, Fernandes, & McGehee, 2015; Stam & Spiegel, 2016).

3.2.1 The entrepreneurial climate in rural tourism

The entrepreneurial process is not merely an economic-driven phenomenon but also a socially constructed process over the course of time. This process is generated from entrepreneurial propensity and influenced by an entrepreneurial climate (Jay Kayne, 2000; Koh, 1996) (see Figure 3.1).

The e-climate categorisation can be seen in both vertical and horizontal layers. Bryant (1989) classifies it into three levels: macro, meso and micro level. In the vertical category, there are five key elements influencing e-climate: economic, socio-cultural, political-legal, physical and technological (Barkauskas, Barkauskienė, & Jasinskas, 2015; Koh, 2014; Oriade & Robinson, 2017a). Kline and Milburn (2010) commented that an e-climate for rural tourism requires not only these conditions but also the effective integration of them to create a business culture that is both structured and flexible.

The macro e-climate is broad and therefore is often discussed in the vertical category. At this level, the climate can have a vast effect on the viability of rural tourism enterprises (Bryant, 1989). Macro climate factors related to rural tourism, which are the most commonly focused on in the literature, include population (demographic changes, employment rate and tourist consumption behaviour), institution (government policies and private investment) and technological change

(Barkauskas et al., 2015; Bryant, 1989; Chens, Sok, & Sok, 2008; Mahony & Van Zyl, 2002).

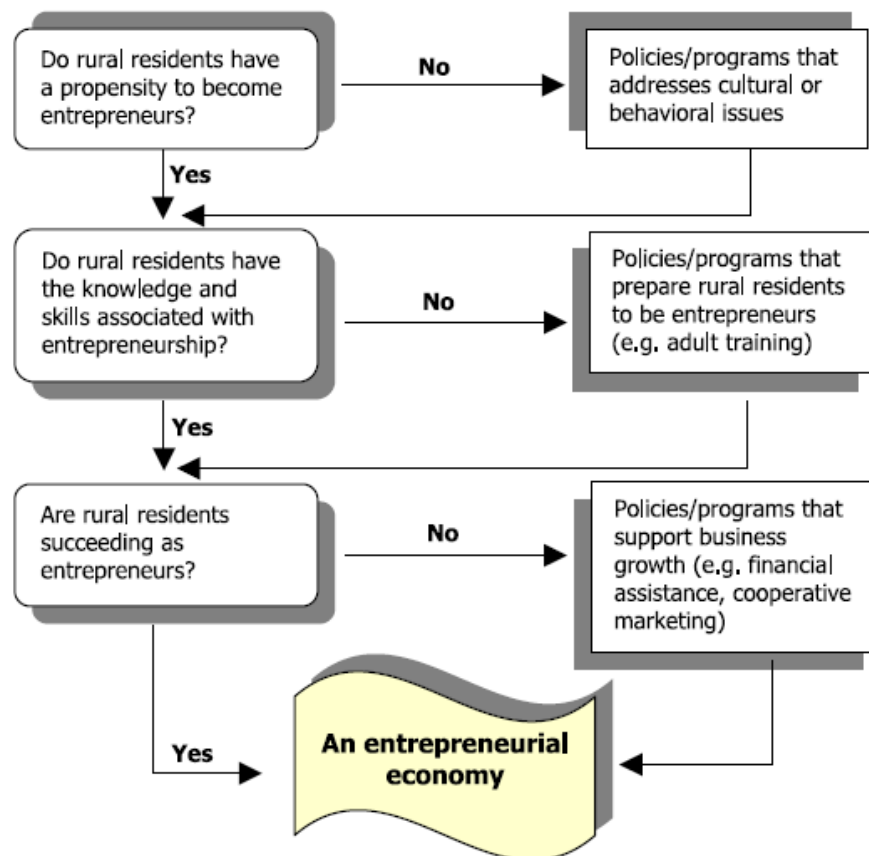


Figure 3.1: Framework for rural entrepreneurship development
Source: Jay Kayne (2000)

For meso and micro e-climate, Malecki (2007) emphasises the importance of innovation for strengthening the competitiveness of SMEs. This author asserts that there are four types of policy instruments that would provide a favourable climate for business innovation: finance, information, advice and human resources.

The meso e-climate is the regional environment, which involves a sense of collectivism and structure regarding the value set on entrepreneurial initiatives

(Bryant, 1989; Pillai & Meindl, 1998). According to Bryant (1989), it can be influenced by some factors such as marketing boards, urban development and cooperative structures within each region, in which a leading role is still required from the state. Malecki (2007) suggests two sets of policy tools for the regional environment:

- Input resources and allocation focus: mobility and cooperative schemes for higher education institutes, research and industry, subsidies to promote the use of business services, technology or innovation centres with collective and user-oriented nature.
- Behavioural value-added focus: cluster policies, support for firm networking, local strategic plans, schemes acting on the culture of innovation, regional innovation and technology programmes.

The e-climate at micro level has been receiving much attention in academia. The following literature review focuses mainly on e-climate at this level. Firstly, improving the entrepreneurial climate at micro level is important as it can be easily manipulated (McGehee & Kline, 2008). Secondly, this study mainly involves exploring e-climate through community perspective, from which the influence of broad e-climate would less likely, at least initially, to be taken into consideration (Bryant, 1989).

Micro entrepreneurial climate of rural tourism enterprise

Micro e-climate consists of characteristics at four levels: personal, family, firm, and local government policies (Bryant, 1989). Personal factors, including personality, industry knowledge (education, exposure, and experience), age, life's situation, and

decision style are crucial influencing factors on tourism entrepreneurial propensity (Koh, 1996; Koh & Hatten, 2002).

However, extensive empirical studies focus primarily on two areas of individuals' attitude toward risk and entrepreneurial mindset, and competency. Firstly, studies in both developed and developing countries found risk attitude significantly correlated with decision-making process in start-up and operation. For instance, a study by Kline et al. (2011) suggest that there is a strong association between the increase of rural tourism entrepreneurs in North Carolina and the risk-taking attitude and entrepreneurial mindset of the residents in the area. In contrast, risk aversion attitude is found to be one of the factors causing low tourism business initiatives or self-employment among rural residents in many countries, like China (Zhao, Ritchie, & Echtner, 2011), Poland (Sikora & Nybakk, 2012) Vietnam (Nguyen, Frederick, & Nguyen, 2014), and Spain (Driga, Lafuente, & Vaillant, 2009). Secondly, knowledge and skill competency also foster rural business venture development. Studies found that rural residents with education and experience in either management or tourism are more likely to start a tourism business (Koh, 1996). However, Zhao et al. (2011) assert that human capital could be a major impediment to community participation in rural tourism development. For example, a lack of associated business and management skills were found to be among challenges facing many rural tourism entrepreneurs in developing their businesses (UNWTO, 2017). Therefore, several studies emphasise the importance of accessibility to general and entrepreneurship education in rural tourism development.

The influence of family and firm characteristics on the development of rural tourism venture is often interwoven. Firm characteristics are associated with employees,

management structure, capital base, technological capabilities, and stakeholders (Olubiyo & Oriade, 2017). Most studies indicate the dependency of rural tourism business on family supports in terms of the labour force, shared management responsibilities, and finance. For instance, in developed countries this kind of business is usually operated by either couples or co-preneurs¹ but few involved children (Getz & Carlsen, 2000; Kastenholz, Lane, & Kastenholz, 2018), while in developing countries it can be family-owned businesses, usually run by either a male or female sole proprietor employing family or extended family members (Banki & Ismail, 2015). Furthermore, rural tourism and hospitality businesses are usually newly established on a small scale with part-time operations yet have close contact with customers (Getz & Carlsen, 2000; Kastenholz et al., 2018; Zhao & Getz, 2008). Investment capital is primarily sourced from personal savings, family members' contributions, conventional source of community funds, which embeds in local village society (Banki & Ismail, 2015). These demonstrate how family characteristics can determine the structure of a rural tourism firm and subsequently either foster or constrain the development of the firm.

Local e-climate is referred to as the overall community entrepreneurial culture, and local government policies play critical roles in creating this enabling culture (Bryant, 1989). In Cambodia context, local government is further divided into three levels: province, district/municipality and commune (MoI, 2008). Most studies of rural tourism indicate the important roles of local government in four key areas: support provision, destination management, education, and facilitation. Local policies regarding support provision in terms of financial capital and investment could be

¹ Co-preneurs is referred to a couple who start a business venture together (Fletcher, 2010)

seen as an enabler to the rural business venture (Rogerson, 2002; Shang-Pao & Fotiadis, 2014). Furthermore, destination management is essential for tourism business development in remote are. Successful rural tourism destination management is often contributed by local policies, which focus on marketing and promotion, construction and maintenance of physical infrastructure, and the attractiveness of the destination (Ionel, 2013; Ivanovich, 2015; Rogerson, 2002; Shang-Pao & Fotiadis, 2014). The earlier section describes the importance of individual education in increasing entrepreneurial propensity. Therefore, local policies focusing on entrepreneurial skills training (Ionel, 2013), advisory provision, and innovation and technology transfer (Ivanovich, 2015; Malecki, 2007) are suggested to improve the education accessibility for rural entrepreneurs. Lastly, e-climate could also be nurtured by the roles of local government as synergies between stakeholders (Rogerson, 2002; Shang-Pao & Fotiadis, 2014), as subordinates of national government to assist the implementation of rural development strategy (Ivanovich, 2015; Rogerson, 2006), and in the decision-making on employment and shared benefits (Ivanovich, 2015).

Kline and Milburn (2010) suggest 10 micro-entrepreneurial categories that are necessary for the growth of rural tourism business: general context, governance/ leadership, quality of life, community and cultural norms, networking, human resources, education and training, business support service, physical infrastructure, and financial infrastructure. The table below details each category by providing some key descriptors, which are adapted from Kline and Milburn (2010) and success factors of rural tourism found by Wilson, Fesenmaier, Fesenmaier, and Van Es (2001), Briedenhann (2011), and Haven-Tang and Jones (2012). Table: 3.2 put

together these elements as micro e-climate factors which provide favourable climate for rural tourism business growth.

Table 3.2: The supportive entrepreneurial climate of rural tourism at micro level

Micro-entrepreneurial climate factors for rural tourism	Descriptors
General context	Tourism development stage Private enterprise development stage
Governance/ Leadership and partnership	Policies supporting small business and local employment Model of leadership for rural tourism development Strategic planning Power of structure for local communities Tax structure Permitting
Quality of life	Quality of tourism product (complete package) Healthcare and education Wages
Community and cultural norms	Attitude toward tourism Attitude in problem-solving Residents possessions Shared identity
Social capital/networking	Wholesaling Supporting industries Linkage of supply and demands Family and community networks
Human resources/ education and training	Access to general education Access to information Tourism education Understanding of business
Business support services/centres	General support Access to advice DMOs
Physical infrastructure	Transportation and accessibility Communication technology Utilities Housing Safety Landscape
Financial infrastructure	Access to start-up funding Funds for tourism development Investment

Source: Adapted from McGehee and Kline (2008) and (Wilson et al., 2001) and (Briedenhann, 2011) and (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2012)

Motivations of rural tourism entrepreneurs

The entrepreneurial process seem to be a thread linking the individual characteristics, the internal and external motivations of an entrepreneur, the climate and community that the entrepreneur operates within and the outputs of the entrepreneur (McGehee & Kim, 2004). According to Koh and Hatten (2002), there are six types of motivation, which distinguish tourism entrepreneurs: social, lifestyle, marginal, closet, nascent and serial. Two types of entrepreneurs, which are often found in rural tourism studies, are lifestyle entrepreneurs and marginal entrepreneurs. Lifestyle tourism entrepreneurs are those whose purpose of starting a tourism business is to support the desired lifestyle, while marginal entrepreneurs are those who seek additional economic growth by operating a tourism enterprise within a peripheral sector of the tourism (Koh & Hatten, 2002).

Table 3.3: Koh and Hatten's (2002) typology of tourism entrepreneurs

II. Behaviour- or motivation-based typology	Definition	Example
Social tourism entrepreneur	One who starts a non-profit touristic enterprise	A regional tourism industry association
Lifestyle tourism entrepreneur	One who starts an enterprise in order to support a desired lifestyle; generally, these types of tourism entrepreneurs have no desire to 'grow' the business beyond a certain size	B&B owner and avid kayaker who specializes in guided kayak adventures
Marginal tourism entrepreneur	One who starts and operates a tourism enterprise within the informal and peripheral sector of the tourism industry	Unlicensed roadside farmer's market
Closet tourism entrepreneur	One who operates a tourism enterprise while maintaining a full-time job as an employee elsewhere	A high school teacher who offers guide services during the summer
Nascent tourism entrepreneur	One who is in the process of developing a tourism enterprise	An individual developing a business plan or in the process of attracting capital investment
Serial tourism entrepreneur	One who has founded a succession of tourism enterprises, either due to failure of the previous enterprise or the evolution of one enterprise into another form	Tourism enterprise A becomes a corporation, whereupon the serial entrepreneur sells the business and starts tourism enterprise B

Source: Koh and Hatten (2002)

A study of McGehee and Kim (2004) categorise motivational factors of rural tourism entrepreneurs as formal (primarily economic) and substantive rationality (primarily socio-cultural). The result revealed that farm families involve themselves in tourism for a combination of both economic (formal) and social (substantive) reasons. They, therefore, argue that individual rural tourism businesses cannot be simply classified by their motivation as either formal or substantive, but, more likely, as a mix of each, which one could outweigh another: substantive-formal or formal-substantive.

Lifestyle tourism entrepreneurs, then, appear to be substantive-formal and are often found in developed country context (Getz & Carlsen, 2000; Lai et al., 2017). For instance, Getz and Carlsen (2000) found that most rural families in Australia employ tourism and hospitality businesses as a tool to achieve their lifestyle aims, but it is also likely that some families and other owner-operators have a lifelong interest that brings them into these sectors. Their goals are more family-related such as pioneering paths for their children's education and business, sharing responsibility and decisions, and enhancing family relationships and position in society. However, sole-proprietors, who do not involve family in the business, tend to be motivated more by normal profit-generation goals, but they also favour the rural environment (Getz & Carlsen, 2000).

Marginal entrepreneurs, who can be considered as a formal-substantive type, are common in developing countries (Banki & Ismail, 2015; Zhao & Getz, 2008). For instance, Banki and Ismail (2015) found that rural tourism business owners of Nigeria are pushed by economic survival purposes and deprivation of community members. For rural tourism entrepreneurs who are motivated by economic and lifestyle-related benefits, business performance and growth tend to be more prioritised (Zhao & Getz, 2000). Nevertheless, internal family relationships and economic significance of the business to the family was also highly and commonly recognised.

3.2.2 Issues of rural tourism in developing countries

Rural tourism enterprises face numerous challenges. UNWTO (2017) suggests that rural tourism should be viewed from multi-dimensional perspectives; therefore, based on case studies from 14 countries in Asia and Pacific, challenges and

opportunities of rural tourism are categorised into three fundamental groups:: supply of products and services, market demand, and institutional arrangements.

Table: 3.4 summarize key challenges and opportunities in each category.

Table 3.4: Issues of rural tourism in developing countries

Supply of products and services	Market demand	Institutional arrangements
Business skills and innovation	Marketing plan	Leadership
Financing	Packaging	Sustainability
Profitability; and Standard	Partnership	Training; and

Source: Adapted from UNWTO (2017)

Supply of products and services

Issues in the supply of rural tourism products and services include business skills and innovation, financing, profitability and standards.

Business skills and innovation

Evidence in the case studies showed that there is general lack of experience and formal business education that are needed for market analysis to customize special needs of rural tourism operators (UNWTO, 2017).

The development of tourism products and experience is a key for success in rural tourism (Moscardo, 2005). Rural destination requires a differentiated and unique amenity to attract tourists (Moric, 2013). However, most rural areas' lack of product specification and diversification of ideas is seen as a considerable disadvantage (Gopal, Varma, & Gopinathan, 2008; Liu, 2006). These are caused by limited knowledge of the ever-changing tourism market demand and the traditional mindset of small-scale farming economy, which prevents farmers from investing in sustainable development options.

Financing

Rural communities often face financial constraints. Operating micro-organisations at a local scale makes it hard to access resources, especially financial resources (Rosli, Chang, & Granados, 2017). The lack of capital and an inability to secure conventional loans make investment almost impossible and lead to traditional methods in production (Moric, 2013). Self-funding through personal savings, family resources and income is required, while conventional sources of private capital pose potential financial risks, which family enterprises must share among family members and generations (Othman, Sazali, & Mohamed, 2013). In one case in Cambodia agri-tourism for instance, the inability to repay loans borrowed from microfinance institutions has caused some villagers to lose their land and properties (Mao, Grunfeld, DeLacy, & Chandler, 2014). Therefore, social-economy enterprises initiatives, partnership, and sufficient support from government agencies regarding funds could be crucial for rural tourism business development and sustainability (Gopal et al., 2008; Othman et al., 2013).

Profitability

The issues associated with profitability are caused by limited business experience, remoteness distance and seasonality, and competition (UNWTO, 2017). These issues are also evident in case studies conducted by Gopal et al. (2008) and Mao et al. (2014). Limited experience and proper training have challenged rural tourism business in reaching a reasonable level of profitability. The remoteness distance and seasonality, resulting in higher costs for utilities, communications, supplies and other services, exacerbated the existing challenge. In addition, the low price of imported products and incapability to afford modern equipment are barriers for rural business owners to invest profitably and link to the tourism value-chain (Mao

et al., 2014). Besides, lack of proper cost control, and accounting and management practices pose another severe problem for micro and small rural tourism enterprises.

Standards

Standards in health and hygiene, safety, and customer services are critical for the sustainability of a rural tourism enterprise or community (UNWTO, 2017). Several studies found similar issues. In case of agri-tourism, it was found that low capacity in production of farmers, due to inadequate technical equipment, traditional methods, and failure in maintaining hygienic conditions, impede the ability to supply the products with consistent quantity and quality, required by tourism market (Gopal et al., 2008; Mao et al., 2014; Moric, 2013). Issues related to customer service were found in accommodation service. Limited accommodation facilities are still challenges for rural communities in providing service quality and experience (Moscardo, 2005). Nonetheless, some communities maintained that improving the quality of living would change the sense of uniqueness and authenticity of rural tourism experience (Dai, Wan, Xu, & Wu, 2017; Othman et al., 2013).

Market demand

Issues on the market demand side often involve marketing plan and packaging. Rural communities tend to have an inadequate understanding of market dynamics, identification of market segments, pricing of products, and attracting tourists to their communities (UNWTO, 2017).

Marketing plan

A study on one agri-tourism case in India by Gopal et al. (2008) suggested that uncertainty of market demand leads to an inefficient strategy in marketing agri-tourism as a product. Similarly, Dai et al. (2017) conducted a study with rural

tourism providers and tourists on their perception of key development of tourism in one rural area in China and found shared views among both groups of respondents that marketing plan was an inherent weakness. However, different perceptions were expressed in regard to whether reducing price and increasing service capacity would deter or contribute to rural tourism development in the area. Therefore, a proactive strategy to ensure a consistent stream of visitors is critical for rural tourism business.

Packaging

A major issue for rural tourism in developing countries is the problem in the clarifying of service concept (Oriade & Robinson, 2017b). Rural tourism experiences require combining complementary products and services to create a user-friendly package. However, the lack of data on cultural heritage leads to limited understanding and diversification of cultural tourism products (UNWTO, 2017). Oriade and Robinson (2017b) commented that services are often poorly designed, with confused service concepts and haphazardly amalgamated themes. In a rural area in China, Dai et al. (2017) found that a lack of specialised knowledge on the nature of products among local service providers and a lack of differentiated service types needed to be addressed for a thriving tourism development.

Institutional arrangement

An institutional arrangement is defined "as a set of organizational forms, policies, rules, practices and cultural norms designed and deployed to govern a group of actors towards the attainment of a particular objective" (Van der Duim, Lamers, & van Wijk, 2015 p.3). In the context of rural development, the institutional arrangements are the relationships, social relationships or networks among the various actors involved in rural development programmes (Hamzah, 2010).

UNWTO (2017) point out that issues associated with institutional arrangement include leadership, sustainability, training and demonstration projects. This is supported by many previous studies, which highlight the lack of sufficient support from government and related organisations. These issue include inadequate infrastructure, financial assistance, capacity building training in both technical and entrepreneurship (Gopal et al., 2008; Liu, 2006; Mao et al., 2014; Moric, 2013), appropriate policies (Moric, 2013; Othman et al., 2013), and mechanisms for meaningful local involvement (Liu, 2006). In addition, demographic changes (Dai et al., 2017), negative socio-economic impacts (Moscardo, 2005), and overexploitation of natural resources (Gopal et al., 2008; Moscardo, 2005) were found to be challenges toward sustainability. Hamzah (2010) suggests that governments' involvement is central in the development of appropriate policies and the provision of adequate financial assistance, infrastructure improvement and good economic environment to ensure the prosperity of the new initiatives in rural areas. Institutional arrangements, which forge the partnership between local civil society, and private sector operators as well as municipal, provincial land national authorities are required to develop rural tourism, particularly at the early stage (UNWTO, 2017).

The most common institutional arrangements for rural tourism development usually embody different types of community-based initiatives, where its success is reliant on the effectiveness of public-private-partnership (Ashley, Ashley, Goodwin, & Roe, 2001; Saarinen & Lenao, 2014). The following literature review explores the concept of public-private-partnership as an attempt to seek a possible and viable solution to overcome the challenges facing rural tourism in the context of this study.

3.3 Public-Private-Partnership (PPP)

The public-private-partnership (PPP) emerges as a result of a shift in public policy making from “government” to “governance” (Marx, 2019). It is a cooperation where characteristic and principles approaching from the private sector are used to increase efficiency in public sector service and regulation (Grigorescu, 2008). It allows more opportunities for valuable partnership than would be the computation of individual efforts.

3.3.1 The use of PPP

The PPP has been used across various sectors in ensuring the funding, construction, renovation, management, maintenance of infrastructure, or providing a service (Marx, 2019). PPPs are applied as an institutional arrangement, through which access to private funding can be gained, providing the government with a development tool to solve social issues in rural context and improve the public sector (Bjärstig & Sandström, 2017). In the tourism sector, the PPP approach has been advancing in the field of marketing and promotion (Rajko, Krajnović, & Tomčić, 2008), while in rural areas, the approach is often seen in stakeholder collaboration in the implementation of various community-based tourism models such as pro-poor tourism (PPT) or eco-tourism (Saarinen & Lenao, 2014).

The underlying idea of partnerships is that by generating additional knowledge and resources, results can be achieved that would benefit all parties, which could not have been achieved on an individual basis (Kolk et al., 2008). Although the PPP is created to produce better results benefiting the community in a sustainable manner (Grigorescu, 2008), it does not necessarily mean all actors share the same drives.

Successful PPP must provide both individual and collective benefits to fulfil each partner's primary drives.

Individual benefits for the public sector can be an improvement in the efficiency of its core function, law-making and decision making, and inherently private but government-owned assets (Beilock, Grigorian, & Reinertson, 2006).

The private sector, on the other hand, can also make use of public service for its advantages. The access to certain public services could be beneficial for private sector to reduce knowledge and information gaps, minimise collective action problems, creation or involvement of user groups and associations, reduce the negative effects of thin markets, ensuring small size and thinness of market, and ensure quality and adherence to standards (Beilock et al., 2006).

Collective benefits in tourism marketing and promotion are desirable for rural community development as a result of PPP in four key areas: destination attractiveness, marketing efficiency, destination productivity and destination management (Rajko et al., 2008).

3.3.2 PPP and sustainable rural development

In a rural area, the PPP approach has been receiving growing attention for its roles as a driver for sustainable development and poverty alleviation (Saarinen & Lenao, 2014). It is especially important for rural business owners as it is deemed to improve services, enhance revenue streams, which promote the overall community economic growth, reduce project time and costs, and increase creativity with the expertise their partners bring to the project (Cetinski, Peric, & Sugar, 2009; Jordan, Stinnett, & Gibson, 2018). It plays a crucial role in creating an inclusive value chain

by acting as a link between supply-side and demand-side. It creates a positive business environment and supports micro enterprises in a rural community, which lack access to the necessary resources to fully participate or invest in the tourism sector (De Boer, Van Dijk, & Tarimo, 2012). Table 1.4 presents the potential contribution PPP brings to a community-based tourism initiative.

Table 3.5: Potential contribution of the PPP brings to the CBTIs

<p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Direct employment opportunities (including, administration, guiding, tours and transport, construction, hospitality, management, accommodation shopping, food and beverage outlets) ● Indirect employment opportunities (including, environmental management, entrepreneurs, other secondary industries) ● Supports the development of multi-sector or mono-sector non-profit enterprises (benefiting/controlled or strongly influenced by communities) ● Provides invigoration and development to local economies ● Provides alternatives to changing or fading traditional industries ● Increases land values, and thus rates payable to council for community services <p><i>Environmental</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improves environment (changes in subsistence leading to less degradation of natural resources) ● Encourages awareness and appreciation by the community of natural assets and the environment and other resources on which tourism relies ● Enhances management and stewardship of natural resources <p><i>Socio-cultural</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides and stimulates infrastructure development (roads, communications, healthcare, education, public transport, access to drinking water and food supplies) ● Increases safety and security ● Facilitates workforce development (e.g. rights and conditions) ● Fosters civic pride (in community, culture, heritage, natural resources and infrastructure) ● Mutually beneficial (to all stakeholders in the community) ● Creates opportunities (broadening of idea horizons) ● Promotes cultural understanding ● Preserves cultural and social heritage and local languages or dialects ● Supports and preserves local and unique crafts and skills ● Creates a sense of well-being ● Promotes greater cross-institutional understanding ● Appreciation of cross-stakeholder goals and agendas <p><i>Building of skills and influence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Influencing and enforcing government policy (national, regional and local) ● Skills enhancement (training; such as administrative, service industry, maintenance, guiding) ● Building capacity collectively and individually ● Fosters empowerment: gender and community; social, financial, political and psychological

Source: Simpson (2008)

3.3.3 The PPP institutional design

The PPP takes on various forms and involves multi-stakeholders. Preferable partnerships should involve a range of important actors, including governments, non-governmental agencies, international organizations and the private sector (Ciolac, 2013). As shown in Figure 3.2, in rural areas, the key PPP actors include public, private and civil society (Bjärstig & Sandström, 2017). It is suggested that for long-term impact on rural tourism development, the involvement of the local population in the role of investors and shareholders in tourism projects is crucial (Rajko et al., 2008).

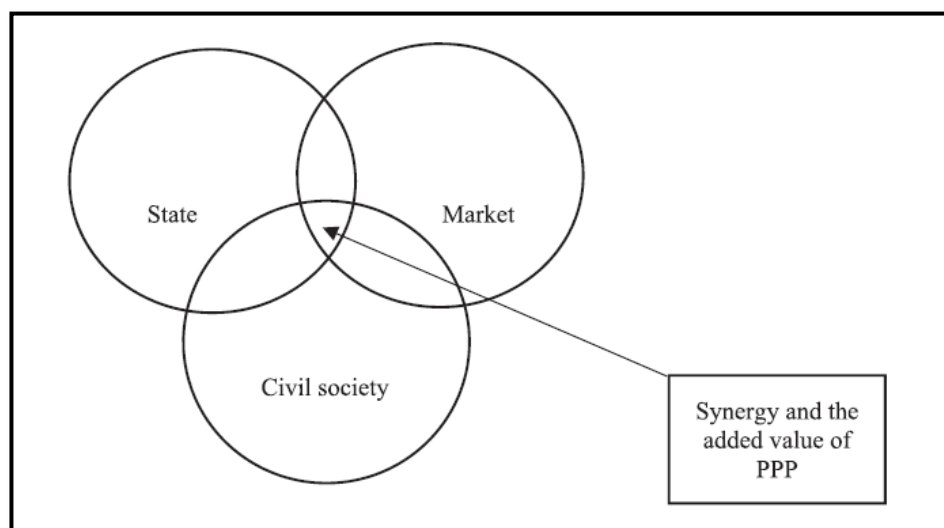


Figure 3.2: Actors of PPP in rural development

Source: Bjärstig and Sandström (2017)

The PPP approach is not without challenges. Ensuring the effectiveness of PPP requires trust, active participation of all stakeholders and adequate allocated funds (Grigorescu, 2008; Marx, 2019). Therefore, several factors need to be put into consideration in the institutional design of these partnerships. Institutional design is defined as a set of rules that establishes and governs interaction between partners

in a collaborative setting to achieve a specific policy goal (Marx, 2019). A good institutional design must clearly define three components: roles and responsibilities, procedure and goals (Grigorescu, 2008; Jordan et al., 2018; Marx, 2019). Roles and responsibilities can be identified by the understanding of power, resource balance, decision-making, and partnership nature. In addition, a lack of understanding of project time and expectations are sources of potential frustration; therefore, the design must include planning and management of project progress and clearly defined expectations of the project. Partnerships should be formed with the potentials for realising mutual advantage, or dissolve should they fail to arise.

Chapter 4 Research Design

This chapter begins by presenting the researcher's philosophical position behind the research methodologies employed in this study. Research paradigm, ontology and epistemology theories will be discussed. Then the justification of selecting qualitative approach as the research methodology will be provided and followed by the research method and data analysis tool. Finally, ethical consideration and research rigour will be presented.

4.1 Research Paradigm

It is essential to understand the researcher's paradigmatic beliefs, as it influences the whole aspects of the research process, from research purpose to how the research is conducted. Therefore, research strategies used in a study need to be consistent with the researcher's worldview. This research is underpinned by constructivism epistemology and relativism ontology. A research paradigm is much more complicated than just its interrelation to research methodology, but it is philosophically based upon ontological and epistemological assumptions (Blaikie, 2007). This means each research paradigm embodies a worldview that is consistently underpinned by an ontology and epistemology.

While ontology is about "What is the nature of reality?", epistemology tries to answer, "Is what is learned independent of the researcher?" (Bailey, 2007; Gray, 2014). Epistemology is a way of understanding and explaining how knowledge can be obtained (Blaikie, 2007; Crotty, 1998a), and it provides a philosophical background to decide what kinds of knowledge about the world are regarded as certain (Blaikie, 2007; Gray, 2014). It look closely at the relationship between researchers and the subject of the knowledge throughout the research process

(Bailey, 2007; Blaikie, 2007; Gray, 2014). According to Blaikie (2007), there are many ontological stances and its sub-variations; however, two main ontological perspectives, which are more recently and widely discussed, are realism and relativism. A realist believes that there is only one reality, which exists independently of human consciousness or thoughts of it (Blaikie, 2007; Crotty, 1998a). A relativist, conversely, assumes that there is no objective social reality but multiple realities depending on different contexts, which also require different approaches to evaluate them (Gray, 2014).

Three epistemological stances, which are frequently discussed, include objectivism, subjectivism and constructivism. Objectivism is the belief that reality exists objectively and, independent of the researcher's feelings, views or values. Knowledge of this social reality can, therefore, be discovered with the objective role of the researcher. On the other hand, in subjectivism, the meaning is already, but unconsciously, created by the researchers themselves through their dreams or religious beliefs and is then imposed on the object of study (Crotty, 1998b; Gray, 2014). Based on this, the two epistemological perspectives are not aligned with this research objective and the researcher's philosophical outlook.

Interpretivism paradigm, which underlies this study, is closely linked to constructivism epistemology (Gray, 2014). An interpretivist believes that the truth or meaning in social science cannot be found by using natural science approach (Gray, 2014), and that reality can only be accessed through "social constructions such as languages, consciousness, shared meaning and instruments" (Myers, 2013 p.39). This means language and speech are the keys to understanding the reality and its meanings, which are socially constructed and shared through interaction. That is

why the main focus of interpretivist is "social relationships and processes" through which everyone in a setting directs and creates their social worlds (Bailey, 2007 p.53). Constructionism is philosophically based upon "relativism" ontology (Chia, 2002 as cited in Gray, 2014). Therefore, constructivism and relativism are the theoretical standpoints of this researcher.

The objective of this proposed study is to investigate rural entrepreneurship, which is believed to possess a different setting from other locations, and therefore provides a unique context of entrepreneurial environment and experiences. Besides, the study aims to understand entrepreneurship, which is associated with behaviour drawn from the social context (Jack & Anderson, 2002). Specifically, for rural entrepreneurs who are not used to communicating or expressing their opinions or whose voices are not heard enough, close interaction between researcher and participants is required to build up their social meanings. Interpretivism, which provides the researcher with the opportunity to co-construct this contextual reality and which reflects the theoretical assumption for this study, is therefore endorsed.

In practice, a constructivist believes that truth and meaning neither exist externally nor are produced independently (Blaikie, 2007; Gray, 2014); they are constructed through the interplay between people with the physical and social world (Blaikie, 2007; Crotty, 1998a). This means reality either does not pre-exist or is not brought in by the researcher; instead, it emerges from the interaction between researcher and object of study. However, Blaikie (2007) claimed that the understanding of the meaning already exists prior to interaction, which means researchers, who interpret this reality, are already shaped by their own experiences. Therefore, their point of

views and experiences influence research interpretation. As a result, reality or meaning is created in a way that is different from one researcher to another, even on the same issue. In this study, even though the objective is to understand rural entrepreneurs' social world, the researcher admits her pre-existing knowledge and experience could shape the nature of research and influence how social reality is interpreted. Section 4.4 provides detailed research rigour via research credibility, conformability strategies, and the researcher's reflection.

4.1 Research methodology

Based on the theoretical perspectives explained above, qualitative methodology is, therefore, the most suitable approach that shares a consistent belief with the objective of this study. In social science practice, qualitative research methodology is the primary tool to studying social and cultural phenomena (Myers, 2013). Qualitative inquiry is used in this study due to the nature of the research question, which intends to explore the details of a topic within its contextual setting such as rural entrepreneurs' perception and their everyday behaviour (Creswell, 2014; Silverman, 2016). It provides the researcher with an opportunity to gain "a deep, intense and holistic understanding of the context" in which the study is conducted because it involves the interaction of the researcher in the natural, real-life environment of the study participants (Gray, 2014). This methodology was used in the tourism field, in particular, by Hodgson and Firth (2006), who also subscribe to constructivism. They assert that qualitative research provides flexibility in research design and is deemed the most appropriate approach for exploratory field study, which involves language barriers and low literacy level of participants. The present study has similar characteristics as it was conducted in a rural setting, where low literacy can be generally anticipated. In addition, the data collection involves

conversation in the local language. For these reasons, this methodology is also employed.

According to Creswell (2014 p.184), a qualitative approach has eight characteristics, which this research embraced in selecting data collection approaches, interview procedure design, and analysing data.

- (1) Natural setting: data was collected in a natural setting, where participants behave and act in their own context and researchers have close interaction with them over time.
- (2) Researcher as a key instrument: although the protocol is used as a data collection instrument, researchers involve themselves closely in the study, from instrument development to field data collection process.
- (3) Multiple sources of data: various forms of data are gathered and reorganised into themes that cut across all these data sources.
- (4) Inductive and deductive data analysis: the themes of data are built inductively, and deductive thinking also plays a vital role as the analysis progresses.
- (5) Participants' meanings: the main focus is on the meanings the participants hold about the issue studied, not those the researcher brings into the research process.
- (6) Emergent design: qualitative research design is not tightly prescribed. Some or all phases of the research process may be modified when data collection starts.
- (7) Reflexivity: The researchers reflect how their role in the study, their background, culture, and experience hold potentials for shaping their interpretation.
- (8) Holistic account: reports from multiple perspectives (including entrepreneurs, non-entrepreneurs, local authorities and local NGOs) are involved in an attempt to draw and understand a bigger picture of an issue being studied.

4.1.1 Data collection methods

Qualitative researchers typically gather data from multiple sources, make sense of them and organise them into themes that cut across all of the data sources (Creswell, 2014; Silverman, 2016). For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interview and documentary data collection were employed.

Interview method

Interviews are extensively used in qualitative research as a data collection method (Creswell, 2014; Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). Interview could be the best approach when the research objective is exploratory in nature, which seeks to explore individuals' in-depth experiences, values, feelings or attitudes (Gray, 2014; Petty et al., 2012), which cannot necessarily be accommodated by a formal questionnaire (Byrne, cited in Silverman, 2016). Additionally, it is useful when participants cannot be directly observed; participants can provide historical information, and the questionnaire allows the researcher to have control over the line of questioning (Creswell, 2014). This seems ideal for this qualitative research, which aims to understand entrepreneurs' behaviours and perceptions.

Creswell (2013) suggests nine steps of conducting an interview: (1) Decide on research questions; (2) identify interviewee; (3) determine the type of interview; (4) use adequate recording procedures; (5) design and use an interview protocol; (6) consent form; (7) determine place for conducting the interview; (8) interview procedures and (9) refine the interview questions and the procedures throughout field visits. Further, interviews can be conducted in three structures: structured, semi-structured and unstructured; and the choice of the approach depends on the

researcher's objectives (Singleton & Straits, 2010). Among these three approaches, the semi-structured interview is seen as the most appropriate for this study.

In a standard or structured interview, all respondents are asked the same questions, which were pre-prepared with highly restricted objectives and order. The answers are framed within specific topics (Singleton & Straits, 2010), which are often seen in quantitative study (Gray, 2014). Therefore, this type of interview does not fit with the nature of this study. A non-structured interview, on the other hand, has general objectives and wide-ranging discussions, in which questions are developed spontaneously throughout the interview (Singleton & Straits, 2010; Bailey, 2007). As suggested by (Gray, 2014, Singleton & Straits, 2010), a non-structured interview is beneficial when a researcher wants to gain insight into interviewee's experience and knowledge. This seems suitable for this qualitative research; however, two drawbacks of this structure make it less preferable. Firstly, it can be time-consuming to reach the depth of data and novice interviewers can get lost (Gray, 2014). Secondly, a non-directive conversation could lead to mundane or irrelevant information (Bailey, 2007). Therefore, a semi-structured interview, in which control of its structure is at moderation, was employed for the purpose of this study.

Unlike the two structures above, a semi-structured interview enables researcher's control over the topics of conversation while still allowing flexibility and maintaining the natural flow of dialogue. Key questions, which are in an open-ended form, are pre-developed; the scope of the interview is, therefore, limited to specific subtopics. This helps the researcher to save time and avoid side-tracking. However, with such open-ended questions, interviewees are given an opportunity to expand their opinion or knowledge around a study topic while allowing the researchers to

clarify and broadly follow a specific topic list (Gray, 2018). Although researchers have a list of topics to cover, a semi-structured interview still allows the diversion of the interview into a direction that was not originally anticipated, and this fits with the exploratory nature of this study. Hodgson and Firth (2006) pointed out that the semi-structured interview is preferable for research that involves cultural differences as it helps facilitate the information-collecting process. It does not impede the emergent theme; instead, it provides a framework with enough flexibility to increase comparability and comprehensiveness of the data.

Documentary method

In addition to primary data from the semi-structured interview, secondary data collection was also employed. Secondary data were collected throughout the entire research process, prior, during and after the field interview. Gray (2014) points out two main advantages of using secondary data: firstly, it often covers a broad scale of data set within a long period of time; the results, therefore, could explain evolution and allow replication. Secondly, the anonymity of individuals in the data set provides an opportunity for objective and unobtrusive analysis. Thus, with time and financial constraint in data collection, secondary data would provide an overview, if not comprehensive, of the study context in a shorter amount of time and help the interviewer to avoid what was already known in the interview. In this study, secondary sources of data included academic documentation, official statistics, professional and technical reports, and organisation documents.

4.1.2 Methods of inquiry

The methodological approach used in conducting this research, is dictated by research question (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This research explores the current rural

tourism entrepreneurship climate with the objective to achieve sustainable rural development. To reach the objective, the study adopts a framework from Jay Kayne (2000) (See Figure 3.1). The framework presents three layers of inquiries with systematic flow representing different phases of rural entrepreneurship development. From here, literature related to entrepreneurial climate and propensity, and rural tourism entrepreneurship was extensively reviewed. Documentation includes academic journals and related published reports. The literature review helps to refine research objectives, guide sub-interview questions, and determine potential samples, which are essential to filling the literature gap. As a result, four different groups of participations were targeted for the study (the following Section 4.2.3 details sampling criteria). Different sets of interview questions (See Appendix 1) were also developed, with the structure shown in Table 1.3. The interview questions were initially developed to answer research objectives¹ and 2 (See page 4), and the research aims to seek suggestions on solutions from participants to reach objective 3. Based on expert interview and official government report gathered on the field, critical solutions were proposed. Therefore, the last part of the interview question regarding Public-Private-Partnership was developed on the ground to assess the viability of the solutions from other participants' points of view.

Table 4.1: Structure of interview questions

Entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs	Government and NGOs
Perceived Desirability of rural residents	
Perception about tourism and entrepreneurship	Attitudes of community and entrepreneurs toward tourism and entrepreneurship
Motivation towards tourism entrepreneurship	Perceived barriers of community to be involved in tourism businesses
Perceived Feasibility	
Viability of tourism as a career option	Viability of tourism as a career/ current tourism development
Self-capacity to be engaged (skills, knowledge and resources...)	Their roles in tourism and rural development
Support available or needed to facilitate their engagement (external supports)	Support available or needed to promote community engagement (training, policy, promotion...)
Partnership	
Attitude toward partnership	Attitude of community, government and NGOs toward partnership
Capacity to collaborate	Perceived opportunity and barriers

4.1.3 Sampling criteria and techniques

The present study employed purposive and snowball sampling techniques to recruit interview participants. Purposeful sampling or theoretical sampling is used to select participants who are believed to represent the population (Gray, 2014) and can provide rich information in response to research purposes (Patton, 1990, as cited in Bailey, 2007). Snowball techniques enable the researcher to locate the hidden population who actually can be important informants for the research (Gray, 2014).

This research aims to develop a broad understanding of rural entrepreneurship development; therefore, participants were selected from different rural tourism stakeholders to give voices from different perspectives. The selection criteria detailed in Table 4.2 below were applied to recruit three groups of participants (existing tourism entrepreneurs, non-tourism-involved local farming households in Ek Phnom District, and local authorities in Battambang Province).

Table 4.2: Selection Criteria for Participants

- Local authorities, including village chiefs and officers from the provincial tourism department, will be key informants about a big picture of tourism development and existing support strategies from the government perspective. (Bailey, 2007) claim that these gatekeepers are necessary when data collection setting is not open to everyone.
- Rural tourism entrepreneurs in micro-businesses such as restaurants, short tours and home-stays, could provide important data related to entrepreneurial characteristics and business operation.
- On the other hand, non-entrepreneurs would be necessary to identify barriers to entrepreneurial skills development and tourism participation. Non-tourism-involved local farming households with potentials for agri-tourism or eco-tourism will be targeted.

Local authorities were chosen to be the first group of interview targets. Firstly, it was because they could provide a critical overview of local tourism development context that could possibly give more direction to the data collection process. Secondly, administration at the government level is formal, complicated and can be time-consuming. Therefore, approaching this group earlier or in advance could save time and ensure a more predictable and controllable data collection timeline.

Official invitations were sent to the office of the Provincial Department of Tourism, which is in Battambang Province (See Figure 5.1). The information sheet and consent form were also attached to provide necessary information, including the purpose of the study and the researcher's contact details, through which the office could respond to the invitation once the decision was made. The researcher was contacted two days after that the invitation was accepted. Then the researcher went on to visit the office of local authorities at district and commune levels to drop the

same invitation letters. Their administration process was responsive and straightforward. Therefore, an agreement to schedule the interview within 2–3 hours was made.

Several names and contact details of potential participants were obtained from local authorities. Thus, the researcher went on to contact them. Where the responses were less responsive, another potential participant was referred through snowball sampling. Through the invitation via phone call, the person agreed to participate in the interview. Therefore, the interview setting was scheduled at the convenience of the participant.

After several interviews, the researcher felt she had a good understanding of the context of tourism in the study area. The local tourism entrepreneurs were the next targets for interviews. The participants were well known to the researcher as she used to work as a local tour guide in this province. Therefore, contact details of participants were obtained through the researcher's personal networks in the proposed study area. The farmers were recruited using the snowball technique.

The researcher contacted potential participants via phone calls and invited them to participate in the study. Interested entrepreneurs received the Information Sheet about the details of the study and decided if they would like to participate. In this initial meeting, the potential participants were given the researcher's contact details (phone number), so that they could respond to the invitation. The potential participants were given a week to respond. Follow-up invitations was applied via phone call when they did not respond within that given time.

From this group of participants, the contacts of new potential participants were obtained. This included local non-governmental organisations and non-tourism households. Then the same method was applied to approach them.

4.1.4 Participants' profile

In total, 16 participants were interviewed. These include five tourism-related entrepreneurs, four non-tourism related households (non-entrepreneurs), five government officers and two representatives from non-governmental organisations. To embrace ethical consideration and assist the reporting process, respondents are reported using label as following:

Table 4.3: Participants' code

Participants	Label
Tourism entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs	Rural residents
Entrepreneurs	E#
Non-entrepreneurs	NE#
Government officers	G#
NGOs	NGO#

However, it is important to note that entrepreneurs are divided into 2 groups, and the rationale behind this grouping is explained in section 5.2. The participants' profile is presented in Table 4.3 and Table 4.5.

Table 4.4: Rural residents' profile

Participants code	Age	Education	Family Members	Occupation	Customers
Tourism-related entrepreneurs (Group 1)					
E#1	46	Bachelor	5	Accommodation	Tourists
E#2	57	Primary school	6	Food and crafts	Tourists and locals
Tourism-related entrepreneurs (Group 2)					
E#3	52	Primary school	5	Traditional food	Tourists and locals
E#4	45	Secondary school	8	Food and crafts	Tourists and locals
E#5	60	High school	4	Drinks	Tourists and locals
Farmers (Group 3)					
NE#1	59	Primary school	3	Farming and Weaving (irregularly)	
NE#2	54	Primary school	6	Farming and Weaving (irregularly)	
NE#3	50	Secondary school	8	Farming and Weaving (irregularly)	
NE#4	59	Secondary school	5	Farming and Weaving (irregularly)	

Table 4.5: Profile of government officers and representatives from NGOs

Names	Government officers
G#1	A city hall officer in charge of LED project
G#2	Local authority in Ek Phnom (commune level)
G#3	Local authority in Ek Phnom (commune level)
G#4	Representative from Department of Tourism in Battambang Province.
G#5	Local authority in Ek Phnom (district level)
Name	Non-governmental organisation
NGO#1	A local non-governmental organisation providing education to children and craft skills (sewing & weaving) training to the local community.
NGO#2	A non-governmental organisation working on community development and capacity building. The organization is developing a social enterprise project based on potential resources in this community. The project will cover several areas at different stages of its implementation, including vocational training courses (hospitality and crafts), local food processing, and tourism services.

4.1.5 Interview process

The interview process was conducted between 1 June and 15 July 2018. In total, 16 participants were interviewed. The interview settings were scheduled according to the participants' convenience and availability. Government officers were interviewed at their office during working hours, while representatives from local non-governmental organisations preferred meeting at a local café after working hours. Most tourism entrepreneurs operated their business at home with the exception of one entrepreneur, who ran his accommodation service at a separate location from his house. Therefore, his interview was arranged at the lobby of his bungalow, while interviews with the rest of participants, including non-tourism households, took place in their homes. This choice of location provided a convenient and comfortable environment for the participants and at the same time provided

the opportunity for the researcher to observe their business environment and operations. It was found to be helpful in the interview question development and data verification.

Government officers and NGO representatives were found to be more relaxed with the interview. However, most of the villagers had not previously been interviewed; therefore, the interview started with a general conversation to establish trust and get them comfortable with the discussion. All interviews were conducted in Khmer language, and generally, each interview lasted 45–70 minutes. With participants' consent, a mobile phone was used to record the interview. In addition, notes were taken throughout the entire field visit. The break between one interview and another was not consistent. It depended on the data that were received. In some cases, the researcher needed to view printed reports obtained from the field to revise interview question direction and avoid redundancy before conducting the next interview.

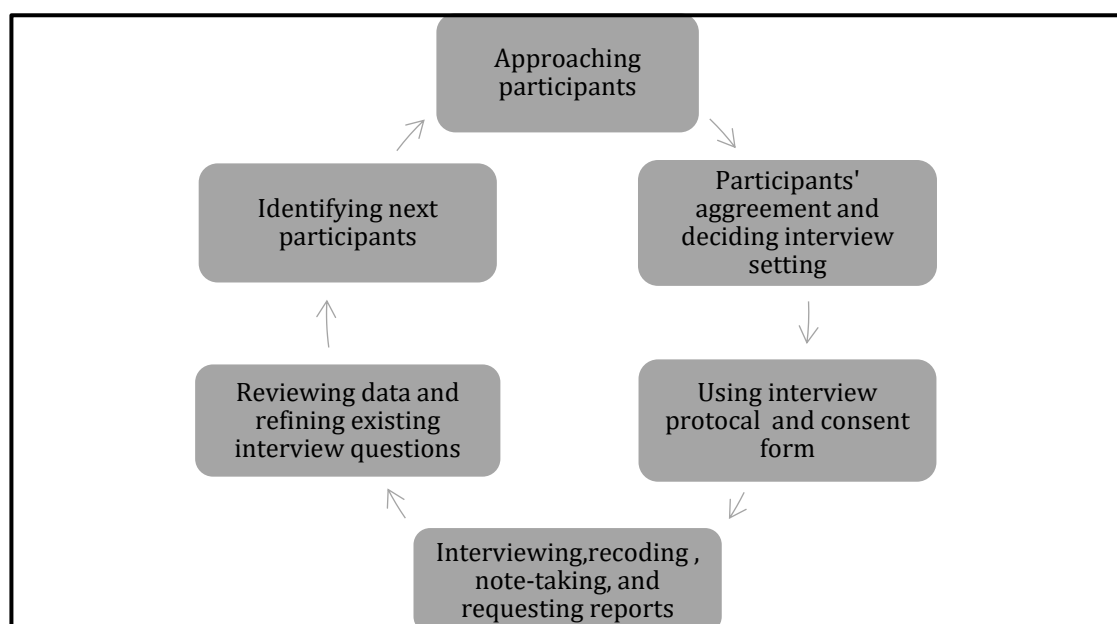


Figure 4.1: Research interview process

Source: Researcher

4.1.6 Data analysis approach

The thematic analysis approach was adopted in this study. Thematic analysis is the process of identifying and analysing patterns within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, as cited in Gray, 2014). It is about grouping data into themes and trying to find the relationships across the themes (Petty, Thomson & Stew, 2012; Pop, Ziebland & Mays, 2006), which capture essential data concerning research questions and represent meaning within data (Gray, 2014).

Thematic analysis is commonly used in qualitative analysis (Petty, Thomson & Stew, 2012), and this could be due to its simplicity and flexibility. As claimed by Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is theoretically an epistemologically independent; it, therefore, can be used across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches. He added that through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet sophisticated, account of data.

This study embraces the approaches from Walters (2016) and Esfehiani and Walters (2018) for the process of thematic analysis. The approach from Walters (2016) is a model consists of six steps: (1) initial reading of texts to gain familiarity; (2) repeated readings to code texts; (3) development of basic themes (4) consolidate into organising themes; (5) derive global themes and networks; and (6) describe, explore and analyse networks. This model is developed specifically for tourism research, based on the six-step procedure of Braun and Clarke (2006), which has been utilised for thematic analysis across different fields of research.

Furthermore, as noted by Esfehni and Walters (2018), tourism research, including this study, is generally involved with cross-language, of which the timing of translation is vital to ensure the reliability and credibility of the study. Their study suggested that translation is an internal procedure within a thematic analysis and situated it between the second and third phases when the codes are being consolidated into underlying themes. Therefore, the data analysis process of this study was undertaken in seven steps as follows:

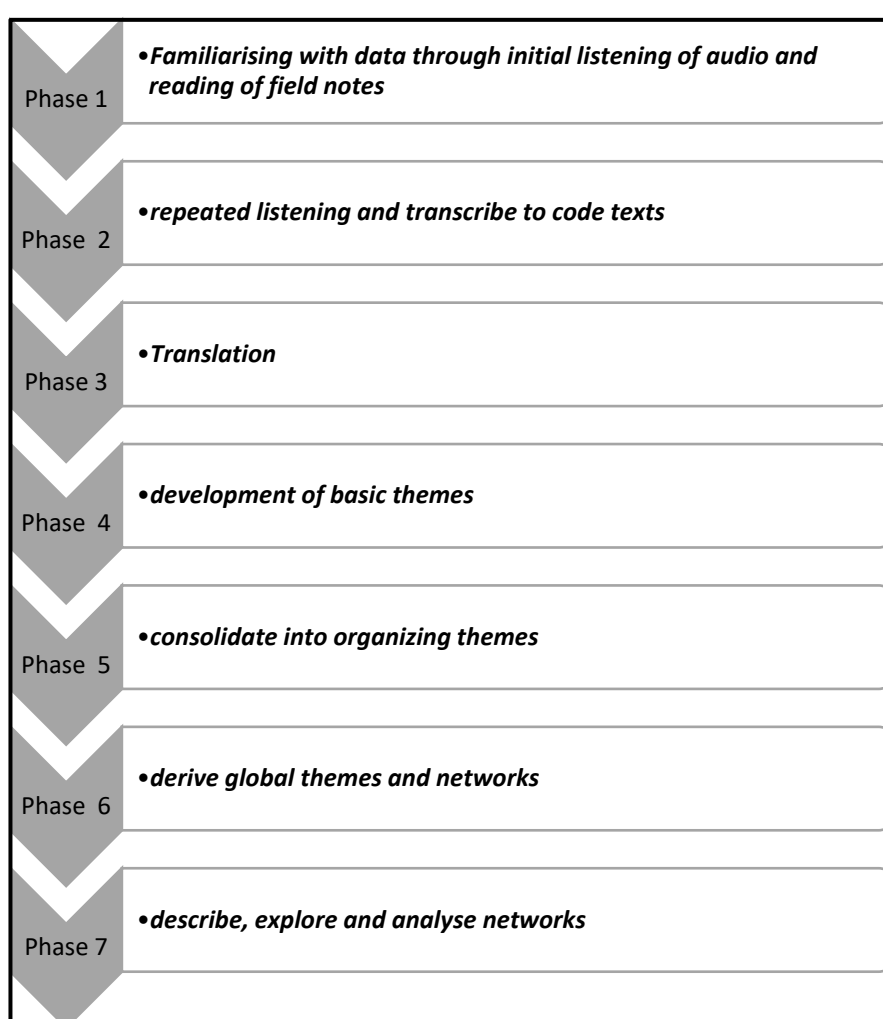


Figure 4.2: Data analysis process

Source: Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006) and Esfehni and Walters (2018)

Phase 1: Familiarising with data through initial listening of audio and reading of field notes

Due to time constraint, instead of fully transcribing data and reading through the transcription, the researcher listened to the whole conversation from each audio to gain an initial understanding of data. Interesting aspects relevant to the research question were noted in a Word document with summary and audio timeline detail. In addition, field notes were used to fill the missing information. Even though transcription is a key phase of data analysis within an interpretative qualitative methodology (Bird, 2005 p. 227), Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that as long as the information we need is retained and remains true to its original nature, rigour of data analysis can be ensured. Therefore, they suggest that at least "a verbatim account of all verbal utterance" should be maintained (Braun & Clarke, 2006 p.88).

Phase 2: Repeated listening and transcribe to code texts

With the direction given by the notes, the researcher listened to the voice recorder again and then fully transcribed different extracts of the interview, which were found relevant. At the same time, the researcher paid equal attention to all parts of the interview to confirm whether any appealing aspects had been missed, and that unrelated information would be excluded from the next steps of the analysis process. It was noted that new interesting extracts were still found and then edited to the transcript, which was uploaded into NVivo to process coding. At this point, the transcript was read sentence by sentence to identify interesting features which then formed initial coding.

Phase 3: Translation

Here is where translation took place. The researcher carefully translated all initial codes from Khmer to English. The same procedure was undertaken for the other interview audios. Therefore, by the end of this phase, a list of all initial codes across all data sets was obtained.

Phase 4: Development of basic themes

This step involved re-analysing the initial codes and figuring out how different codes could be combined into a broader category (Braun & Clarke, 2006). All codes were compared to find similar patterns and be developed into potential themes or basic themes. The relationship between codes, themes, and different levels of themes was also analysed in this phase.

Phase 5: Consolidate into organising themes

Basic themes and their codes were reviewed to see if they needed further refinement or separation. The themes with inadequate supporting codes collapsed and were relocated in other themes. Final basic themes that share similarities were categorised into a higher level of themes, which is called "organised themes".

Phase 6: Derive global themes and networks

The organised themes were further grouped into the highest-level themes called "global themes". The process was done through refining and generating more specific definitions of each theme (Gray, 2014).

Phase 7: Describe, explore and analyse networks

At this point, the three levels of themes were put back together and global themes were placed at the centre of this thematic network. This means global themes were described as relating back to the original research questions and the literature review.

4.2 Research ethics and trustworthiness

4.2.1 Ethical considerations

This research was granted ethics approval from the AUT Ethic Committee (AUTECH) to ensure essential moral principles throughout the research process (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Newsome, 2016). Ethical considerations are taken into account as follows:

- Before the interview: The Information Sheet, with detailed research objectives and protection of participant's rights, confidentiality and privacy, was provided to all potential participants. Once they make a decision to participate in the interview, interview settings were arranged at participants' convenience, and consent forms were signed.
- During the interview: This free flow of conversation is ensured to promote a friendly environment and encourage mutual respect between the participants and the researcher.
- After the interview: As recommended by Damianakis and Woodford (2012), participants' names were omitted and replaced by codes to avoid any risks associated with reporting details about a selected piece of data. In addition, the involvement of participants would be acknowledged in the statement of acknowledgment of the final report, which would also be

made available to all participants upon request. Data would be stored in an office in a locked cabinet (WH423) within the School of Hospitality and Tourism at AUT University and destroyed after six years, as a requirement of the university.

4.2.2 Research rigour

Research rigour or trustworthiness refers to the degree research, and its findings can be trusted (Robson, 2011). Research guided by different epistemological assumption requires various criteria to evaluate its rigour (Sandelowski, 1986; Koch & Harrington, 1998, as cited in Petty et al. (2012). To ensure the quality of this study, four criteria suggested by Petty et al. (2012) would be observed: *confirmability*, *dependability*, *credibility* and *transferability*. This set of criteria is a combination of criteria developed by (Nelson, 2008; Erlandson, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

Credibility (truth value or authenticity) is the extent to which the research findings can be trusted by its own participants. This criterion is ensured by employing data collection and analysis methods that have been developed by leading qualitative researchers and the essences of process are fully and strictly flowed. A purposive sampling technique enables recruiting the participants who are in a position to provide data required by research objectives (Patton, 1990), while triangulation allows the cross-checking of information reliability from different perspectives. Indicative questions for the participants to share their experiences openly (Flick, 2009) and a seven-phase data analysis procedure (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006) help minimise the loss of data originality during transcribing, translation and interpretation.

Dependability (consistency, auditability) is about ensuring that the study could be repeated, and variations are understood. Researcher theoretical perspective, descriptive study context and triangulation strategy in interview samplings help explain the inevitable variances in research results.

Confirmability is known as the degree to which the findings are the outcomes of the inquiry and not of the researcher's bias. In a qualitative study, researchers recognise the influence of their experience and subjectivity on data interpretation and make this known through reflexivity. A seven-phase data analysis procedure (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006), which the study employed, helps minimise the loss of data originality during transcribing, translation and interpretation.

Transferability represents the extent to which the finding can be generalised or applied across a particular context of study or with other participants. However, qualitative research is often context specific. Therefore, a clarification on transferability is done through specifying the setting of which the study is carried out, which is a rural tourism destination in Cambodia. The details on geographical, , socio-economic aspects and the phase of present tourism development are provided in Chapter 2 to give the readers or the users of the research findings ideas on how it could be fitted into other circumstances.

4.2.3 Researcher's role

The researcher was born and bred in Battambang. She also worked as a tour guide in the proposed research area for two years. Being an insider, she has gained a solid understanding of the current tourism situation there and already established a connection with the local people. This has facilitated her process to recruit participants from the group of "tourism-related entrepreneurs" – an added

advantage in gaining trust and engaging participants in a meaningful and more open conversation. As the researcher was new to the group of farmers, an initial meeting with them was conducted to establish relationships and trust before the interview process.

Chapter 5 Findings and discussion

The purpose of this study was *to explore the current environment of rural tourism entrepreneurship in Cambodia*.

This chapter evaluate the empirical findings from the selected case of Ek Phnom area with previous research outcomes concerning the following research objectives:

1. to explore the entrepreneurial interests of rural residents in tourism
2. to assess current situation of the development of rural tourism enterprises
3. to identify alternative strategies to encourage and enhance entrepreneurial initiatives in the rural tourism sector.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. Section 5.1 analyses the nature of tourism in Ek Phnom using rural tourism definition (four concepts defining rural tourism). Then, an analysis of entrepreneurial attitude of rural residents and their perceptions on the current e-climate in this area is presented in Section 5.2. Section 5.3 details the current rural tourism business development focusing on key barriers and facilitators. Finally, Section 5.4 discusses alternative strategies for improving entrepreneurial climate in Ek Phnom by focusing necessary institutional arrangements.

5.1 Rural tourism or tourism in rural area?

Despite the given attention on rural tourism as a synergy for sustainable development and tourism (CSDS, 2017), Cambodia currently does not have its own definition of what rural tourism looks like in this country. However, the integrated literature review suggests three concepts, which characterise rural tourism. These

concepts are ruralness, rural tourism attractions, consumption nature, and sustainable development, and these will be used to analyse the characteristics of tourism Ek Phnom area in the following sections.

5.1.1 Ruralness of Ek Phnom area

As Lane (1994) suggests, rural tourism can be defined by three criteria of the rurality of where tourism takes place: (1) population density and settlement size; (2) land use and economy; and (3) traditional social structure. Ek Phnom District, as identified by urban reclassification definition of Cambodia, is a rural area where population density is just two per square kilometre, and more than 60% of the total population are employed in agriculture (BTBPDP, 2017; DIP, 2016), which is higher than the standard percentage of 50% (UNFPA, 2014).

However, geographical aspect alone does not wholly describe the characteristics of rural tourism, specifically in this area or in other areas of Cambodia, as Trading Economy (2019) reported that 99% of the country total land size is classified as rural area, while agriculture area and forest consume 31% and 53% respectively. This means most touristic destinations and attractions in Cambodia can be simply considered as rural tourism. And it could be one of the reasons why there is no nationally assumed definition.

5.1.2 Rural tourism attractions in the Ek Phnom area

Rural tourism can also be defined based on the supply and consumption of rural resources as tourism attractions.

Rural tourism supply

From the supply side, rural tourism has been identified as activities or attractions offered by rural resources. These resources are not only farm-based but also include

varieties of special interests such as agri-tourism, ethnic tourism, ecotourism, culinary tourism, and creative tourism (Lane, 1994; Sasu & Epuran, 2016; Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997; Sznajder et al., 2009). These match what the Ek Phnom Area has to offer, as one of the main touristic destinations in the province.

Two temples were officially listed as national heritage and tourism spots: Ek Phnom Temple and Samrong Knong Temple.

Ek Phnom is a Hindu temple constructed in 1027 during the reign of King Sorayak Varman I (1002–1050). It has adapted the architecture of 11th century and illustrates the nature of life in the Angkor era, and therefore has a great artistic and historical value. It is located 14 kilometres from the provincial town, but recently a new road has made the site closer and more accessible.

Sarong Knong is approximately 5.7 kilometres from the city centre. It is the oldest Buddhist monastery in the province, constructed in 1707. The temple is also associated with the war history of Khmer Rouge regime because it was used as a detention centre and torture place. Nowadays the site is being preserved to promote peace and education at a community level. A small museum and memorial site can be accessed at no charge for intergenerational learning and memory about both ancient and recent history of the site.

Both temples serve as the main tangible touristic attraction to the area. In addition to this, there are subordinate products such as other old Buddhist temples, lovely village and houses, festivals and beautiful landscape of rice fields, lakes and rivers. The villagers also have a long unique tradition of producing rice paper and weaving cyperus mats. These traditional activities were passed from one generation to

another until now. The number of people making a living through these activities has gradually decreased due to the loss of interest of the younger generation and migration.

Tourism activities to this area include village and farm tours, bike tours and food experiences. Tourists, who were conventionally motivated by temple sites, are increasingly attracted to this remote area due to its interesting and unique rural lifestyle of the villagers. The attractions include farming, fishing and small family businesses of rice wine, rice paper, bamboo sticky rice, rice noodles and other handicrafts. The village receives both independent travellers and arranged tour groups, with short distance to the city centre; the tours usually take half a day. This means there is no overnight stay for the trip in this area.

Table 5.1 provides a summary of rural attractions the Ek Phnom area based on three attributes: *culture, nature and history* as categorised by Nair et al. (2015). Please see Appendix 7 and 8 for images.

Table 5.1: Summary of tourism products in the Ek Phnom area

Cultural Attributes	Natural Attributes	Historical Attributes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Villages: traditional houses, rural lifestyles - Food: rice wine, rice paper, rice noodles, banana paper, bamboo sticky rice, and numerous local fruits. - Activities: biking, walking touring - Farming activities - Local and national festivals - Religious sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landscape and rice field - The Great Lake, Sangke River and numerous small lakes - Bird sanctuary and conservation sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - War museum and genocide memorial site - Dam constructions during wartime - Buddhist temples - Hindu temple

Source: Researcher

Rural tourism demand

From demand perspective, rural tourism has been defined by the nature of rurality consumption. Rural tourism consumption in this area is in line with the assumption of Sharpley and Sharpley (1997) that some tourists visit the countryside with the desire to experience the rural setting rather than partake in particular activities. The majority of international tourists visiting Ek Phnom area are driven by the experience of rural lifestyle, which is in contrast to their daily lives. Travel is more about the consumption of activities in ruralness including visiting the villages, lifestyles of small-business families, tradition of handicraft production etc, in which the essence of authenticity and creativity is well-embedded, as pointed out by Sasu and Epuran (2016).

Interview with one craftsman indicate how tourists are attracted to the area:

Tourists come to see my craft production. Some don't believe that it is handmade. But when I showed them how it is made, they are very interested in it.... just like that, they visit here to see village, and how we make crafts.... (E#2)

Nonetheless, the general claim that rural tourism is more of a European concept (Nair et al., 2015), which bases its demand on tourists from the developed world (Oriade & Robinson, 2017a), is not entirely true in the case of the Ek Phnom area. The findings reveal that the rurality of Ek Phnom is in fact sought by both domestic and inbound tourism markets. Although the demand for authenticity and creativity from tour experience does not appear to be as evident among domestic tourists, interview data suggest that this attitude does exist among this group of tourists. For instance, when being asked about the type of customers and their purposes of choosing this remote destination, an owner of an accommodation business, explained:

...not only foreigners, we have been receiving Cambodian customers as well, from Phnom Penh (the capital city). Some said they get used to the experience of air-conditioned accommodation. This is what they don't have back at home. With this rural-style housing and setting, they can show their children, who have only been exposed to modern lifestyle, how life is like 20–30 years back. (E#1)

He also expressed his opinion that this is a new trend and growing demand as a result of modernisation and the need for unique experience.

5.1.3 Sustainable rural development of the Ek Phnom area

Increasingly, rural tourism has been recognized as a concept for sustainable rural development as it provides an opportunity for tourists to interact and learn about local culture, history and nature, while allowing the cooperation between community and government to generate socio-economic benefits with minimal harm to environment (Nagaraju & Chandrashekara, 2014; Nair et al., 2015). Although this aspect has not been fulfilled in the context of Ek Phnom, findings reveal a growing attention on utilising tourism development to revitalise rural economy and social welfare, where collaboration is vital to bring it to reality. A representative of an NGO stressed:

This should not be seen only as tourism and rural economic development, but also social development, aging population, women role in society, cultural preservation, social welfare and children education. (NGO#1)

5.2 Rural residents' profile

To facilitate the reporting of findings in the next section, a summary profile of participant from rural resident group is provided below in addition to detailed profile in Table 4.4.

Rural residents participating in this study includes both tourism-related entrepreneurs (E) and non-tourism related households (NE). Interview data

revealed that tourism-related entrepreneurs can be divided into two groups based on their entries into tourism businesses.

- Group 1 (E#1 and E#2) refers to entrepreneurs, who were involved in tourism in the form of new business venture.
- Group 2 (E#1, E#2 and E#3) refers to entrepreneurs who are involved themselves in tourism in a form of business expansion, which means their business existed before they expanded their market into tourism.
- Non-tourism related households are in Group 3 (NE#1, NE#2, NE#3, and NE#4). They are farmers and craftsman, who are not involved in any tourism business.

5.3 Rural residents' attitudes towards tourism entrepreneurship

This study examined and compared attitude toward developing a tourism business of rural residents, both existing rural tourism entrepreneurs and non-tourism related households, by using the concept of entrepreneurial propensity. As conceptualized by Shapero and Sokol (1982) and Krueger Jr and Brazeal (1994) entrepreneurial propensity is generated by the perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, and risk attitude.

The findings revealed interesting facts regarding entrepreneurial propensity among rural residents in this area. Regarding perceived desirability, two themes emerged: attitude towards entrepreneurship and towards tourism. Generally, positive perceptions on entrepreneurship are evident among all groups of respondents, yet when it comes to tourism sector, although tourism growth were recognized, only few entrepreneurs saw it as a desirable employment option. For risk attitude, it was apparent that entrepreneurs had stronger risk-taking attitudes than non-entrepreneurs. With regards to the feasibility of developing tourism businesses,

respondents from all groups share the same perception and numerous constraints have been raised regarding the feasibility to the start-up and expansion of businesses. Nonetheless, some respondents in Group 3 presented considerable levels of motivation, while all respondents in Groups 1 & 2, who are already operating tourism businesses appear to have a more positive tendency to move forward with their ventures and stay in tourism.

5.3.1 Towards entrepreneurship

Non-entrepreneurs (Group3)

Respondents in group 3 are all farmers, yet they previously involved themselves in small businesses activities. They demonstrated entrepreneurial spirit, and positive perceptions towards entrepreneurship. All respondent agreed that self-employment is a good career choice due to its economic benefits. Some respondents also echoed that it involves lower risk than farming, which can easily be affected by natural disasters. For example, some farmers stated:

... trading makes more profit because we might loss today, but tomorrow is another story. We might gain profit. Farming is unpredictable. Sometimes our hard work could be ruined by just one-night flooding. For rice, it's a one-year investment and for crop, it's a one-season loss. (NE#1)

...Farmers take as much risk as business doers.... Entrepreneurs make a lot more profit from just the margins. They can sell things twice the price they buy from producer. They don't loss as long as they make some sales. (NE#3)

However, the reasons they are only employing farming as a career is due to age or family-related reasons, as one farmer raised:

There are a lot of household chores to do already. No one helps me as my children moved out after getting married. And I am at this age. If I do farming, I don't have to go far from home. So, I can take care of everything on my own. (NE#4)

Rural tourism entrepreneurs (Group 1 & 2)

Respondents from Group 1 & 2 strongly presented positive attitude towards entrepreneurship, which can be inferred from their motivations and business plans.

Motivations

As McGehee and Kim (2004) argue, rural entrepreneurs are driven by solely either economic or socio-cultural benefits, yet more likely a mix of them. This was found in this case study. When reflecting on motivations, the entrepreneurs revealed that entrepreneurship is seen as an attractive career for both economic and non-economic benefits.

Economic reasons involve profitability and future financial stability. Residing in this rural district does not give the majority of the population many job opportunities besides agriculture. Apparently, self-employment is perceived as a more profitable option compared to farming, which requires hard labour or other available employment roles, in which their capabilities match. Therefore, these entrepreneurs involved themselves in tourism appeared to them as one of the career options.

Look, here, what can we do? Farming is too hard. Work as construction worker? No. If we can, doing a business is a good choice. Make a good profit. (E#1)

Base on typology of tourism entrepreneurs categorised by Koh and Hatten (2002), Group 1 is nascent entrepreneur-type, who formed a new tourism venture, while Group 2 is seen as marginal entrepreneur-type, who employed tourism as an additional source of income.

In addition, while agriculture is labour intensive and retirement pension is often not available in most careers, self-employment is seen as a better career choice to

ensure financial stability in their later stage of life. For instance, an entrepreneur who currently owns an accommodation business said that:

...because I think I cannot work as a tuk-tuk (a type of transportation) driver forever. Working as a tour guide is exhausting. I had to climb up two temples a day. Sometimes I asked tourists to go by themselves. For example, I stop climbing Takeo Temple (a tourism site) now. Climbing and guiding is so tiring. When I was young, I did it. Now I have to find an easier job. (E#1)

Similarly, being interested providing home-stay service as an expansion to current business, another entrepreneur explained how this would financially secure their retirement:

When I get old, I will not be able to do anything (physically) hard. So at least I can make some money from house or room renting. If I can earn just 50\$ per month, it is still good. (E#4)

With regards to non-economic benefits, entrepreneurs touched on the factors of ownership and sense of self-esteem. Having a complete ownership is a preferable quality about entrepreneur life. They can enjoy independence, not only in terms of finance, but also in the production process. This can be inferred from a craftsman who makes a living from weaving and sewing.

I work for myself.... I won't work for the wholesalers. If I wanted, I would have worked for them since long time ago. But I didn't. I always have a stand to be self-employed.... Some sewers never think about how much profit wholesalers benefit from us. They hire hundreds of sewers, and delivery man to work for them. All they need to do is finding market. They don't work very hard under control like us. (E#2)

Additionally, becoming an entrepreneur seems to have brought them personal pride and social status. For instance, one of the respondents frequently compared present livelihood to the past:

Previously, my family and I were just poor people...but now we can afford a better living...." and "From nothing and now I am the owner of a Bungalow. (E#1)

Similarly, when being asked, "How do you feel about being an entrepreneur?", one entrepreneur expressed the enthusiasm as following:

I am so happy to show people I can do it and do it well. Yes, they said I can do it very well. These are my outcomes. I am a widow, but I work very hard to support my children. I do not abandon them like some people do. (E#2)

Facilitators

In addition to motivations, there are some factors which had facilitated entrepreneurs in entering tourism businesses. These facilitators include business experiences and tourism network. For Group 1, work experience played an important role in developing their business skills and establishing tourism network.

I have worked (as a tour guide) with tourists, so I know their needs.... My experience in tourism is almost 20 years. Without this experience, I can't do anything even when I have a university Degree. Tourism experience is more important. (E#1)

Previously, I worked for a non-governmental organization by providing weaving training lesson. I was exposed to tourists who visited the organization. So, when the organization was closed, I continued weaving business at home. In 2011, tourists start coming to my house to see my craft work.... (E#2)

Group 2, on the other hand, was linked to tourism network by tour guides and transportation service providers. The local products and traditional way of production in their business were found appealing to tourists (mostly for international tourists) and considered as lifestyle tourism products. For these reasons, those entrepreneurs were involved in tourism, which provided them additional customers.

Tour guides had brought tourist to visit my house since long time, but I hadn't sold anything to them. When I reorganized my stall, more tourists were coming, so I expanded my business and generate more income from tourism.... They come by their own, some come with tour guides. (E#4)

It was the tour companies, which contacted me first.... Then, they brought more and more tourists. It all started with Soksabai then the other companies like Butterfly. (a biking tour companies). (E#3)

Therefore, it can be seen that tourism operators and workers are important link for this non-tourism entrepreneurs in the first place.

5.3.2 Towards tourism

To understand rural residents' attitude toward tourism, two areas were focused: their perception on tourism development in Ek Phnom and the intentions to invest in tourism businesses.

Tourism development in Ek Phnom

Rural residents in this study shared similar opinions regarding the current situation of tourism development in Ek Phnom. Rural resident participants detailed that they noted the growth of tourist arrivals, both domestic and international, however, the lack of well-organised infrastructure and attractions in the community tend to capture limited tourism demand that can be viable for new start-ups.

Yes, I saw a lot of tourists coming, sometimes with the big bus, sometimes with tuk-tuk. I also encountered with many groups of tourists biking around the villages with tour guides, or by themselves.... But there are a lot of sellers (for tourist demand) already, and our area does not seem to have enough attractions. Tourists only spend some hours here, and then they leave. (NE#3)

Entrepreneurs shared similar remarks on the increase in tourist arrivals in the area; however, some doubted the underlying cause of this growth:

This year, there are more tourists visiting the area. But I also see more new tour guides as well. I don't know whether because of them or because of tourism growth in the whole province. (E#4)

Regarding future tourism market, some expressed strong belief of a continuous growth, while some remained uncertain.

Business expansion plan

Despite the uncertainty, all entrepreneurs expressed the intention and commitment to continue or expand their tourism business. Several ways of expansion plan were mentioned: increasing the size of production, increasing variety of products and starting new related business.

The need for this kind of accommodation is growing. If I have enough money or more land, I will build more houses for my bungalow. (E#1)

I want to expand my business.... I want to organize my place with a bigger and proper roof so that I can place my weaving equipment. And I want to stock enough weaving materials because when the materials are out of stock, I need to stop my production for a while until I can buy more materials. So, it doesn't go smoothly.... Home-stay can also be an extra source of income. There are some tour guides asking if I can host some groups of tourists.... If I have enough money, I can do it. I can refurbish my house and put up a sign to attract some tourists to stay for one or two days. Because tourists want to stay with local people and see our lifestyle. (E#2)

Absolutely, I want to expand this business.... I have really good recipe, not like the others, who buy some ingredients from the other producers. Here everything, I grow and make by myself except very few plants that I can buy from local market.... I also have some idea to sell to more tourists too. (E#5)

Some of them have already thought of their potential descendants.

I am old now. I will pass this business to my children when I cannot do it anymore.... I would pass it to my daughter because there are not many people knowing how to produce it. It would be profitable.... Among all children, only my daughter knows well how to make wine ingredients. (E#5)

Yes, I will do it as long as I can.... For children, they might do their own jobs after their study. But if they don't want, they can do what I am doing now... I cannot expand my place anymore as there is no more space. But I can increase types of product and sales. In high season, I sell more products. I buy and produce more things. In low season, I produce just enough. The products I place inside the house (souvenirs), only tourists buy them. No local people will buy.... Now I sell almost everything. (E#4)

I want to provide home-stay service too, but my house doesn't have enough space. If can buy a piece of land neighbouring to my house, I want to build one or two rooms for tourists to stay.... I usually ask the land owner. Several rooms are enough.... Yes, I thought of it. I want to do many things, but with this small land, I cannot do anything.... (E#2)

As Getz and Carlsen (2000) point out that most rural tourism businesses often lack comprehensive succession plan,

5.3.3 Towards risk

Rural tourism entrepreneurs present strong risk attitude and entrepreneurial mindset. They believe that these are important qualities contributing to the success of an entrepreneur.

It depends on our effort, always looking for what can bring income. Do this and that. If one business doesn't work out, pick up another one and focus on it. More or less, it would generate extra income. (E#4)

It depends on opportunity. We look at possibility....The relatives from both sides, me and my wife, have no background in doing business. They are all orphan and poor. Since I got married, there was no any support from relatives, nothing. I worked from nothing. I worked with tourists, and all business ideas started from me grasping the opportunity. For this business, without any experience, we cannot do it. (E#1)

In contrast, non-tourism households appeared to have low risk-taking attitude, self-confidence and sense of competitiveness.

I saw some sellers sell their product until they sold their land. They made no profit. (NE#4)

Business is only for young people, they can sell. Before I used to sell sugarcane juice and drinks, but now I am getting older, it's tiring.... Whatever business I did always ended up failing.... I quitted and turned fully to agricultural activities. (NE#3)

I am this old. It is too late. If I were younger, I really want to be involved in tourism business. But at this age, I go to the temple (practice religious concept). (NE#1)

I am old now and dare not to ride motorbike or commute far away from home, to the city centre (for example). (NE#2)

These risk aversion attitudes were found in many countries as one of the causes for low entrepreneurial activities. The findings of this study support previous studies, which indicate the significant link between risk attitude and entrepreneurial mindset, and a start-up (Driga et al., 2009; Kline et al., 2011; Nguyen et al., 2014; Sikora & Nybakk, 2012). Risk attitude might have been the case for low business interest in this area. Although, farmers explained that their lack of entrepreneurial interest is due to other causes, they are perceived to have a change aversion attitude, as one local authority commented that:

Some people just make a living from what they used to do, layback. But those who used to trade, they still continue and try to expand their business. For instance, at Ek Phnom temple, those who are sellers, they are still there. Those who are not, they don't start any.

5.3.4 Barriers towards tourism business development

When asking about the feasibility in developing tourism business, all rural residents shared similar opinions that there are a number of barriers, which can be grouped into three levels of e-micro climate.

This findings confirm the assumption of Bryant (1989) who claim that businesses involving local initiatives are less likely, at least initially, to consider broad e-climate. Barriers perceived by rural residents are categorised by micro e-climates levels as

personal, family and firm, and local government levels. A summary of these perceptions is presented in Table: 5.2.

Individual level

At individual level, it was evident that risk attitude and entrepreneurial mindset, and competency are the two main e-climate components of rural tourism enterprise development in this area.

Furthermore, in consistence with the assertion of Zhao et al. (2011) and UNWTO (2017), human capital could be a major barrier for local participation in rural tourism development. All rural residents shared that they had received low education, both formal and informal, and access to business training is very limited. Group 3 indicated that the lack of knowledge and relevant skills is one of the reasons inhibiting their business start-up, while Groups 1 and 2 also believed that it is one of the barriers to their business operation and expansion. Although they could not identify the specific skills they would require to facilitate them, most residents pointed out that innovation is very important for any business including tourism.

We have to do something different from the other to be able to stay in the market. Selling? There are already a lot of existing food sellers. If we sell the same thing, we will not be able to compete with businesses which have long been established.... For example, we have to produce unique products as souvenir.... (NE#4)

Family and firm level

Tourism businesses in the Ek Phnom area are either family-owned ventures or sole proprietors. In the case of sole proprietors, the findings support the study of Banki and Ismail (2015), who assert that extended family members are employed in the business operation. In the case of family-owned ventures, the finding is partly in line with the studies conducted in Australia (Getz & Carlsen, 2000) and China (Zhao &

Getz, 2008), which found that rural tourism and hospitality businesses are small scale and operated by couples with close context with customers. However, these tourism businesses are not newly established with part-time operations as found in the above case studies. They are operated full-time, and either newly established or family inherited.

Nonetheless, the findings support the above studies that labour and financial supports from family members are key factors influencing entrepreneurial project development as well as firm characteristics.

At the family and firm level, rural residents perceive four key challenges to business development: a lack of capital, physical resource, and labour. Most participants said their families do not have sufficient finance. In addition, the access to safe financial support is inadequate. Participant revealed that there are several micro finance institutions (MFIs), which can provide them with enough loans. However, this source of finance was not considered as a good option due to high interest rates. It was mentioned that many residents in this community are in debt with MFI due to the inability to pay back the interest. This issue was also found in a case study of agri-tourism, which was conducted in Siem Reap by Mao et al. (2014).

This limits their capacity in production and expansion as sustaining the business largely depend on small profit they made. Some entrepreneurs shared:

The issue is capital. No matter how many business ideas I have, but without it, I can move my business. (E#2)

I will not borrow money from MFI. I will operate and grow the business with whatever I have. (E#4)

Second issue is physical resources. Rural residents explained that they do not have adequate resource for a business start-up or expansion. *“For instance, providing home-stay service would require a land ownership and facilities, however land is very expensive now (E#4).* Similarly, one farmer stated:

We need a good location for business to grow. Therefore, landownership is our challenge to be engaged in business. (NE#3)

Third, a lack of labour represents another barrier. Group 3 participants are all farmers who make a living of farming. In addition to farming activities, household chores are their full-time responsibility; they therefore do not think they have enough time for business activities. For this reason, starting a new venture appeared to be challenging and requires a collective agreement with all family members. One respondent explained:

There are a lot of household chores to do already. No one helps me as my children moved out after getting married. And I am at this age. If I do farming, I don't have to go far from home. So, I can take care of everything on my own. (NE#4)

Groups 1 and 2 are currently involving their family members in business, yet if their businesses are to expand, external labour force is required. However, finding labour force could also be difficult due to the high migration rate in the area.

If I expand my business, that would be my children who help me. I do some tasks and they help with some other tasks. But they need to go to school too. They might not have time to help me. So, I would have to find more labour. But it is so hard to find now in the community. So quiet now. They all go (migrate) somewhere else. It is so hard to find worker now. There are only old people left to take care of grandchildren. In the lower part of the village, mostly old people who stay to look after their baby grandchildren (whose parents migrate for jobs. (E#4)

Fourth, rural residents also pointed out the issues related to networking and market access. The lack of demand was frequently raised as it causes constraints in business profitability and capacity to sustain their living.

For Group 3, tourism business ventures do not seem feasible, as they do not have access to them. For instance, one respondent expressed:

If tourists are interested in our place, I'm interested in doing business with them.... We want to have a connection with them, but we don't know how to make such connection. (NE#4)

For Groups 1 and 2, the limited access to tourism market was obvious as market interaction is mostly one-sided. Participants said that they do not have any possibility to promote their business or products, and tourism information is generally obtained via personal networking, which is not always sufficient. For instance, several entrepreneurs explained that tour guides and transportation service providers are their only connections to the tourism market. As one entrepreneur said:

I know only Tuk Tuk drivers who used to come here, group tours..., new groups, I think they know my place from other drivers.... (N#4)

Local government policies level

In regard to local government policies, rural residents indicate two constraints: tax regulations, and a lack of government support and encouragement.

Through the interviews, both non-entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs revealed that one of the underlying reasons behind their reluctance to start or expand their businesses is the tax regulation and the complicated legal application. Some entrepreneurs believe they would be imposed tax if their businesses are expanded or more standardised.

I don't know about business registration as well. It's complicated and expensive. (E#5)

Absolutely, I want. I want to expand this business. But the situation in the country is not good, not stable. There is no regulation yet, the regulation about alcohol production. It's stuck at the Office of the Council of Ministers.... As I know, the tax for alcohol is very high. (E#5)

In addition, most rural residents expressed that they have received very limited support from local authorities. Supports, in the forms of finance, training or encouragements, were deemed important yet unavailable. Some participants felt that they are being ignored or excluded. For instance, one participant said:

"I never know or receive any training. If there are training course in the village, only a small group of people who are close to the authorities is informed."(E#4)

However, one of the participants presented an exceptional case:

"I was encouraged by the local authorities. They told me that if there's any issue occurring in business operation, for instance, argument among customers or the need for security guard, I can contact them." (E#1)

Table 5.2 summarize perception of rural residents on barriers to tourism business development. These barriers are arranged in three levels with sun- categories adopted from micro e-climate detailed in Table 3.2.

Table 5.2: Perceptions of rural residents on barriers to tourism business development categorized by micro e-climate level

Micro e-climate	Key descriptors	Non-tourism entrepreneur	Entrepreneurs
Individual level	Risk attitude and mindset Age/ health	Low risk-taking ability Low self-confidence Failure experience Failed role model	Risk-taking Competitive Optimistic Opportunity seeking
	Competency	Lack of tourism awareness and skills Low level of education Inability to receive training	Lack of tourism awareness and skills Low level of education Inability to receive training
Family and firm level	Financial infrastructure	Lack of finance Lack reliable access to loans and credit Need collective decision of family	Lack of finance Lack reliable access to loans and credit Need collective decision of family
	Physical infrastructure	Location Lack facilities for tourism business Lack land ownership Lack access to raw materials for craft production	Lack land ownership Lack access to raw materials for craft production
	Human resources	Lack of labour Conflict with family responsibilities and farming activities	Lack of labour from family and labour market due to migration
	Networking/ social capital	Lack tourism exposure No access to tourism networks and market	Known by tourism agents yet still limited access to tourism networks and market
Local government level	Government support	Lack of governmental support and encouragement Concern about general safety and security	Lack of governmental support and encouragement Concern about general safety and security
	Governance/leadership and policies	Complicated administrative work and perceived cost	Complicated administrative work and perceived cost Tax regulation

5.4 Barriers to rural tourism development in the Ek Phnom area

In Chapter 2, barriers to rural tourism development were grouped into three fundamental categories: supply of products and services, market demand and institutional arrangements. This section presents these barriers from the perspectives of Ek Phnom District participants, which include local community (entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs), public sector and civil society.

5.4.1 Supply of products and services

For the supply side of rural tourism, there are two major barriers preventing rural tourism entrepreneurs from fully benefiting from tourism activities. They are skills and financial capital constraints.

Lack of business skill

Rural residents in the Ek Phnom area generally lack tourism awareness and resource management skills, and although some existing tourism-related businesses have taken place, the study have revealed limited entrepreneurial capability among entrepreneurs. Due to the small size of business operations and tourism market, at this point, a deficit of three skills, namely product development, service delivery, and financial management, were deemed the most critical from all participants' perspectives.

Product development skill

There are two main issues regarding tourism product development. Firstly, it involves standardisation of existing products. Low tourism awareness results in limited quality of products to respond to tourism demands. Although entrepreneurs have gained technical skills in production, traditional business, poor packaging and

renovation are still seen as weakness to their product quality. An officer from Department of Tourism commented:

The main constraint is that the locals do not understand about product development. What products are needed.... We (the community) have potential products, for example... but they don't response to market demands especially tourism market. It's due to packaging quality and market standard. (G#4)

Secondly, tourism product development involves product diversification. The destination lacks supporting tourism products; however, there is limited innovation skill in converting and differentiating rural resources into tourism attractions. Lack of understanding of tourism concept leads to repetitive products, which increases the intensity of competition in the small existing market. Respondents from NGO and DoT (G#4) shared similar remarks, as following:

There is lack of understanding of what is eco-tourism concept and authenticity.... (NGO#2)

The imitative business is very common. If one business is successful, people will follow each other.... There is no creative strategy. This leads to low profitability.... They should have more sense of creativity in both production and service delivery.... They can diversify local products to attract tourists. They first can start with domestic tourists. (G#4)

Financial management skills

Financial management is one of the barriers most of entrepreneurs faced. Most entrepreneurs shared their similar perception that the neglect of financial management is due to the small size of their business.

I never keep records, revenue or cost. Sometimes I earn enough for daily living in my family, but if there's unexpected expense, it's not enough. It's because I don't have big income. (E#2)

I don't how much profit I make per day, I don't pay much attention. My business is small. I know only revenue which I use to by what were out of stock.... (E#4)

However, respondents from DoT and NGOs emphasised the importance of financial management as it stands among the main causes of rural business failure. For instance, they commented:

The community does not know the 'Cost Principle'. (G#4)

Some villagers who participated in my programme, after starting off their production for a while, they somehow ran out of finance. There is no clear management. (NGO#2)

This participant went on to explain that poor financial management could lead them to either continuous debt with micro-finance institutions or a widespread migration in the neighbourhood.

Having recognised these issues, DoT is determined to emphasise these skill sets in the future plan of tourism training courses. This will be elaborated in Section: Training the trainer, p.105.

Profitability

The profitability of tourism-related business in the Ek Phnom area depends on both local and tourist demands. Nowadays, the market demand is perceived to be insufficient, and has posed a limitation for the birth and growth of rural tourism enterprise in this area. This has resulted from three factors.

Firstly, migration of the local population has caused inactivity in the local economy and made business less viable.

Look, this year! Every year I can sell a lot during the Khmer New Year (the celebration is in April annually). But this year I couldn't sale at all. So quiet. In the previous years, people migrating to Thailand could make a lot of money, so they can spend a lot here. But this year they can't. So, a lot of people do not come back to visit their families. It is also due to the restriction about migration... (E#4)

Secondly, low profitability is due to the limited international tourist arrivals, and seasonality. Participants from government bodies also acknowledged this issue. According to the DoT staff, although Battambang has seen increasing tourist arrivals, the number of tourists visiting Ek Phnom is still limited compared to other destinations in the province.

The number of tourists is still limited. For example, in 100 tourists visiting Banan, only 10 going to Ek Phnom. And they don't buy a lot of souvenirs. So, food selling is how most residents can benefit from tourism. And it's only small sized-business.... But for traditional family production, residents can earn more especially with domestic tourists.... Anyway, the residents haven't been able to generate much profit yet. (G#4)

Thirdly, the limited business experience of rural entrepreneur negatively affects the success of business. It leads to poor management, especially in cost control, and low capacity to produce quality products or services that can reap off tourism benefits.

5.4.2 Market demand

Barriers related market demand side include lack of marketing planning and poor product packaging.

Marketing plan

Findings show limited marketing strategies adopted by most entrepreneurs. Advertising, which is seen as a key strategy for business growth, was not developed or actively adopted by most entrepreneurs. They are still utilising traditional business methods and rely on “Word of Mouth”, which reaches limited market. Additionally, the seasonality and incapability in measuring market size have restricted their operational capacity, which results in reluctance in promoting their business. For instance, several craftsmen explained:

I don't advertise or anything. Buyers know me from other buyers. (E#3)

I can't advertise my products as I cannot produce enough in high season. So, in low season, I still continue my sewing, to store enough products during high demand season. I never seek a bigger market, because I cannot supply enough if a big order is placed. (E#2)

However, entrepreneur with high education and working experience in tourism appeared to have strong technological capability and higher performance. An entrepreneur emphasised the significant contribution of ICT adoption in the success of business operation.

Internet and website are very important marketing tools. It has helped me a lot. That's where all the booking is from and sale is made. (E#1)

Product packaging and attractiveness

The weaknesses of touristic attractions in the Ek Phnom destination include poor packaging and lack of diversification of products. As detailed in Section 5.1.2, tourism in Ek Phnom is based on cultural and rural attributes of the whole villages. Currently, travel packages include village tours to see handicraft production of different small family-owned businesses. However, these tours are operated on a separate basis without linking each family to another. According to local authorities, a good circuit itinerary can be organised as long as the production schedule of each family business is compatible and that requires communication with tour guides. Despite the DoT having established tourism corridors and route maps that suggest a sample of well-organised itineraries, travel packages are still mainly provided by outside travel agents and transportation service providers, who appeared to have limited communication with the DoT. In addition, the absence of communication between travel organisers and local entrepreneurs, and their limited tourism capacity are perceived to be barriers to achieving well-bundled excursion experience in the community, as one commented:

It's difficult to attract enough tourists when the residents operate their business separately. For example, tourists visit rice paper production, then they continue to see bamboo sticky rice production. But sometimes the sellers (entrepreneurs) have their own schedule, so when tourists arrive, they already finish their production.... Sometimes tourists can see (the craft production), but sometime not, because of this. (G#3)

Similarly, an NGO staff agreed:

Most tourist coming to Battambang, they want to see local lifestyle. Some tourists are interested in the uniqueness of each destination. In Battambang, there are not many places. And the communities, which make a living on producing local product, are not yet clustered. So, the concept I have could act as an employment hub for the community. And we want to spread this to market to other travel agencies, which provide tour packages (in this province).” (NGO#2)

Additionally, rural resources have not been effectively diversified or transformed into tourism products. Limited product development skills have hindered local entrepreneurs’ capability in perceiving what can be utilised or commercialised as tourism specialties. For instance, as a DoT officer commented that some kinds of local cuisine, which have tourism potentials, have been overlooked. Similarly, seeing the potentials of the area, which should be better marketed for tourism, participants from DoT shared as following:

Tourists need products with quality and standard. And it should be creative and it should reflect the characteristic of locality... If it still lacks creativity, hospitality and explanation, it wouldn't be attractive for tourists.... We want them to work as community. Work together to fully utilize resources and attractions in that district.... They need to cooperate for instance; they can provide food and drinks. (G#4)

5.4.3 Summary

There are a number of challenges, on both supply and demand side, facing rural tourism development in Ek Phnom. On demand side, most entrepreneurs, who are operating businesses in this area lack business competence. This issue together with seasonality prevented them from profitably invest in sector. On demand side, these

entrepreneurs struggled to develop effective marketing plan and attractive product package that can grasp tourism market. Table 5.3 summarise these challenges by adopting micro e-climate categories presented in Table 2.3. The next Section will cover a number of suggestions in response to these issues.

Table 5.3: E- climate in the Ek Phnom Area

Micro e-climate	Elements
General context	Limited market demands due to stage of tourism development
Quality of life	Concern of security
Community and cultural norms	Inactive attitude of residents Low risk-taking ability Lack successful role model Family and farming culture Lack entrepreneurial culture
Education and assistance	Low level of general education Lack of business and innovation skills Lack tourism awareness Inability to receive training
Financial infrastructure	Lack of capital Lack reliable access to loans and credit
Physical infrastructure	Lack land ownership Lack facilities for tourism business Lack access to raw materials for craft production
Human resources	Lack of labour due to migration
Networking/ social capital	Lack tourism exposure No access to tourism networks No access to tourism market Lack access to tourism information resource
Business support services/	Lack training and business advisory
Governance/leadership or Public-private partnership	Lack of governmental supports Complicated administrative work Tax regulation Low capacity of government staff Prioritization of policy Lack partnership

5.5 Institutional arrangements: Alternative solutions

By putting together the perceptions of all stakeholders, this study found a number of institutional arrangements, which are necessary for the development of rural tourism and tourism e-climate in the Ek Phnom area, and in which these stakeholders have roles to play. These institutional arrangements include:

1. Tourism product development
2. Policies supporting SMEs
3. Networking and access to market
4. Skill training and advisory
5. Financial support to tourism entrepreneurs and
6. Physical infrastructure

In addition, all respondents shared common opinion that Ek Phnom lacks tourism attractions to generate sizeable tourism market that can foster business growth. Therefore, in order to create adequate entrepreneurial opportunity and a supportive e-climate, the area requires a complete and competitive tourism package that can bring in more tourists.

The following section presents the participants' key suggestions with strategies to improve tourism package in Ek Phnom and the perceived roles and responsibilities the key actors should possess to bring about a favourable e-climate.

Improving the Province's Tourism Destination Image

Having no clear direction of what types of tourism the province is promoting has led to poor promotion, less competitive advantage, and tourism development that is not compatible with the local value. It was raised that the province needs a clear vision of its tourism image to compete or complement other tourism destinations in the

country. This strategy involves differentiating the province's tourism image. As commented by one NGO staff:

Currently, authorities don't really have long-term perspectives. They want to develop tourism in this province like in Siem Reap.... They don't have clear stance I think this is the gap government authorities in Battambang overlook. They want Battambang to be the second Siem Reap. That's not what tourists want to see here.... So, if they develop a destination, they might want to change the complete nature of the place. (NGO#1)

At the moment, Ek Phnom has not fully capitalised on its competitive advantage. The participants pointed out that the province ought to shift the focus to cultural tourism and agri-tourism as the province's main attractions. One NGO staff was optimistic about viable links to tourism. He said:

Ek Phnom is a unique tourism destination. Along the way, there are local activities.... Most tourists coming to Battambang don't want to see (Hindu) temple. They spend their time visiting a lot of temples in Siem Reap already.... Most tourists want to see local lifestyle. Some tourists are interested in the uniqueness of each destination. In Battambang, there are not many places like this. (NGO#2)

Linking tourism to agriculture

Ek Phnom is an agricultural-based area. By linking tourism to agri-business and agricultural activities, can it not only complement and diversify existing tourism products, but also increases business opportunity in the area for farmers who are heavily dependent on farming. As one NGO staff pointed:

For instance, the community can do organic farming, vegetables and fruits. There is no such business yet. But these are all the possibilities.... We don't introduce a completely new thing that the farmers cannot do or adapt. In Ek Phnom, we can do food processing. With technical assistance in addition to their existing production, they will be able to grow.... There are demands for such market. Our project will initiate herbal tea production outsourcing ingredients from local farm. (NGO#2)

Similarly, a local authority from Ek Phnom commune made similar remark regarding the opportunities gained by linking agriculture and tourism:

The Green Company (a private agricultural company) initiated the agriculture association, several months ago. But it's still under process. If we can modernize the agricultural production in this area, tourism can possibly grow. But we haven't achieved that yet.... If the agriculture association take place, it would be a huge opportunity for tourism.... we can link with the Dam construction sites. (G#3)

(See Table 5.1 for tourism products in the Ek Phnom area)

Linking existing craft businesses

As detailed in Section 5.3.2, tourism in Ek Phnom involves crafts businesses, which serve both tourism and local demands. However, a lack of cooperation between local craft business leads to poorly organised itinerary or poor tourism package, which is deemed as the destination weakness to attract more tourists. A participant commented that both the government and NGOs foresee little benefits to the community given the existing market, unless the communication and cooperation with other craftsmen improves. For instance, an officer from DoT commented:

The locals haven't been able to fully exploit tourism benefits yet. Firstly, it's because their businesses are separated. If there is a cluster in operation, work as community, for example in production process.... If it's in small scale... those tourism activities are not attractive to tourists.... We want them to work ... together to fully utilize resources and attractions in that district.... They need to cooperate.... (G#4)

In addition, these craft businesses are operated in small sizes using family labour, which limits their productivity capacity. The small size of the business makes it difficult to response to a huge market. It was agreed by both entrepreneurs and local authorities that there is enough local demand for business expansion if more labour is also employed in production. One local authority pointed:

Some businesses cannot response to the market demand, while some cannot find enough market. If they can cooperate and take turn with other crafts producers to supply the products, they can grasp bigger market (G#3)

Therefore, linking these craft business can contribute to the e-climate in two aspects. Firstly, it creates opportunity for improving tourism package in the area. Secondly, it provides opportunities to expand market size of the current production, while improving networking. With the expansion, rural tourism enterprise could generate substantial capital to improve their product standards, which could contribute to the tourism products in the area.

5.5.1 Roles of Local government

There are six roles of local governments, which are crucial to the development of rural tourism enterprise in this area.

Legal support: policies and regulations

Most respondents raised the issues regarding regulations. This shows that an intervention of government would determine the development of rural tourism entrepreneurship in this community. The absence or presence of certain policies can also prevent rural tourism stakeholders from engaging in a meaningful manner.

Two forms of legal support were raised: policies supporting SMEs and local products and facilitation roles.

Firstly, the implementation of policies supporting the growth of rural tourism enterprise is crucial. For instance, one NGO staff (NGO#2) commented that social enterprises working with the community should receive adequate encouragement and support. Fair trade policy is necessary to encourage fair competition and local product promotion by reducing imported products. He shared some experiences regarding legal barriers, which the government should consider improving in order

to attract investment into facilitating social enterprises, which can positively contribute to the community.

I think Battambang should have a marketplace (for local made products and craft). Phnom Penh and Siem Reap already have it... but fair trade has not yet gained governmental supports... I want to do this to seek attention from government for social enterprise initiatives. Nowadays, very little consideration on this area. For example, as long as it's a business, VAT is imposed... all made by and benefits local community. Government should provide an exceptional condition for social enterprise especially at the survival stage. (NGO#2)

Secondly, in addition to supportive policies, the government should provide legal facilitation to remove business barriers.

Generally, the supports we need from the government are legal facilitation because sometimes, the regulations are not compatible with our work.... For example, if we can implement our project before registration is fully granted. That's how they can help.... For our community project, Australian government would to support, but the issue is they are required to sign a memorandum with the Ministry of Foreign Affair of Cambodia first... (NGO#2)

Tourism planning and marketing

As pointed out earlier that it is important to improve the province's tourism image.

A DoT and an NGO staff acknowledged that stronger tourism marketing is required to promote the province, and the DoT should take the lead role.

DoT has the responsibility to promote and encourage stakeholders.... But currently we need more marketers. (G#4)

I think, first, what they can support is to widely promote touristic destinations in the province especially DoT because it is the main provincial headquarter. (NGO#2)

Culture and heritage preservation

Incorporating with improving the province's tourism image, the preservation of culture and heritage is essential. The province was known as a cultural and natural tourism destination. The preservation of cultural attributes should be one of the

areas of focus for tourism development. However, there is a concern about limited government intervention in preserving these assets, as a respondent from one NGO suggested that:

DoT should support in the reservation of identity and tradition of some touristic destinations.... Development is important, but we should consider what kind of development and direction is preferable. If everywhere is modernized, the authenticity and identity of those will be lost.... First, authorities should take a lead role in the preservation of heritage buildings. For example, the process of registering colonial buildings with UNESCO, it's still under discussion. Secondly, some communities which possess strong cultural identity and characteristics should receive governmental support to maintain it, not change too fast... Currently, there is lack of collaboration and supports from government bodies. (NGO#2)

Training the trainers

As found in this case study, skill shortage is one of the barriers facing rural entrepreneurs in EK Phnom. The interview with the Head of DoT revealed that the Department has well recognised the issues concerning this issue and the lack of marketable products to absorb tourism benefits. Therefore, DoT has determined to tackle these issues through providing tourism training courses to tourism operators, who will further transfer all skills to their own communities. As revealed by one DoT staff:

DoT plays a role in providing training course.... In the Ministry of Tourism, there is Department of Training and Product Development, tourism products. And we have been working on this.... we determine that we will implement a strategy we have had developed. We wouldn't guaranty to what extent it's successful, but this will be a model. We need tour operators in all communities to collaborate with us. Then they can apply these skill trainings in their communities. (G#4)

He raised an example of crafts business and went on to provide more details on this training plan as following:

It's SME or family business. In Vietnam, it is successful. There are different groups for production, the elderly, adults, students.... So, the local economic is active. And I want communities here to adopt it. But first, I have to find capable led-teacher/trainers. They are volunteers. I am organizing the training space. I have a lot of connections. Once the space is arranged, I'll invite targeted residents from tourism potential districts. They will be provided training course on capital utilization, product segmentation and hospitality. These three skills are important to enable them to successfully participate and benefit from tourism activities. (G#4)

Improving access to information and networking

Information resource is vital for the development of rural economics where its ecosystem is more vulnerable. However, interviews reveal a poor mechanism of information transfer among stakeholders. Limited access to information regarding market demand and finance was raised among entrepreneurs, non-entrepreneur and NGOs. Besides the well-known issue of seasonality, the lack of information about market has hampered the growth of local tourism business. According to entrepreneur participants, Group 1 and 2, tourism information is generally obtained via personal networking, which is not always sufficient. For instance, several participants explained that transportation service providers are their only source of information on the tourism market.

If tourists are interested in our place, I'm interested in doing business with them.... We want to have a connection with them, but we don't know how to make such connection. (NE#4)

The market for rice paper is seasonal. Sometimes, I cannot supply enough, sometimes I cannot find enough market. I don't have clear information about market demand. That's so difficult. No clear market demands, up and down, many competitors. (E#4)

Tuk-tuk drivers who used to come here, group tours... new groups, I think they know my place from other drivers.... (E#2)

Similarly, NGOs expressed difficulty in accessing information related tourism in the province. This poses a barrier in initiating an effective development project in the

community. A respondent from a local NGO shared that *"Somehow, information resource related to tourism market in the province is very scarce.... The government should provide the accessibility to this."* (NGO#2)

In addition to access to tourism information, other sources of information regarding entrepreneurship and agriculture are also crucial channel in fostering entrepreneurial mindset among rural community farmers to develop and modernize agricultural production. This issue was raised by one NGO staff:

The government should broadly promote skill training and entrepreneurship program on broadcasting system or media. This can help change the traditional mindset or perception among farmers or rural community. If farmers are made aware of available program or supports in the community or province, they will be able to seek necessary supports.... In the community, local leaders and authorities have to communicate regularly with the locals (NGO#1)

Improving physical infrastructure

Finding revealed that infrastructure is one of the barrier for some craftsmen in accessing adequate raw material for their production. This limit their production capacity as most production is seasonal or irregularly. It is this limited capacity, which keeps their production as a small and family owned business. One farmer who weaves mat in off-farm season described her difficulty:

I can generate more income in weaving mat than in farming. It takes me 2-3 days to cut and collect raw materials, but that will be enough to make 100 mats. But it is very far to get these raw materials, and these plants only grow in big and deep lake. It's difficult to get them. (NE#2)

Interview with authority from district government confirmed that the area lack physical infrastructure, which the local government is trying to improve. One office acknowledged:

We are trying to improve infrastructure in this district, roads, bridges.... We believe that this will greatly improve accessibility to the area, more tourists will be able to come in, for instance, to visit Ek Phnom temple.... (G#5)

Therefore, improving physical infrastructure should be taken place in this area. It is crucial in enriching local e-climate as it provides adequate accessibility, which contribute to tourism growth and local business development. The roles of the NGOs

5.5.2 Roles of non-governmental organizations

The finding reveals two types of NGOs in this area. Some NGOs are non-profit organisations providing only training courses and social supports in the community. The NGOs participating in this study are profit-making organizations functioned as social enterprises. An NGO, which is investing in tourism project to contribute to the development of this community, made the following suggestions to other NGOs in this area:

NGOs should, to some extent, seek revenue in order to be self-sustained. If they heavily rely on external funding, how long can they ensure the sustainability of the organization? When the projects end, their operation also comes to an end. So, what happen to the community they were working with? What happen to the children who are taking the courses? (NGO#2)

The study found five key roles, which NGOs can do to support rural tourism enterprise in this area. These key roles are detailed as follow:

Gaining access to the market and skills development?

NGOs play a critical role in linking the supply-side and demand-side. The findings revealed that NGOs have been playing an important role in providing skills in this community. Participating NGOs provides skills training centres, through which the trainee and community can gain access to market for their craft outputs. For

instance, NGO#1 explained how the tourism initiatives that the organization proposed, could link the craftsmen and farmers to the tourism value chain.

Nowadays, the communities which produce local crafts are not yet mobilized. So, our project centre will serve an employment hub for the community. And it can spread the community profile to other travel companies, which provide tours (in Battambang) Community can either produce crafts at their own houses or in this hub. There are a lot of projects, not only handicraft, but we also plan to establish home-stay in this community. We will initiate herbal tea production, outsourcing ingredients from local farm. (NGO#2)

The centre provides training courses focusing on sewing and weaving skills.... Throughout the training, the trainees can produce crafts or souvenirs, for which the centre find the market. (NGO#1)

While the DoT is responsible for providing skills training at the provincial level, the NGOs' roles at the local level would maximise the number of local residents receiving skill development courses.

Community business advisors

NGOs should take joint responsibilities with government to provide the community business supports and advisory. Interview data indicated shared an opinion between NGOs and DoT that the business advisors are required. There are two main advantages for this. Firstly, this will encourage and ensure the community involvement in the tourism development by providing mentorship. As an officer from DoT pointed out:

Rural residents need community advisors.... This group has to show the community the example of successful cases. For instance, they should point out which community successfully adopt OVOP initiative, and what are the benefits of cooperation in OVOP. By indicating business options the community have, they would be more courageous and motivated to be engaged in craft business or related-tourism business. (G#4)

Secondly, further guidance and consultancy are necessary supports added on to skill trainings. This would strengthen rural residents' existing capacity and increase their

opportunities for livelihood improvement. One NGO informant made the following comment:

After the training, they need more mentorship and consultancies to give them direction of how to efficiently apply their skills.... No matter how much government find markets for their production, if the local people have skills, but do not know how to use it, it is barely possible to develop rural community. (NGO#1)

Therefore, community advisors, who provide business mentorship, could create a supportive climate for local tourism business to grow.

Local leaders and collaborate with other NGOs

Leadership of government and its down-line agencies would not be enough for success in developing rural tourism entrepreneurship. Local leaders and NGOs also hold important responsibility in encouraging bottom-up initiative in the way that benefits community and rural entrepreneurs, reducing overreliance on public sector and external support while fostering collaboration. A respondent pointed out:

As an NGO, we need the involvement from all parties. Local NGOs in each community should initiate or encourage the people in the area. They should seek solution for the community they are working with. What can be done in their communities? Not only relating to food processing. For instance, disable people who are discouraged think they cannot do anything, but actually they can. And each NGO should have a clear vision, so that we can collaborate. (NGO#2)

Table 5.4: Roles and functions of the tourism actors in Ek Phnom

Main actors	Roles	Function
National government	Marco policies Development strategies	Promote SMEs and local product Develop physical infrastructure
Provincial government	Facilitator Initiator of policy design	Promote of cultural and heritage preservation Implement development strategies as government subordinates
Department of Tourism	Planning and marketing Educational role Provincial advisor	Attract investors Provide training to the community trainers Channel of tourism information
NGOs	Investor- Wholesaler Educational role Advisor	Collaborate with governments to provide skill training inside community Link community to market access Develop strategies for traditional and agricultural product development Promote certified traditional products
Local authorities	Local leader Facilitator Local advisor	Develop local community strategies Provide community funding Mobilize local community Provide general community supports
Local entrepreneurs and farmers	Craft and agricultural producers	Production, trade based on utilizing local resources Collaborate with each other to link production chain
Tour guide and travel agents	Intermediary	Link community to market access

Advocates of PPP have attest to the benefits of combining resources to support the development of projects in rural area lacking the necessary resources (Cetinski et al., 2009; Jordan et al., 2018). In sum, this study also purports the need to also form partnerships not only internally, but also externally to include potential stakeholders outside Battambang. A model below is constructed from the key suggestions o presented above. Table 5.4 summarize key roles of tourism actors in this case study. These roles will be embraced in the following model.

5.5.3 Model for Sustainable Rural Development in Battambang

Sustainable rural development begins internally with the local farmers and entrepreneurs by initiating the process of doing business. This initial driver forms a ripple effect there by generating more interest and investment before the local leaders, NGOs and government take the lead to develop and establish the program

in the area. Externally, it is important to grow and sustain rural development initiatives with foreign investors/partners for increased funding and opportunities. It is also important to appeal to tour guides and travel agents to Battambang. This latter plan could potentially help Battambang develop special interest tourism for the province village craft experience. The cart wheels signify the external influence or macro influence as a catalyst that will drive the internal system.

Rural tourism entrepreneurs play a crucial in sustainable rural development. These entrepreneurs are those who showcase strong motivations and entrepreneurial competency to recognize and create business opportunities for local economic bulk. These entrepreneurs create employment opportunities not only for themselves, but also for their whole family in either craft production or other tourism services. In addition, these family businesses can serve as a mean to preserve and revitalize rural culture and traditions. Therefore, through tourism, these local craftsmen contribute not only economically, but also socially to rural development. Furthermore, these existing tourism entrepreneurs can be important aspiring role models to encourage local farmers and rural community to invest in tourism ventures, which will subsequently increase of supply of tourism entrepreneurs that sustain rural tourism development.

However, sustainable tourism development requires not only the quantity of tourism entrepreneurs, but also quality of entrepreneurial climate that fosters tourism business development (Koh, 1996). Therefore, it is important that all actors in rural development collaborate to create this supportive climate, within which these entrepreneurs operate. Both public sector and NGOs play crucial roles in providing entrepreneurial supports that can prosper tourism business initiatives. McGehee and Kline (2008) and Koh (1996) echo that micro entrepreneurial climate

have direct influence on tourism entrepreneurial initiatives. Therefore, the collaboration between NGOs and local governments in education and business support will contribute to both short term and long-term benefit-generating from tourism.

Local leaders play crucial roles in providing general support and advisory at grassroots level. They are synergies between stakeholders (Rogerson, 2002; Shang-Pao & Fotiadis, 2014); they, therefore, have to collaborate with all actors such as NGOs, private sectors and government agencies at all levels to fulfil the needs of farmers and entrepreneurs. In addition, as subordinates of national government to assist the implementation of rural development strategy (Ivanovich, 2015; Rogerson, 2006), local authorities have to represent the voice of the community to initiate policies that could foster the grow of rural tourism businesses. Community funding and initiatives can foster entrepreneurial culture by reducing risk and the reluctance to invest of traditional mindset-farmers. Similarly, in response to skill shortage of the entrepreneurs and farmers, NGOs can provide education, training and exchange programs to enable them to successfully develop a business. In addition, technological supports are necessary for local producers to improve their quality, standard and productivity in both crafts and agricultural production. Business supports, expertise, business networks are necessary in providing advisory and guidance. Therefore, match making services by the local government or the NGOs can serve as a link to connect external business investors with local rural businesses.

It is important to appeal to tour guides and travel agents to Battambang. They could be one of the important starting-point to establish connection between the community and private sector outside the community such as tourism service

providers. They are important intermediaries, who create the initial link between the community and tourists. Evidence from case study suggests that rural residents who have connection with this group of people are more likely to develop a tourism business or to link their craft production with tourism. Therefore, establishing relationship with them could potentially help Battambang to develop special interest tourism for the province village craft experience.

Government, through their legal authority, can significantly influence entrepreneurial climate at both local and national level, and across climate categories (Bryant, 1989), and are, therefore, central actor to the sustainability of rural development. Entrepreneurial climate elements provided by governments might include macro policies, business policies, physical infrastructure, rural development, and public safety (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005). Rural areas often lack accessibilities; therefore, government supports in physical infrastructure such as roads, buildings, utilities, tourism facilities, maintenance on touristic destination etc. can enable farmer and entrepreneurs to improve their productions or services required by tourists. In addition, policies supporting SMEs and local products regulated by government are important for the survival of rural tourism ventures in the competitive market.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to assess the current entrepreneurial climate of rural tourism business in the Ek Phnom area. In order to achieve this, the study explores three areas 1). Entrepreneurial interests among rural residents including both farmers and existing entrepreneurs 3). Knowledge and skills associated with tourism entrepreneurship, and identify challenges and drivers that can encourage them to successfully develop a tourism venture. 2). Identify alternative solutions, by determining roles and responsibilities of key actors in the Ek Phnom area in enhancing entrepreneurial initiatives in the rural tourism sector.

The following section summarises key findings drawn from this study. Then the research limitations and implication are discussed. Subsequent section draws recommendation for future research, and followed by concluding remarks.

6.2 Summary of key research findings

The exploration on current entrepreneurial interest among rural residents in Ek Phnom revealed weak entrepreneurial culture and climate in the area. Rural residents presented mixed attitudes toward creating and developing tourism venture. An examination on business start-up background, and a comparison of motivations between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs, allow the study to uncover a number of micro e-climate factors which impede or facilitate the development of tourism businesses. Entrepreneurial mindset and family characteristics are the main influencing factors whether or not an individual becoming an entrepreneur, while social connection stood out as key facilitator involving entrepreneurs in tourism sector.

With regards to skills and knowledge, the study found that most tourism entrepreneurs in this area require further skill development in order to enable them to profitably tap on tourism demands. In addition, although entrepreneurial mindset and skill shortage were identified as barriers in creating or operating tourism businesses, it is the lack of access to necessary resources that influence their entrepreneurial attitude and prevent rural residents, both entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs, in this area from successfully develop their tourism business.

By identifying these challenges, the study seeks applicable solution to response to the third objectives. The study identifies six institutional arrangements that need to be in place in order to create a favourable entrepreneurial climate necessary for rural tourism business initiatives. These institutional arrangements focus on 1). complete and competitive tourism package 2). policies supporting SMEs 3). networking and access to market 4). skills training and advisory 5). financial infrastructure; and 6). physical infrastructure.

Rural tourism in the Ek Phnom area is still under developed, which requires further improvement to become an attractive destination that can pool in more tourist arrivals. The lack of tourist arrivals was found to be one of the major reasons of low birth rate of local tourism businesses. Three opportunities were identified to tackle this issue: linking craft business, linking agri-business, and embracing the Province's tourism image with cultural and agri-tourism. In addition to this, the five arrangements listed above were deemed to provide a supportive environment that foster entrepreneurial culture in this agricultural-base area. Furthermore, the findings suggest partnership between both internal and external stakeholders is vital to achieve the above solutions and sustain rural development in this area.

6.3 Limitations of study

The study has identified a number of methodological limitations. The study employs qualitative interview with limited scope and sample size. The issues surrounding entrepreneurship and tourism are highly influenced by broader scope of climate, which is beyond the scope of this study. The geographic location of this study was Ek Phnom area. Therefore, the findings of the study are not generalisable. The study found the following limitations:

The study intended to explore the entrepreneurial climate of the Ek Phnom area; therefore, the different perspectives of the key stakeholders were necessarily required to gain insights of the rural development in the context of tourism in Ek Phnom. However, due to time constraints, the study could only approach four groups of key stakeholders (as listed in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5).

Second, the study focuses on entrepreneurial interest of rural residents, of which demographic feature is important. However, Ek Phnom is a remote location, where migration among working age labour is prevalent. Therefore, the researcher faced challenges in selecting research participants with age range that are deemed suitable for this study. The local farmers participated in this study are all in their 50s.

The third limitation involves the accessibility to public data. In Cambodia, access to government reports requires long procedures; therefore, is difficult to access. This study reviewed only the publicly available and conveniently accessible government documents.

6.4 Implications and Future Research Directions

The discussion of the findings and the reflection on limitation indicate a number of further studies that are required surrounding rural tourism entrepreneurship, especially in the context of Cambodia. Further research could focus on the following areas:

1) Partnership and involvement of private sector is currently scarce, which limits to capacity to tap on tourism demands. Therefore, an assessment on the possibility for collaboration between stakeholders is required.

Existing literature suggests that private investment could provide government a development tool to solve social issues in rural context, while improving the public service (Bjärstig & Sandström, 2017). This study finds that rural tourism community might be too remote, and require heavy governments' funding, which burden government' limited budget. The emerging themes in this research indicate that external private investors would be important partners, bringing in more funding and opportunities to grow and sustain rural development initiatives. Therefore, it is important for the government and NGOs to facilitate external investors interested in tourism entrepreneurship developing business partnerships with farmers to enhance the tourism product offerings. Investment in destination development, such as tourism infrastructure could increase tourism growth, and provide entrepreneurs and farmers with opportunities to actively participate in tourism sector.

2). Study on tourists' behaviour with regard to their perception on rural tourism and craft experience is needed. Research from demands side is critical for the success of

tourism entrepreneurs, yet is currently lacking. Therefore, investigation on this area would enable tourism entrepreneurs to supply matching services or products.

3). In addition, the participants in future research should not only focus only on international tourists. This study finds that domestic tourism is currently growing in this province and is important source of market to solve the issues of seasonality, which is well known in tourism market. Therefore, extended research on this issue would allow the local community to leverage tourism development opportunities in contribution of sustainable rural development in Battambang.

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Appendix 1: Indicative questions for participants from government and NGOs

AUT

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

1. Do you think tourism is growing with opportunities for people to start new businesses in this area?
2. Is entrepreneurship seen as an attractive option among rural people?
 - Why/Why not?
3. What are the general attitude local people towards entrepreneurship?
 - Especially in tourism?
4. What is the procedure to start new a business?
 - Or is it difficult for entrepreneurs to start a business? How long would it take?
5. Do you think (tourism) entrepreneurship is being promoted in the region?
 - How?
6. What are the supports (financial, technical...) for their business operation from both government and any associations?
7. What are seen as the main challenges and opportunities for tourism entrepreneurship development?
8. In what way should the climate or culture of entrepreneurship be improved?
9. What is the role of government / your organisation in supporting existing local tourism business and stimulating new entrants?
10. What policies should be developed in order to encouraging more entrepreneurship in tourism?
11. What is the role of local agencies (authorities, media, etc) in promoting tourism entrepreneurship?
12. What training programs or tools would be necessary to build local capacity related to tourism business?
13. What do you think about general business network environment in the community?
 - And is collaboration a viable strategy to boost business growth? How can it be strengthened?

1. Education background and characteristic

- Please tell me your education background.
- How are you interested in becoming an entrepreneur?
- Do you think becoming an entrepreneur requires inborn talent or it can be trained?
- Does family background play an important role in shaping your entrepreneurship?
- What training have you taken about entrepreneurship or tourism?

2. Business background and operation

- What was your motivation for starting this business?
- How did you start your business?
- How long have you operated your business?
- How has the business going? Is it growing well?
- What factors drive you to success? Or what quality does a successful entrepreneur need?
- What skill and knowledge do you think you need to improve?

3. Business environment and support

- What are challenges as a rural tourism entrepreneur?
- Have you received external supports (from government, agencies, associations etc.)? In what way?
- What do you think government and related stakeholders can do more to create a better environment for tourism entrepreneur?

4. Networking and collaboration

- To what extent have you been able to connect with other business owners? In what way?
- What do you think of community collaboration? Would it help business to grow?

Appendix 3: Indicative questions for non-tourism households

AUT

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

1. General background and characteristic

- Please tell me about yourself: education background, occupation...
- Do you think you can be an entrepreneur? Why?

2. Perception on tourism entrepreneurship

- Do you think tourism is growing with opportunities for people to start businesses in this area?
- What is your interest of businesses this sector? Or in what way do you think you can be involved in tourism business?
- What is your opinion of becoming an entrepreneur?
 - Do you think becoming an entrepreneur requires inborn talent or it can be trained?
 - Does family background play an important role in shaping your entrepreneurship?
- What training have you taken about entrepreneurship or tourism?
- In your opinion, what are the barriers to start a business? And how can that be overcome?
- Would you be interested in a tourism start-up? Why/ why not?
- Is there any training in the community related tourism and entrepreneurship?

3. Networking and collaboration

- To what extent have you been able to connect with other business owners? In what way?
- What do you think of community collaboration? Would it help business to grow?

Appendix 4: Participant Information Sheet

AUT

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

Date Information Sheet Produced:

28 February 2018

Project Title

Promoting tourism entrepreneurship for rural sustainable development: The case of Cambodia

An Invitation

My name is Leakhena Tep. Currently, I am working on a research project to fulfil the requirement of receiving a Master Degree of International Tourism Management at Auckland University of Technology.

Therefore, I would like to invite you to take part in this research, which addresses the question “How can rural tourism entrepreneurship be enhanced?”

Participation in this research is absolutely voluntary; you are under no obligation to be involved in this research. Decline or withdrawal from this research will neither advantage nor disadvantage you.

What is the purpose of this research?

In this research we are interested to find out how local Cambodian people in the Ek Phnom District can become more involved in the tourism industry in order to strengthen the local community.

The results of this research will lead to a Master thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology, and might be used for other academic publications as well.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

In order to develop a broad understanding of rural entrepreneurship development, participants will be selected from different perspectives: existing tourism entrepreneurs, non-tourism-involved local farming households, and local authorities. As a rural tourism entrepreneur you can provide important data related to entrepreneurial characteristics and business operations. As a non-tourism-involved farmer household, you can help us to identify elements that prevent you from being involved in tourism. As a local authority, you will be a key informant about existing support strategies from government perspective. You are invited either because of your personal connection to the researcher and known

experience or because other participants have mentioned you as a key source.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Participation is quite easy. After reading this information sheet and if you agree to participate in the study, please contact me within one week via my mobile number provided below. Once you agree to participate, a participant consent form will be given for you to sign at a scheduled interview.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

You will spend approximately 60 minutes to answer around 15-20 questions. Place and time of the interview will be scheduled according to your convenience and preference and can take place at your home or at a public place in the village. The interview will be digitally audio-recorded and if you wish to read the full transcripts of the interview, it will be then sent to you for confirmation. The data will be analyzed and submitted for the mentioned purpose.

What are the discomforts and risks?

These are minimal because we will not ask any discomforting questions on sensitive topics in the interview. All knowledge you can provide us is valuable and is meant to help support the community. There are no right or wrong answers.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

The interview will generally be conducted one-on-one and only the main researcher will be present and ask questions. General questions will be asked to ensure a friendly environment and I will maintain professional attitude throughout the interview.

Furthermore, you have several rights as a volunteer in our study, and we take these rights very seriously.

- You can choose not to answer any or all questions you are not comfortable with.

- You can withdraw from the study for any reason and at any time prior to the collection of data.
- You can ask any question during research process.

What are the benefits?

Besides the key benefit for the primary researcher to fulfil her qualification of Master of International Tourism Management (MITM), the research would provide some potential benefits for you as a participant and the community as a whole. This will be a good opportunity for you to represent your voice as a local player in the tourism sector, and the result can help to support local entrepreneurs to take advantage of tourism growth. This would contribute to poverty alleviation and regional development.

How will my privacy be protected?

The confidentiality of your views will be assured. All information gathered and the analysis will be used for my research only. Your identity will be kept completely anonymous as an identification number will be used to replace your name. All data collected from you will be safely and strictly stored with only me and my two supervisors having access to them.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

All you will spend is your time. In total, it is expected that you will not spend more than 1 hour on participating in this study.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You can response to this invitation within one week. Then a phone call will be used to follow up whether or not you participate in the study.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

If you wish to receive feedback on the results of this research, once the data analysis is finished, a summary of the result will be sent to you in the way that is most convenient for you.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor

Email: sandra.goh@aut.ac.nz

Phone: +64 99219999 ext. 6778

Bart Neuts

Email: Bart.neuts@aut.ac.nz

Phone: +64 99219999 ext. 6692

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz, +64 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Name: Leakhena Tep

Email: leakhenatep@hotmail.com / sgi4412@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Sandra Goh

Email: sandra.goh@aut.ac.nz

Phone: +64 99219999 ext. 6778

Bart Neuts

Email: Bart.neuts@aut.ac.nz

Phone: +64 99219999 ext. 6692

Appendix 5: Consent Form

Project title:

Promoting tourism entrepreneurship for rural sustainable development: The case of Cambodia

Project Supervisor: **Sandra Goh**

Bart Neuts

Researcher: **Leakhena Tep**

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 28 February 2018.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings via (please tick one): Regular mail ☐ Email ☐

Participant's signature:

Participants name:.....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date on which the final approval was granted* AUTEK Reference number *type the AUTEK reference number*

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Auckland University of Technology

D-88, WU406 Level 4WU Building City Campus

T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316

E: ethics@aut.ac.nz

www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

Appendix 6: Ethic Approval

23 March 2018

Sandra Goh

Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Sandra

Re Ethics Application: **18/95 Promoting tourism entrepreneurship for rural sustainable development: The case of Cambodia**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Subcommittee.

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 23 March 2021.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
2. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEK prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form: <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
4. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEK Secretariat as a matter of priority.
5. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEK Secretariat as a matter of priority.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

AUTEK grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval for access for your research from another institution or organisation then you are responsible for obtaining it. If the research is undertaken outside New Zealand, you need to meet all locality legal and ethical obligations and requirements. You are reminded that it is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard.

For any enquiries, please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz

Yours sincerely,



Kate O'Connor
Executive Manager
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: leakhenatep@hotmail.com; Bart Neuts

Appendix 7: Traditional food and crafts in Ek Phnom



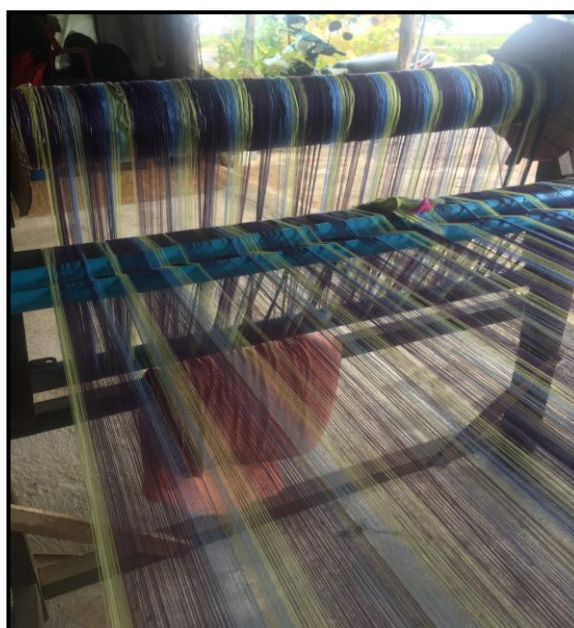
Rice paper production



Rice noodle production



Banana paper



Scarf Weaving

Appendix 8: Fishing Village in Ek Phnom

