# Driving Mechanisms for the Agricultural Tourism Network Sector in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province

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**Abstract:** This research aims to study the driving mechanism for the agricultural tourism network sector in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province with the use of combined approaches. The 2 research processes comprised 1) to study of documents and related research with associate agricultural tourism network in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province and 2) to study of mechanisms to drive agricultural tourism with Delphi techniques from relevant sector, both public, private, public and academic. Results indicated that the driving mechanism for the agricultural tourism network sector in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province comprises the following elements 1. Man refers to a group of people or organization who join the network including 1) Government sector; 2) Private sector; 3) Public sector and 4) Academic sectors including educational institutes and related organization; .2. Resources refers to the tool used to promote the development of an area or a government network to support the development of the area, infrastructure to allocate budget to develop tourist attractions, private sector network to promote / support activities in the tourist area, public sector network to perform tourism resource management planning and academic sector network to support knowledge in development coordinating with relevant sector in the area for development and 3. Management System (System) refers to the establishment of a common agricultural tourism management model of network partners with the processes as follows: 1) Defining the needs to be a network; 2) Seeking partners to share information; 3) Forming a network to work 4) Setting goals, objectives, strategies that are common opinions; 5)Establishing working structure and share-decision making process; 6) Designing work plans and activities; 7) Developing network capacity; 8) Creating communication system; 9) Exchanging of knowledge and lesson summary development and 10) Monitoring and evaluation..

**Keywords:** Driving Mechanism, Tourism Network Partners, Agricultural Tourism

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## 1. Introduction

Similar to rural tourism, agricultural tourism (Agrotourism) is a part of ecotourism that evolved from the concept of sustainable tourism focused on environmental conservation and ecology which cause the least impact on tourist attractions. Agrotourism allows tourists to get involved with nature / rural areas especially in agricultural areas where tourists performs agricultural activities that cause fun and learning processes in different ways which makes tourists conscious of conservation and realized the importance of nature and culture of the local society to create sustainable tourism. The environment can also survive without being destroyed as well as all involved parties realize the importance of helping to maintain the quality of the tourist attraction so that it does not deteriorate due to the density that exceeds the carrying capacity of the tourist attraction. (Isichaikul, 2018, P. 5) Agricultural tourism is considered as another form of Alternative Tourism or Niche Tourism (Robinson and Novell, 2005, p. 9) which is the current trend of tourism that tourists are more interested in today. It is a form of agricultural tourism occurring in many countries such as Australia, USA, Canada, Philippines and Thailand because Thailand is an agricultural country with a variety of occupations in agriculture, have agricultural wisdom and famous for its fruit trees, rice, advance fisheries and livestock activities since the past. Such diversity will attract and cause a good impression on tourists, provide opportunities for them to join activities with farmers to experience the natural environment, agricultural lifestyle that combines religious activities, arts, culture and traditions, as well as an education to learn, exchange experiences and find the process of working closely with right livelihoods and also increase income distribution to the locals. The research conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in the United States (University of Tennessee, 2005) found that the reason tourists visit rural or farm tourism is to see rural scenery (86%), to learn about the source of food (71%), to visit relatives in other provinces (63%), to see and participate in farm production or agricultural activities (64%), to buy agricultural produce (39%), to collect fruit (43%), to do hunting or fishing (27%), and to stay overnight in rural areas (8%). The informative agricultural tourism group was approximately 40 years old and about 3 middle-sized families with a college-to-university education, travel for an average distance of about 80 miles from home and spend about $ 45 on day trips.

Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province has interesting tourism activities with various sector involving in promoting tourism in the area including the government sector, private sector, public sector and various groups in the area that formed a tourism network to develop and promote tourism at the local level. However, the purpose of

integration for development has not yet been achieved due to different network groups having different competencies to promote spatial tourism as well as unclear and inconsistent approaches with the spatial tourism develop. Researchers and stakeholders therefore wish to study the model for strengthening network partnerships in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province to drive agricultural tourism, upgrade agricultural products by using tourism activities as a tool to increase income, reduce the problem of falling price products, reduce trade through intermediaries, create pride among farmers and their children in the future for their farming career, encourage farmers to learn and develop communication and create local jobs that prevent young workers from working outside the area. However, good sustainable tourism management cannot be undertaken alone or by any other agency. Hence, it has to rely on various sector such as partners, networks, public sector, private sector, communities, community enterprise groups as well as those who are involved both in the area and outside the area to take part in the management and joint development plans to drive agricultural tourism to achieve the goals of the government policy.

## 2.Research Objectives

To study the mechanisms to drive the agricultural tourism network parties in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province.

## 3.Literature Review

Network (Chanhom et al., 2018, p. 52) is a work in the form of a network of community-based tourism networks at both provincial and regional levels under the concept "Brother for brother, friend for friend" which helps to enhance the work performance of network members in each area through consultation, activities, sharing experiences and community-based tourism management. These implementations causes the development of community tourism development strategy tool as a tool for directing development and working with government and academic network partners to support project activities according to the needs of the community tourism network.

Guidelines for the development of agricultural tourist attractions (Songsoonthornwong, 2018, p. 52)

The preparation of agricultural tourist attraction is considerably importance that the things that should be prepared include 1) Personnel to be developed in terms of knowledge, understanding of tourism and hospitality, management of tourist attractions and cultivate awareness of nature conservation, local arts and culture; 2) Physical referring to the improvement of landscape to create aesthetics and maintain the good image of the area; 3) Management including the setting of organization and providing service, creating a community tourism agreement and 4) Marketing which is the improvement of price, public relations, distribution channel and tourism resources

Agricultural tourism management process (Thiansawang, 2018, p. 18) includes 1) Planning refers to the setting of goals in the agricultural tourism business by establishing policies for conducting agricultural tourism businesses; 2)Setting of guidelines or operating methods for conducting business by determining what are the main unit and consulting agency; 3) Employment refers to the emphasizing the participation of community members, focusing on the community to take care of tourist attractions by the community through selecting persons suitable for their work based on experience and expertise in each person; 4) Controlling refers to the supervision of activities to be carried out according to a defined plan or goal that the committee is appointed to perform duties of controlling agricultural tourist attractions.

Factors affecting the promotion of agricultural tourism (Songsunthornwong, 2018)

1) Local tourism resources that locality has a variety of different tourism resources. Locality with rich and varied resources has an advantage in attracting tourists to travel; 2) Providing knowledge about agricultural tourism promotion to relevant persons such as operators, tourist guides, etc; 3) Collaboration refers to a cooperation between locals including local authorities to share resources, help each other in the conservation of agricultural resources, set campaigns to maintain cleanliness in the communities, etc; 4) Marketing promotion which is to make tourists know tourist attractions such as services and activities available in tourist attractions; 5) Availability of utilities such as electricity, water supply, roads, bridges, and road signs to facilitate tourists to access tourist attractions and 6) Support and investment by sector that both the public sector, the private sector, the communities and the related sector to make the management of agricultural tourism resources to be appropriate.

## 4.Research Methods

## 4.1 Population And Samples

The population and sample group in this research were stakeholders from all sectors defined as three groups of key contributors in research as follows:

1.1 15 people chosen from the government sector with purposive sampling method.

1)      6 people from Provincial Community Development Office Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province consisted of Provincial Community Development and District Community Development.

2)      1 person from Ayutthaya Tourism and Sports Office

3)      1 person from Tourism Authority of Thailand Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province.

4)      1 person from Ayutthaya Provincial Administrative Organization Tourism Promotion Department.

5)      6 people from Provincial Agricultural Office consist of Provincial Agriculture and District Agriculture.

1.2 12 people from community leaders / farmer groups / community enterprise groups and people in the area chosen by the purposive sampling method

1.3 10 people from Local tourism business operators include travel sector, lodging, restaurants, merchandise transportation within the community and representatives for each type of business chosen by the Convenient Sampling method 2 people each.

## 4.2 Research tools

In-depth Interview and Structured Interview

## 4.3 Data Collection

The data collecting in the area of agricultural tourism was done with the interviews with all relevant sectors, including government sectors, tourism operators in the area, community leaders, farmers, community enterprises and people to study the spatial context with the different issues and questions according to the context and mission of each target group as follows.

3.1    Government sectors: The interviewed issue were the agency's mission, roles and capabilities in the management of agricultural tourism in the area including trends of participation in tourism development in the area.

3.2    Community leaders / farmers/ community enterprises and people in the area: The interviewed issues were spatial contexts, roles, functions of participation in spatial tourism activities as well as demand for agricultural tourism development in the area.

3.3    Private sectors/tourism and related business entrepreneurs: The interviewed issues were the business model of the business, the need to use the area in the tourism business including participation in area development to promote and develop tourism.

4. Data analysis- The analysis of data from in-depth interviews was as follows:

The interview with a group of informants and the results obtained from the group chats of different groups, and all validation has been performed. The researcher categorized and analyzed the data as follows.

4.1    Content Analysis is the analysis of the data obtained from interviews for content analysis, prioritizing the content group including analysis, classifying and summarizing the issues discovered (Topic) and then using inductive descriptions by analyzing the situation in the context of capacity building of the tourism network partners in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province.

4.2    Three-wire data validation (Triangulation) by verifying information from the source of information in terms of time, place and person to determine whether Information at different times, locations, and information providers also get information with consistent content. Since the results of the data collected by the triangular method resulted in the same findings, it showed that the obtained information was accurate. The researchers used the data from all 3 interviews to analyze and summarize each topic according to the research objectives.

## 5. Research Results

Results of the study from all sectors involved in agricultural tourism in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province found that promoting agricultural tourism had a positive effect that will enhance the way of life of the locals in the area. For the government sector, the government sector embraced policies from the government on the development of tourism in the area by using existing social capital as a means to drive activities to create jobs for the community. As for the community, efforts were made to develop their own tourism management. However, because of the basic way of life of most people are farmers, there is therefore no experience and skills in the management of community tourism although there is an intention to develop the community. The community still faced with various problems.

In conclusion, it can be concluded that the context of capacity building of the current Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya tourism network partners has 2 issues as follows

## 5.1 Context of the capacity building of network partners

Agrotourism in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province had no clear responsible agency yet there is only an assignment to the Agricultural Office of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province from the Upper Central Region 1 to implement a production system development project and safe food business annual fiscal year 2017 including activities of developing learning centers and tourist attractions. However, after that, there was a lack of continuity of project management. Working in agro-tourism is still lacking personnel who have direct knowledge and competence in agricultural tourism management. Although Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province has ordered the appointment of the Provincial Agenda Working Group (Agenda), the fifth group to increase the value of agricultural products and the 6th group to increase tourism value. The work of the steering committee is only in line with the mission of its own agency. There is no integration, collaboration, and linkage with relevant departments. It is an operation in a form of different parties working in the nature of unreal cooperation of the network but just a temporary network. As a result, each network partner has duplicated work in developing the same target group. The participants of the meeting or the trainers thus feel that they are participating in activities with the government in a matter that is nothing new and makes them bored and does not want to participate in activities with government sector. They also sometimes it felt that the government took part in spatial activities regardless of the actual needs of the participants. The lack of continuity of activities is also the problem. When the activities are finished, the responsible sector leave the community without extension of sustainable development which affect the regular occupation of people in the community as well as the training techniques used in performance enhancement that is not effective and sufficient such as prolonged on-site training, making the trainees tired of just sitting and listening. Therefore, there should be educational activities in other areas and more platforms to exchange knowledge. In the aspect of budget, each sector has set for spatial development resulting in redundancy, waste on the budget that has been spent on personal development including systematically development of spatial resource. There are only few networks that work together, for example, between government sector and communities, or between private and community sector. More importantly, personnel in various sectors still lack the knowledge and understanding of sustainable agro-tourism management. These problems caused from lack of integrated planning in the implementation of spatial development. Therefore, all sectors must focus on working together with the goal focusing on the development of tourism personnel, community product development, development of tourist attractions and facilities by linking with all parties involved in supporting networks for promoting and developing whether it is a government sector, private sector, public sector, community, educational institution get involved in development. There is a process of organizing training to build skills and competencies in tourism management of the area to empower the community to manage self-reliance tourism, promote and add value from the cost of community resources to products and services, deliver a positive experience for tourists and build community participation as a model in agricultural tourism management with the development of appropriate models of empowerment of network partners There is a management system and linking agricultural tourism to all areas in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province.

## 5.2 Challenges occurring in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province

Government sectors, the private sectors, the public sectors and the community have given issues that need to be developed and further their potential to achieve the competency that is competent in driving agricultural tourism in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province. Such issue can be divided into sectors of the network parties as follows.

**Government sectors**

1) Lack of personnel with specialized knowledge in community tourism development.

2) Lack of coordination between government sectors which cause a redundant spatial position.

3) Insufficient allocated budget for development in some areas.

4) Lack of public relations agricultural tourism in the area of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province.

5) No main agency to lead the development in the same direction.

**Private sectors**

1) The resources used for agricultural tourism promotion of each area are still insufficiently developed to promote tourism.

2) The structure of the area that for accommodate tourism activities is not yet ready.

3) Lack of villagers do not yet knowledge and understanding of community tourism management among communities/locals

4) Government sector place less emphasis on agricultural tourism than historical tourism.

5) Lack of coordination between communities and government sector to support agro-tourism or community

tourism activities.

6)     No main agency to support or take the lead in promoting agricultural tourism of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province.

**Public sector/Communities**

1) Communities does not have sufficient knowledge on the community based tourism management system and tourist behavior

2)     Lack of knowledge, understanding and attitude of participation in management including the participation in organized tourism activities by the community on the basis of mutual agreements between members of the community.

3)     Lack of knowledge in the process of strengthening tourism promotion with community participation.

4)     Lack of knowledge and ability to develop new tourism activities that reflect the wisdom and identity of the community to tourists.

5)     Lack of knowledge and understanding of principles strategies for coordinating benefits for all parties in the community

6)     Unclear distribution of roles and functions.

7)     Suspicious working system which lack of auditing system

8)     Lack of participation from planning to develop tourism systems in the community.

9)     Lack of skills in writing community tourism development plans.

10)     Lack of knowledge of the accommodating capacity of the area

11)     Some tourism activities affect their livelihoods and the peace of the community

12)     No strong measures to control and prevent social, cultural and environmental impacts as a result of the development of tourism in the communities.

13)     Community tourism resources are not properly maintained.

14)     Some of the household members of the communities lack awareness of the conservation of tourism resources of the community.

15)     Lack of dialogue among community members about the impact and transformation of community tourism resources to find a solution together.

16)     Lack of the advice of tourists to cooperate in the preservation of the environment of the attractions in some communities.

17)     Lack of knowledge and ability to build a community-based tourism network

18)     Lack of knowledge and ability to guide

19)     The tourist attractions in the community causing problems in providing information about the community and tourist attractions in the communities.

20)     The community has little potential to produce local products causing some communities to take their products from elsewhere which is not a product that reflects the identity of the communities to be sold to tourists.

21)     Lack of the ability to interact with tourists.

22)     Lack of knowledge and ability to properly manage basic facilities for tourists both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The challenges posed by the various network partners show that competencies of the agricultural tourism network parties in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province still facing problems in the matter of mechanical systems consisting of people, resources and management systems used to drive the agricultural tourism network parties, consisting of

1)     Humans refer to personnel of government, private, farmer sector and related sector who are involved in setting common agricultural tourism development goals by defining roles and duties according to the missions of the departments. The government sector will prepare a budget plan for the area development while the private sector will support the operation of marketing and public relations and other related services. As for the farmers sector, it

is responsible for the development of resources in tourist attractions to meet the quality standards and to motivate tourists to travel in the area.

2)     Resources refer to the main attraction for tourists to visit the area whether it is an agricultural tourism resource, cultural tourism resources or various traditional activities in which all sectors must participate in the joint care and development. In addition to tourism resources in the area, they are also referred to as resources networked by a partner in each sector based on their own agency's mission that can be used to exchange help groups of partners network appropriately.

3)     Management system refers the system that will be used to manage the agricultural tourism network partners in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province that allows all sectors to be able to manage tourism activities in the same direction, reduce operational duplication for spatial development. The management system will be defined as a network partner that the vision, mission and development plan are set together to drive agricultural tourism in the area of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province.
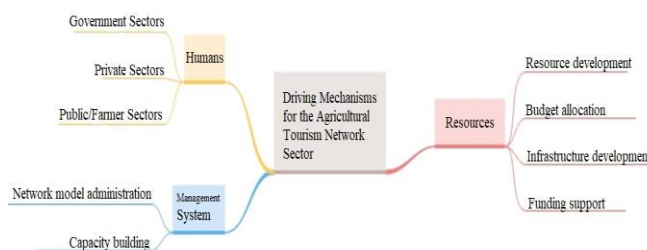


**Figure 1.** Mechanisms to drive agricultural tourism network parties in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province

## 6.Discussions

Agricultural tourism network partners are individuals. Government sector, private sector, public sector and academic sector focusing on participation in helping to promote and encourage collaboration on the basis of the mission of each sector aiming the network of partners to reach a common destination. Therefore, the process of building a network of agricultural tourism in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province will range from the members of the public sector enterprises performing local activities in order to create jobs and careers for more income, reduce exposure from government sector by reliance on related sector such as the government sector that helps support the budget, trainers in educating, the equipment and machines used in the training; private sectors help support access to services or buy products for further distribution from time to time. Sometime, there will also be academic sector i.e. educational institutions that come into the area to help support the community to develop creative ideas in product processing, raising the standard in products and services. However the work of each sector is still lacking in integration in working together. Therefore, in order to achieve the best benefit of spatial development. All sectors must work together in the form of tourism network partners. This is in accordance with the work of Adam Burke (1999) who said that the approach to networking Inviting organizations and stakeholders to participate in determining the objectives of the network establishment, direction of the main activities, establishing the core group of the network that provide opportunities for members to participate in the decision-making process, cooperative management, information technology exchanging and encouraging a link between the networks to strengthen the network. There should be a follow-up and evaluation as well as network management training courses for core organizations and regular network leaders continually. The training courses must correlate with the development goals in line with the area development mechanisms consisting of people, management systems and tourism resources. These performances are consistent with the Tourist Attractions Development Agency (2553) which states that the management potential of agricultural tourism attractions can operate, plan, supervise and manage tourism sites to be sustainable. The capacity to accommodate agricultural tourism sites is ready to provide basic services for tourists that are suitable for the environment of the tourist attraction. Service potential of agricultural tourism sites can create value for the products that are served within the tourist attraction whereas the attractiveness of agricultural tourism destinations has the ability to impress tourists.

## 7.Conclusion

Data analysis can be classified into issues that must be applied as a driving mechanism for agricultural tourism parties in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province which is in line with Prakong Saichan that the mechanism used to drive tourism for sustainability consists of people, resources, tourism and management system.

Humans is a network of partners which is one of the mechanisms driving agricultural tourism including government

sector consist of local government organizations, Provincial Tourism and Sports, TAT Province, Community/Province/District Development, District/ Province Agriculture, Head of Village, and Head of Sub-district; Private sector consists of the Tourism Business Association, accommodation /transportation/ restaurant entrepreneur, travel and service sector, financial Institutions, BAAC, Bank of Agriculture and wholesale business; Public sector consisting of community enterprise, farmers, housewife group, farmers, community philosopher, community leaders and community tourism and academic sector consisting of educational institutes and OSMEP.

Management System (System) is the setting up of a model for the management of agricultural tourism in the area arising from the agreement between the parties to the network that will be used to drive tourism in the same direction. The process of setting up a network group are 1) The community is aware and sees the necessity of being a network; 2) the community seek for communities to share ideas and exchange information; 3) the community form a group in a working network; 4) the community set goals, objectives, strategies that are consistent; 5) the community designate working structure, decision making process and mutual agreement; 6) the community design Work plans and activities ; 7) the community forecast the development of capacity in the network; 8) the community test communication system;9) the community exchange knowledge and lesson summary, and 10) the community monitor and evaluate the performance.

Tourism Resource is a form of tourism activities that are used as a tool to promote tourism in the area. Government networks are to support the budget for the development of the area Infrastructure, allocate budget to develop tourist attractions; Private networks are to promote / support activities in the tourist area; Public sector network are to proceed tourism resource management planning and academic networks are to support knowledge in development and coordinate with relevant sector in the area for development.

### 8.Acknowledgement

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