



2022 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title of the Story: Koh Mak, The Journey to become the first low carbon destination in Thailand

Destination Name: Koh Mak, Trat Province *(include any state, province or region)*

Country: Thailand

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Position: Koh Mak Tourism Project Coordinator

Submission category: *(Please check one of the boxes that indicates the focus of your story)*

Please find detailed information for the categories below in the Top 100 training module 'Good Practice Story'.

- Governance, Reset & Recovery
- Nature & Scenery
- Environment & Climate
- Culture & Tradition
- Thriving Communities
- Business & Marketing

Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices in the Top 100 training module "Good Practice Story".

Should you have any questions on your submission please refer to our FAQ page or contact top100@greendestinations.org





DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

Issues faced ปัญหาที่เจอ

What was the problem/issue solved with the good practice?

Koh Mak, Trat Province, is one of the islands in the Trat where natural resources are still intact. Clean white sand beach, clear water, shady atmosphere and the way of life of local people on the island are key elements of this beautiful island. Some of local people still carry on their traditional occupations, namely rubber plantation and fishery, thus becoming the charm of Koh Mak. Lately, Koh Mak is now becoming more popular with tourists. On the other hand, a result of the increasing number of tourists makes this island more vulnerable to environmental impacts such as pollution or wastewater caused by various hotels and accommodations. These problems are therefore the important element that inevitably affects the potential of tourist attractions. From the Thai tourism strategy with economic goals that want to generate and distribute income to the locality at all levels to reduce income and social disparities, promoting and developing tourism that is environmentally friendly is the final answer. With the concept of "Low Carbon" that emphasizes on tourism that does not increase carbon dioxide or greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere, the local people aim to create a tourism model that has the least impact on the environment and their community.

Methods, steps and tools applied วิธีการแก้ไขปัญหานั้น เครื่องมือหรือวิธีการที่ใช้

How was the good practice implemented?

Tourism under the Low Carbon concept was initiated by the Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA), which aims to coordinate, promote and support various parties in communities and localities to develop sustainable tourism Under the policy to drive operations in the framework of Low Carbon Tourism

DASTA has developed communities on Koh Mak to form a "Low Carbon Family" that includes both government sector, public sector, and local people to reduce carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere in 4 issues: 1) energy consumption with efficiency and using alternative energy, 2) efficient use of water, 3) waste management, and 4) preserving the community's way of life. As well as receiving cooperation and strength of local communities in Koh Mak, the Koh Mak Low Carbon Destination Declaration was signed on 25 September 2012 to cooperatively take care of Koh Mak to have an environmentally friendly tourism model.





In 2015, they launched 3 main campaigns, (1) Eat it Fresh, campaigning for restaurant operators, hotels and resorts on Koh Mak to buy seafood from fishing boats in the area to reduce transportation costs and responding to being Green Logistic as well as encouraging people on Koh Mak to grow vegetables and fruits that are free of pesticides (2) Help Koh Mak counting to 10,000 trees, campaign to encourage tourists to show “green” behavior by providing a form to survey a Low Carbon behavior such as eating local food, reusing towels, not running water while brushing teeth, or turning off electrical appliances when not in use. Then one action will be given to receive 1 tree to increase green areas in Koh Mak. (3) A Good host, campaign to encourage the cooperation of Koh Mak people to make their area into a better place by actively reducing carbon activities such as sorting waste then sell it or make bio-fertilizer, using renewable energy from solar cells.

From 2020 onwards, they keep promoting activities for low carbon tourism, which is environmentally friendly as followings;

- Using solar powered boats as a guideline to help the marine environment
- Supporting solar vegetable garden by letting tourists pick up vegetables for lunch by themselves at 'Organic vegetable garden'
- Supporting green hotels that are strict to environmentally friendly criteria
- Raising awareness through volunteer activities, Trash Hero, a garbage collection activity washed ashore by the ocean waves
- Paying attention to environmental management in tourist attractions to a reduction in carbon emissions as "Koh Mak Low Carbon Calculator", an online tool for calculating Carbon Footprint releasing from all sectors in Koh Mak (<https://www.kohmaklowcarbon.com/>)
- Reducing the use of plastic bags with a campaign for waste separation at the source. By separating the plastics and adjusting the method of disposal from burned into turned to use as fertilizer. In the future, Koh Mak will not burn. We will separate waste in the form of Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) to be 100 percent.
- Creating a constitution on Koh Mak, Koh Mak Charter, in order to take it as a guideline to drive tourism development. It is an agreement that everyone must follow in order to preserve tourism to be sustainable.
- Creating a line group of “Koh Mak Market” This online communication area will be used for trading and exchanging goods and food from their homegrown.

In 2022, Minister of Tourism and Sports announce the national strategy to drive "Koh Mak", to be a model tourist destination not only low carbon destination but also a circular economy model by using various innovations to implement and bring back benefits to all parties that have participated in the operation.

DASTA has a goal by 2027 to develop and upgrade Thailand's model tourist attraction to be a sustainable tourist destination, by leading to income generation and distributing income within the community. With the continuous development of ecosystems and infrastructure, this is for supporting Thailand to be better ranked in the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI), especially in the issue of natural resources and environmental sustainability.





Key success factors อะไรคือปัจจัยแห่งความสำเร็จนั้น

What helped you tackle the issues?

- A sustainable conservation must begin with cultivating the awareness of all stakeholders and local people because if they truthfully want to protect their local resources, the power of unity will make it easy to achieve what is desired, and a concept sustainable tourism will successfully happen.
- The participation from all sectors is considered an important factor for tourism management because it is considered a stakeholder in the implementation of the policy. This is to ensure readiness and desire to act by all parties through the process of creating motivation to make those who practice feel like participating in conservation.
- Having a strong leader and community support can create a mechanism to protect the homeland that people on the island have agreed on the same ambition of making Koh Mak as a “Low Carbon Destination”
- Government assistance is necessary in carrying out activities. With the authority and function under the law, governmental support is another key force in the conservation of nature and coral reefs by coordinating among various sectors and organizing several activities to support this project.

Lessons learned บทเรียนที่ได้เรียนรู้ และวิธีการข้ามผ่านปัญหาที่เจอ

While implementing the Good Practice what challenges were faced, and how were they overcome?

According to the preliminary study, problems and obstacles in the management of low-carbon tourism are as follows:

- 1) Awareness problems arise from a lack of adequate public relations, leading to misunderstandings of the sustainable tourism industry of Koh Mak. The solution is keeping pushing the awareness through offline and online channel. For example, the official Facebook of Koh Mak tourism is built to inform all the news and data needed to know about Koh Mak (<https://www.facebook.com/KohMakAdmin>)
- 2) Problems with disposal of non-biodegradable waste. There are still a lot of waste that cannot be processed or sold, such as clothing waste, disposable diapers, sanitary napkins, building materials, and electronics. This is still waiting to be solved in order to make Koh Mak area a zero-waste area. The solution is to cooperate with many organizations and government sectors to initiate the project and study on the issue.
- 3) The lack of tourists during the low season and pandemic of COVID-19. The solution is to using BCG model (Bio-Circular-green model) along with the sufficiency economy within the community on the island.





Results, achievements and recognitions ผลลัพธ์ การศึกษาวิจัยที่รับรองความสำเร็จนั้น รางวัลที่ได้รับ

What were the qualitative and quantitative results of the good practice?

As Koh Mak has run the campaign of “Low Carbon Destination” for more than ten years, many organizations has started to involve and support the various projects as following;

- Promotion and support from the Digital Economy Promotion Agency (DEPA), one of the important organizations that supports SMEs to use digital technology, has applied intelligent technology “Internet of Things: IoT” to manage the project on Koh Mak
- The signing a cooperation agreement to develop Koh Mak to become a Low Carbon Destination from Bangchak Group, they will support the Koh Mak area, which is the first target area in the country's low-carbon tourism project by accompanying the Faculty of Fisheries Kasetsart University to study Blue Carbon from carbon dioxide sequestration of seagrass resources in eastern coral reefs for the first time in Thailand; which absorbs carbon in a natural way from this seagrass. This concept is gaining a lot of attention around the world, according to the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) It is reported that seagrass is the only plant family fully inhabited by the sea and therefore has a unique ability to absorb and store carbon 7-10 times more than terrestrial forests.
- Bangchak Group also has other missions to support “Winnonie electric motorcycles” to tourism business operators in the area to try and study the suitability through the Koh Mak Subdistrict Administrative Organization, as well as supporting materials and equipment such as gloves and t-shirts made from recycled PET bottles, donated to the Trash Heroes Koh Mak volunteer team for beach waste collection and also for the Ban Ao Nid Integrated Agricultural Community Enterprise Team Used for seagrass conservation and restoration activities. There is also a feasibility study of other collaborations such as the Net Zero School on the use of electricity from clean energy as well.

Moreover, regarding from recent study on the satisfaction of tourists towards establishments that have adopted low-carbon tourism within the organization, it was found that tourists were satisfied with this form of tourism approach because it gave tourists an opportunity to help in conserving the environment while traveling. The study also found that most tourists wanted to have the publicity of low-carbon tourism to be more prevalent.

As the Journey to become the first low carbon destination in Thailand still going on, we can gradually see the changes through ourselves and recognition from others. The study of the whole concept is still in progress to officially make sure that what we have done is truly valuable for the environment and most importantly the local people.





Additional references รูปภาพและวิดีโอ

Provide links to further information. Pictures and videos should be available for download either from YouTube, Vimeo or other Cloud-based (Google/ One Drive) download URL (not WeTransfer).

- Koh Mak 2022 Top100 story <https://youtu.be/4ZldBaO4hhl>
- A study of Tourism Management on the Concept of Low Carbon Destination: A Case Study of Koh Mak Island <http://digital.nlt.go.th/items/show/8427>
- A study on the origin of the Low carbon destination concept by DASTA <https://tis.dasta.or.th/dastaknowledge/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Ko-Mak-Low-Carbon-Destination.pdf>
- A study on “Management Process for Low Carbon Tourism: A Case Study of Koh Mak” <https://so05.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/suedureasearchjournal/article/view/62627/88569>
- 2022 Smart Energy on Blue Carbon of BangChak group <https://youtu.be/XcbZmsgjv4Y>
- The popular travel blog on the full story of Low Carbon Koh Mak <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-iHhprYtc&t=240s>
- Tourism authority of Thailand promotional video of Koh Mak <https://youtu.be/wgW--rzpPwI>

