

Feasibility Study Report on Krabi Community Ecosystem and Sustainable Socioeconomic Development

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GIVE to NATURE

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This report is compiled based on in-depth community field interviews, local market observations, and community ecosystem analysis. It serves as a comprehensive feasibility study report evaluating dual returns: long-term commercial potential and environmental protection.

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Figure 1. One Tambon One Product (OTOP) sign in the Koh Klang Community (Credit: Yunzhu Chen)

1. Executive Summary

This study aims to assess whether the Krabi region in Thailand possesses the necessary conditions to develop a community brand, and to explore how it can combine community economic development with ecological conservation to achieve more long-term community benefits and environmental value.

Between the 8th and 12th June, 2026, the research team visited multiple communities, community enterprises, government departments, community-based tourism organizations, hotel networks, and sustainability promoters in Krabi. These included the Nai Nang Honey Group, Koh Klang Community Enterprises, Klong Pasong Dye Group, Sri Mala Cocoa & Elephant Garden, Krabi Community Based Tourism Association, Sustainable Krabi Foundation and its Participatory Guarantee Systems Network (PGS Network), Ocyco and Jee-Or, NatureMind-Ed, hotel operators, and relevant government departments.

Core Judgment

Krabi does not lack community projects, products, or training. Over the past twenty years, government departments, international agencies, and community organizations have already invested substantial resources in product development, community tourism, community organizational capacity building, and skills training. What is truly missing in Krabi's next phase is an operational system that can sustainably connect communities, markets, and ecological conservation outcomes.

The survey shows that most communities still face similar bottlenecks: lack of stable markets, lack of continuous customers, lack of operational capacity, lack of brand expression capabilities, lack of youth participation, and a lack of long-term commercial partners.

This study recommends that the community's needs be understood as a market system rather than a visual identity system. Its core task is to connect community experiences, community products, community stories, community enterprises, market channels, and benefit-sharing mechanisms, ultimately forming an ecosystem that supports the community's long-term development.

Components of a Community Market System



Figure 2. Components of a Community Market System



Figure 3. Landscape of Koh Klang village (Credit: Yunzhu Chen)

2. Research Background and Research Questions

Give to Nature has long been committed to mangrove conservation and community engagement. In Krabi, many communities have been continuously involved in mangrove protection, ecological restoration, and sustainable resource utilization for years. However, ecological conservation behaviors have not automatically translated into community income. Many communities participating in conservation work still face problems such as youth out-migration, limited income, and insufficient market connections.

Therefore, the core concern of this study is not just “whether Krabi can build a brand,” but whether Krabi can establish a long-term mechanism where the community economy and ecological conservation mutually support each other.

This study aims to answer the following questions:

- Does Krabi possess the foundational conditions to establish a market system?
- What are the main obstacles preventing the development of Krabi’s community economy?
- Do community products and community experiences possess market opportunities?
- What natural resources, community efforts and traditional, cultural resources already exist?
- What capabilities are still missing?
- How should Give to Nature participate in the next phase of development?

3. Current Status of Krabi Community Development

3.1 Community Assets Already Widely Exist

The communities covered by the survey include the Nai Nang Honey Group, Koh Klang Community Enterprises, Klong Pasong Dye Group, and Sri Mala Cocoa & Elephant Garden. These communities already possess local products, community stories, cultural knowledge, natural resources, and basic hospitality capabilities. From a resource perspective, Krabi already has the foundation to develop a community economy.

Krabi's Future: From Local Assets to Global Experiences

EXISTING ASSETS		TRANSFORMATION DIRECTIONS	
Nai Nang 	Mangrove conservation, stingless bees, honey, by-products, community fund mechanism		Mangrove and honey experiences, conservation narratives, souvenirs, and community fund case studies
Koh Klang 	Long-tail boat models, coconut shell crafts, local life routes, island transportation		Half-day/full-day local life routes, handicraft experiences, and community transportation integration
Klong Pasong 	Natural dyed fabrics, mangrove materials, community migration and coastal change stories		Dyeing workshops, eco-cultural stories, and hotel/visitor gifts
Sri Mala 	Family-run elephant experiences, cocoa products, and farm stories		Premium experience price benchmarking, cocoa experiences, and animal-friendly tourism discussions

Figure 4. Surveyed communities with its existing assets and transformation directions

3.2 Community Experiences Starting to Form

Multiple communities already offer beekeeping experiences, fabric dyeing experiences, long-tail boat making experiences, cocoa experiences, and mangrove learning activities. This indicates that Krabi has gradually moved from pure product sales into the experience economy stage. The current issue is that these experiences remain fragmented, and pricing, storytelling, service processes, channel pitches, and quality management have not yet been systematized.

3.3 Community Networks Already Exist

Krabi has already formed several support networks, including the Community Based Tourism Association (CBT Association), Krabi Local, the Participatory Guarantee Systems Network (PGS Network), NatureMind-Ed, and the Hotel Sustainability Network. These organizations respectively cover community tourism, product standards, hotel procurement, environmental education, and community capacity building. Therefore, Krabi is not an area lacking an organizational foundation. What truly needs reinforcement is cross-organizational collaboration and continuous operational mechanisms.

Table 1. List of network/institution in Krabi and its existing role and future potentials

Network / Institution	Existing Role	Future Role to Assume
Krabi CBT Association / Krabi Local	Community tourism network, community stratification, platform prototype.	Community screening, route development, service standards, and local execution.
Sustainable Krabi Foundation	Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), sustainable products, hotel procurement connections.	Product standards, credibility mechanisms, and hotel market connections.
NatureMind-Ed, Social Enterprise	Eco-education, science communication, school/international student groups.	Translation of mangrove and coastal ecological content, school/CSR curriculum development.
Hotel Sustainability Network	Local sourcing, guest recommendations, green procurement demand.	Stable market gateway, procurement testing, and experience recommendations.
Government Agencies	One Tambon One Product (OTOP), community enterprises, training, policy resources.	Policy endorsement, foundational training, registration, and standards support.



Figure 5. Interview with Mr. Chanrit Permzup from Krabi Community Based Tourism Association

4. Analysis of Existing Support Systems

Over the past twenty years, the Thai government has continuously promoted community development. The support systems most relevant to Krabi include One Tambon One Product (OTOP), Community Enterprise, Community-Based Tourism (CBT), OTOP Nawatwithi (Innovative Tourism), Decentralized Hand-on Program Exhibition (D-HOPE), the Bio-Circular-Green Economy (BCG Economy), and the Thailand Village Academy. These projects have effectively driven product development, skills training, community organization building, and tourism experience development. Multiple community enterprises we interviewed mentioned participating in relevant government-supported programs, such as attending training sessions, being invited to various exhibitions, receiving material subsidies, and getting product R&D support.

Empowering Local Growth: Thailand's 7 Key Support Systems

 OTOP (One Tambon One Product) Enhance the competitiveness of community products, create jobs and income, and drive marketing	Main Content Product development, packaging design, star certification, exhibition promotion, e-commerce support
 Community Enterprise Strengthen community business capabilities and drive community organizations to become sustainable operating entities	Main Content Community enterprise registration, business training, financial management, organizational capacity building
 Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Create income through community-participatory tourism activities while protecting local culture and natural resources	Main Content Community tourism route development, tour guide training, accommodation, and hospitality standards building
 OTOP Nawatwithi Transform community lifestyles, culture, and local wisdom into tourism experiences and income opportunities	Main Content Community tourism product design, cultural experience development, visitor hospitality activities
 D-HOPE Discover individual community skills and local wisdom, transforming them into participatory activities and income sources	Main Content Hands-on workshop design, experience activity development, community talent showcasing
 BCG Economy Drive sustainable development through the bio-economy, circular economy, and green economy	Main Content Supporting organic agriculture, recycling, green tourism, and natural resource value transformation
 Thailand Village Academy Enhance the visibility of community culture and local wisdom, attracting tourists into communities through learning-based tourism	Main Content Community cultural curriculum design, learning-based tourism promotion, community mentor cultivation

Figure 6. Thailand's current policies and systems that support community-based business

This study concludes that Krabi does not currently lack government projects. Future interventions should avoid repeating existing training or re-developing isolated products. Instead, they should fill the gaps in market connection, operational companionship, and cross-institutional collaboration mechanisms that are difficult for government projects to cover over the long term.



Figure 7. Longtail boat is a signature of Koh Klang's community-based tourism (Credit: Yunzhu Chen)

5. Gap Analysis: What is Krabi Currently Lacking?

Gap 1: Market Links and Channel Capabilities

Most communities are already capable of manufacturing products and providing experience activities, but they lack the market connection capabilities to continuously convert these resources into income. For community experiences, the tourism market around Ao Nang is still dominated by mature products such as island hopping, kayaking, elephant experiences, and ATVs; the visibility and market penetration of community-based experiences remain relatively limited.

For community products, many sales still rely on government exhibitions, acquaintance networks, or sporadic tourists. They lack stable channels, long-term customer relationships, and sustained marketing capabilities. Even with high-quality honey, natural dyed fabrics, coconut shell crafts, long-tail boat models, or cocoa products, communities still find it difficult to enter the broader market. Local residents also absorb the hidden costs of environmental degradation by undercharging for their products, omitting unremunerated labour, wild natural resources and the ecosystem-dependent cultural value of traditional recipes from pricing, and a genuine community enterprise is unsustainable if its economic returns fail to adequately fund local conservation efforts.

During the survey, multiple respondents raised similar issues:

- Products can be sold, but they are underpriced and sales are unstable;
- People participate in experiences, but the tourist source is not continuous;
- Products exist, but long-term buyers cannot be found;
- Stories exist, but they cannot effectively reach the market.

Therefore, the biggest challenge at present is not creating more products or experiences, but how to make existing resources continuously visible, understood, and purchased by the market. Current attempts (such as the “Krabi Local” platform being promoted by the Krabi CBT Association) are still in the development stage, and their long-term operating models and market influence have yet to be further verified.

Gap 2: Trust, Standards, and Market Recognition

Krabi already has various standards and certification systems related to community development, including OTOP, CBT Standards, PGS, and various government and industry standards. However, from a market perspective, most of these systems operate independently and lack a unified, easy-to-understand expression. External partners, corporate clients, and hotel chains find it difficult to quickly understand the differences between different systems and the community and environmental values they represent.

At the same time, many smaller community organizations find it hard to afford traditional, expensive third-party organic or food safety certifications due to high capital investments and professional expertise requirements. Therefore, the current problem is not a lack of certification systems, but the lack of a value-verification mechanism that can both build market trust and fit the actual conditions of the community.

Gap 3: Community Operational Capabilities

This is the most frequently mentioned and most common challenge identified in this survey. Many community projects often rely excessively on a few core leaders to maintain operations. Once the person in charge retires or leaves, the project easily stagnates.

Meanwhile, youth out-migration and a shortage of successors are widespread. The older generation possesses the craftsmanship, land, community knowledge, and conservation experience, but often lacks digital marketing, English communication, and market interfacing skills. The younger generation possesses potential operational capabilities but rarely views community industries as attractive, long-term careers. Thus, the weakest link in the community is not production capacity, but the continuous organizational capacity to bridge production and the market.



Figure 8. Ocyco, a sustainable brand from Krabi, sells their products in Krabi International Airport (Credit: Yunzhu Chen)

6. Strategic Opportunity Analysis

Based on the survey results, this study identifies four major opportunities for Krabi's future. These opportunities are not mutually exclusive projects but distinct modules that can form a holistic community ecosystem.

Opportunity 1: Community Experience Development and Product Value Extension

Krabi's community experiences and community products should not be viewed as isolated sales modules. Instead, they should be integrated into a complete closed loop of "on-site deep experience" and "off-site value extension." A stable flow of experience customers not only brings in experience fees, but also drives sales in guiding, transportation, catering, handicrafts, agricultural products, and retail commodities, becoming a comprehensive gateway for the community economy.

At the same time, community experiences serve as an important carrier for ecological education. Through mangrove guiding, beekeeping experiences, natural dyeing, local cuisine, and hands-on mini-workshops, tourists can more directly understand the symbiotic relationship between mangroves and community livelihoods, transforming ordinary sightseeing into ecological education. Products infused with brand stories and conservation narratives will act as long-term communication media, breaking through spatial and temporal constraints to drive subsequent repeat purchases and community identity.

Krabi Experiential Tourism Market Benchmarks

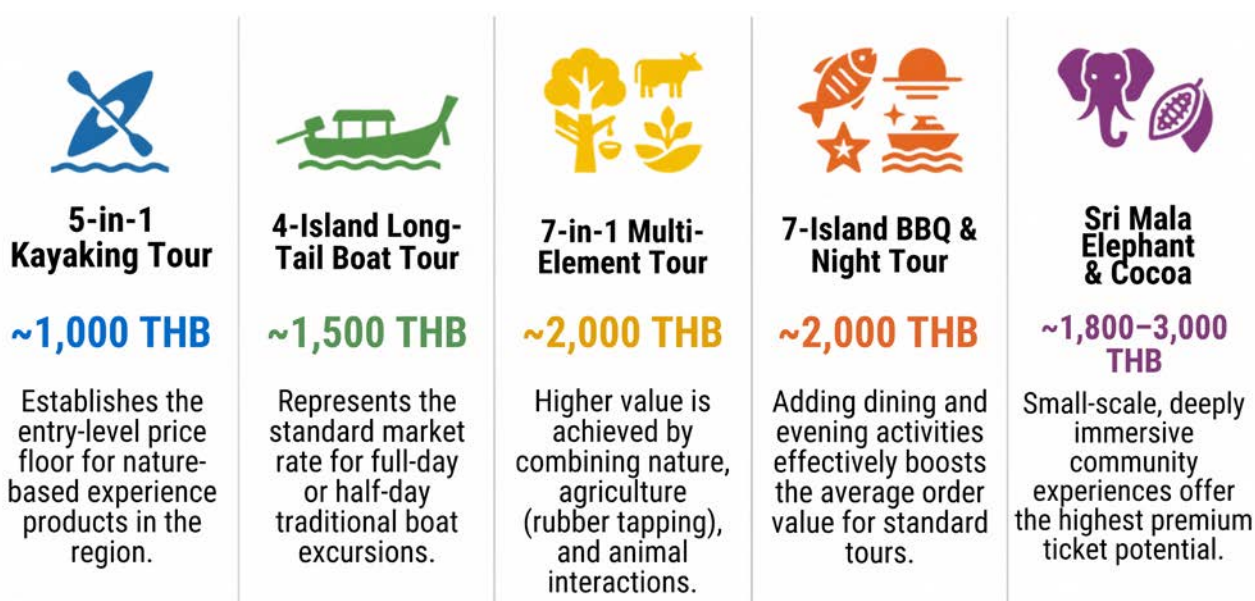


Figure 9. Current Krabi experiential tour packages and their lists of price

Opportunity 2: Hotel and Institutional Procurement

The demand for local and green procurement among hotels, local enterprises, schools, and CSR projects is growing. Compared to individual tourists, institutional clients offer more stable orders, longer procurement cycles, and higher average order values, covering food, welcome gifts, souvenirs, customized experiences, and eco-education partnerships. Future priorities lie in overcoming community deficiencies in supply stability, quality consistency, and quotation communication capabilities to help them meet institutional partnership standards.

Opportunity 3: Building Community Participatory Standards and Trust Mechanisms

The core strategic opportunity lies in proactively constructing a “low-barrier, high-credibility” local participatory standard. Fully leveraging the existing PGS Network foundation, mangrove conservation actions and stingless beekeeping regulations can be transformed into quantifiable local green standards. This will integrate the currently scattered systems and deliver a unified, easy-to-understand “proof of community and environmental value” to bulk and high-end markets, breaking down trust barriers.

Opportunity 4: Youth Community Operators

Recruit and train local youth to handle content dissemination, social media operations, English customer service, order coordination, institutional interfacing, and impact data tracking. This will bridge the organizational and operational gap between production and the market while creating attractive hometown employment opportunities for young people, strengthening the community’s capacity for sustainable development.

How Strategic Opportunities Respond to Identified Gaps

Bridging the Gaps: 4 Strategic Opportunities for Krabi's Ecosystem

Krabi's path to sustainable development relies on four strategic pillars connecting community assets with market demand and local talent.

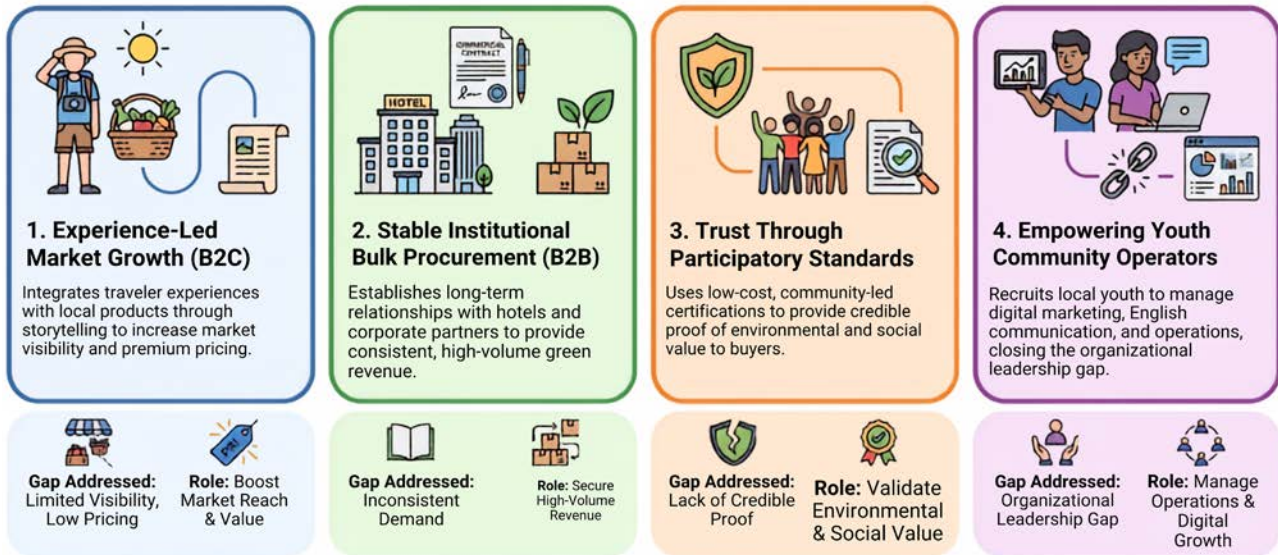


Figure 10. How strategic opportunities respond to identified gaps



Figure 11. Souvenir products from other provinces are selling in the Central Krabi Mall (Credit: Yunzhu Chen)

7. Recommended Development Approach

This study recommends that the future direction should not be to create a new community brand, but to establish a Community Ecosystem that can continuously connect communities, markets, and ecological conservation.

Elements of the Krabi Community Ecosystem Model



Figure 12. Elements of the Krabi Community Ecosystem Model

Since no ecosystem can be independently built by a single institution, future development is best suited for a partner consortium model. By establishing a partner consortium, different institutions can leverage their respective strengths to build cross-organizational collaboration and long-term partnership mechanisms.



Figure 13. Meeting with the inspiring owner of Sri Mala Elephant Garden and Cocoa farm (Credit: Yunzhu Chen)

8. Partner Consortium Structure and Roles

Suggested Partner Consortium Structure



Figure 14. Suggested partner consortium structure

Under the consortium model, Give to Nature is better suited as an ecosystem builder rather than a system operator, undertaking four core roles: community incubator, youth capacity builder, ecological conservation storyteller, and impact manager.

9. Theory of Change and Expected Outcomes

The core logical path is as follows:

Mangrove Ecosystem → Community Assets → Products & Experiences → Market Channels → Income & Livelihoods → Community Pride & Engagement → Youth Participation → Conservation Motivation → Mangrove Protection

Suggested Impact Assessment Framework

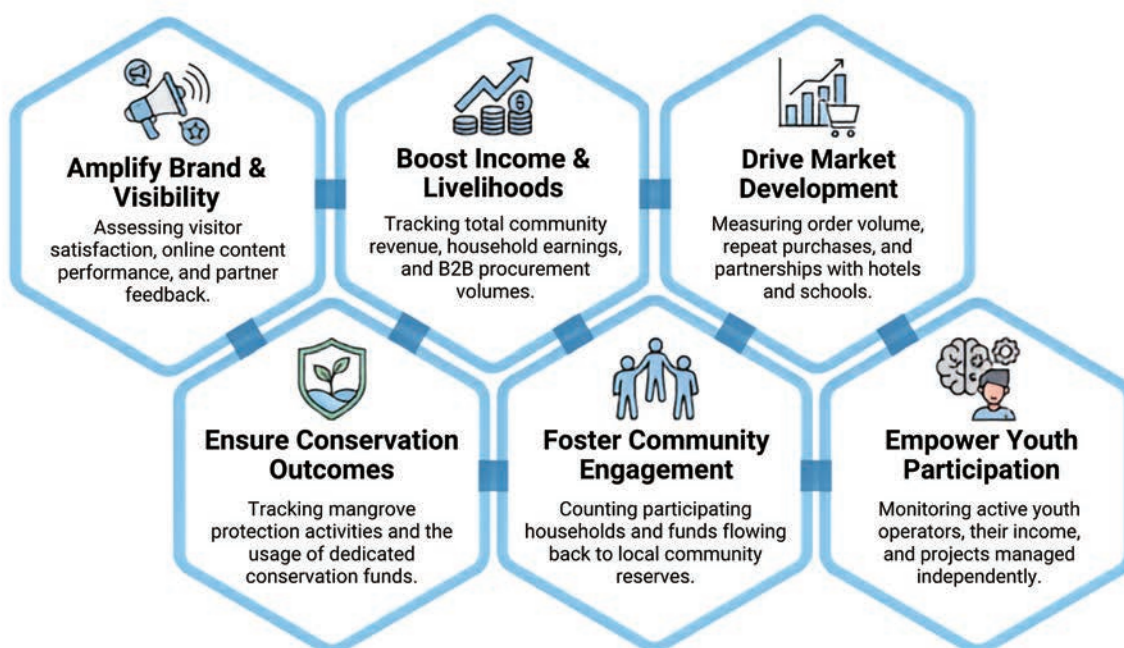


Figure 15. Suggested impact assessment framework



Figure 16. Local women work in the factory of Jee-Or, a Krabi food brand that supports communities (Credit: Yunzhu Chen)

10. Two-Year Pilot Plan

A 24-month period is recommended as the first-phase pilot cycle, initiated by Give to Nature. In the early stages of the project, priority should be given to 2–3 communities with foundational conditions to establish replicable tools and cooperation mechanisms. The core focus of the project is to establish the Krabi Community Youth Fellowship, training local youth's leadership through an “action-based learning, participation, and responsibility-taking” approach to enhance community autonomy and achieve localized operations.

Table 2: Two-Year Pilot Roadmap

Phase	Timeline	Community Experience & Operation Focus	Standards & Trust Mechanism Building	Youth Participation Focus	Phase Outputs
Phase 1: Consortium Formation & Framework Consensus	0–3 Months	Confirm core consortium partners and collaboration principles; screen 2–3 pilot communities; collect baseline data.	Establish governance structure and agreements on core PGS principles; establish CBT structure and principles	Recruit the first batch of 5–10 youth fellows; involve them in community visits, basic training, and documentation.	Consortium collaboration framework, pilot community list, baseline data, draft standards framework.
Phase 2: Product & Standard Prototype Development	4–6 Months	Capacity building for local communities to transform existing resources into testable prototypes; design routes, pricing, guiding content, and processes.	Develop Krabi PGS and CBT operational framework, including standards, peer review, traceability, biodiversity consideration and quality assurance processes	Youth fellows participate via shadow learning in route testing and material organization.	2–3 experience route prototypes, community product story packages, first version of standard text.
Phase 3: Marketing & Standard Trust Verification	7–12 Months	Test market responses through partners like hotels, schools, and CSR; establish profit-sharing and review mechanisms.	Pilot implementation for initial verification.	Youth fellows begin to co-lead, taking charge of customer communication and order coordination.	Stable orders, channel partnership records, revenue distribution mechanisms, customer feedback reports.
Phase 4: Mechanism Establishment & Youth Independent Operation	13–18 Months	Hand over daily operations (customer service, content, channel maintenance) to high-performing youth.	Scale and institutionalization: institutionalize governance and strengthen local review capacity	Select 3–5 core youth, providing clear positions and stipends to independently manage channels.	Core youth operations team, clear division of labor, standards review, and compliance SOP toolkits.
Phase 5: Local Handover & Full Replication	19–24 Months	Gradually hand over daily operations to local networks; expand to 6–8 active community projects.	Scale and replication with more communities, tourist products, hotels and peer reviewers; fully linking compliance rates with impact data	Core youth operators enter the local handover mechanism, becoming the core force of project management.	Local entity handover mechanism, mature standards system, retention plan, two-year impact report.

Core Implementation Principles:

- Start small, cultivate deeply: Prioritize validating methodologies and mechanisms over chasing a high number of communities.
- Build trust infrastructure from day one: Deeply embed local green standards into community production and bulk procurement.
- Action-based rather than bureaucratic certification: Villagers can gain access simply by participating in mangrove patrols or adopting ecological farming techniques, lowering barriers and increasing conservation incentives.
- Plan for local ownership: From Phase 1, explicitly clarify that the project must eventually be gradually taken over by local partners and youth operators, avoiding long-term dependence on external NGOs.

11. Long-Term Sustainability and Local Handover

As Give to Nature completes the first 24 months of the pilot and steps back from its primary driving role, a lightweight local operating entity will be required in the future. Serving as a collaborative platform for the partner consortium (registered and operated as a social enterprise), it will be responsible for supporting partner collaboration and driving market connections. This entity will also serve as a long-term carrier for youth capacity building, where young people can participate through internships, part-time jobs, or project-based work, forming a continuous talent cycle.

11.1 Financial Sustainability Assessment

This study calculated the financial baseline required to maintain a minimum viable operations team (1 full-time operations manager, 2 part-time community liaisons, plus basic administrative and transportation costs):

Table 3: Estimated monthly costs and annual cost for sustainable operation

Team Configuration	Estimated Monthly Cost	Estimated Annual Cost
1 Full-time Operations Manager (15,000 THB/month)	15,000 THB	180,000 THB
2 Part-time Community Liaisons (7,500 THB/month/person)	15,000 THB	180,000 THB
Basic Operating Costs (transportation, communication, tools, administration)	8,000–12,500 THB	96,000–150,000 THB
Total Baseline Requirement	38,000–42,500 THB/month	456,000–510,000 THB/year

Table 4: Estimation Model Based on Seasonal Variations

Income Source	Operational Status Required for Break-Even (Conservative Assumptions)	Annual Income Contribution
Community Experiences	Peak season: ~15 groups/month, Low season: ~5 groups/month; 8 people per group, 1,500 THB per capita; 10% coordination service fee extracted.	~172,800 THB/year
School / CSR / Institutional Projects	Average of ~3 projects per month, charging a 4,000 THB coordination service fee per project.	~144,000 THB/year
Hotel / Gift / Product Sourcing	Around 150,000 THB total bulk procurement volume per month, extracting an 8% operational service fee.	~144,000 THB/year
Community Marketing & Operations Support	Provide social media hosting, order systems, and platform operations support for partners.	~60,000–120,000 THB/year
Projected Total Income Portfolio	Achieving the multi-business status described above	~520,800–580,800 THB/year

Core Judgment

The financial sustainability of this project cannot rely on a single channel. Instead, a mixed income model must be established through the various business lines outlined above to achieve self-sufficiency and a long-term autonomous cycle for the system.



Figure 17. The award-winning mixed-farming demonstration plot of Mr. Ahnat Buabthong in Krabi (Credit: Yunzhu Chen)

12. Main Risks and Assumptions

This study identifies four core risks:

1. Reduced communication efficiency in cross-organizational collaboration within the partner consortium (Risk 1).
2. Market demand and actual orders being affected by fluctuations in the broader tourism macro-environment (Risk 2).
3. Insufficient continuous engagement of local youth and fault lines in talent succession (Risk 3).
4. Ineffective handover by the local operating entity after the pilot ends (Risk 4).

The core assumption of this project is not that every single community product will succeed, but rather to validate within the first 24-month pilot period: whether effective collaboration can form among communities, whether the market is willing to pay a premium for ecological value, whether young people are willing to take on operations, and whether a lightweight local entity can achieve financial independence. Therefore, the focus of the pilot lies in small-scale validation rather than rapid, blind expansion.

13. Conclusion

The critical challenge for Krabi's next stage of sustainable development and biodiversity conservation does not lie in creating more products or conducting repetitive capacity training. Instead, it lies in how to build a mechanism that continuously connects communities, markets, youth talents, and ecological conservation actions. Therefore, this study recommends positioning the project as a community ecosystem development initiative.

The core path is as follows: start with mangrove communities, use community experiences and institutional cooperation as market entry points, utilize youth operator cultivation as the foundation for long-term capacity building, adopt the partner consortium as the collaborative framework, and employ a lightweight local operating entity as the long-term handover mechanism. This will gradually form a Krabi community ecosystem capable of continuously generating community income, nurturing local backbones, and supporting mangrove conservation, providing replicable practical experience in ecological protection and economic transformation for other regions.

Appendix: Field Logs

Contains field observations, multi-party in-depth interview snippets, and research reflections during the two-week visit period; the original text is retained here as a desk review index for future reference.

