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Development of strategic plan for new normal creative tourism: Hala-Bala Forest areas community, Thailand

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Abstract---The operation emphasizing development until it reaches the utmost effectiveness has to rely on plans, which will be guidance for such operation. A strategic plan is a framework for such development by focusing on success according to the goals and period determined. The background of this study is to develop the tourism industry after the Coronavirus pandemic. It is an essential and urgent issue to recover tourism potentially and welcome tourists like before. Furthermore, it builds reliability to the tourists on hygiene and protection of such disease. It is the background of the study. The research was carried out by using the Qualitative Research type using the Participatory Action Research (PAR). The objectives are to study

the contexts and develop the strategic plan for new normal creative tourism of the Hala-Bala forest areas community, Thailand. The key informants derived from Purposive Sampling from the representatives of both public and private sectors, community leaders, and community agents, a total of 38 persons, in the Aiyerweng Sub-district of Betong District, and Mae Wat Sub-district of Than To District, Yala Province. The research instrument consisted of the Focus Group and Questionnaire Form. The instrument statistics included Frequency, Percentage, and content analysis. The Research result found that the key informants' group gave a mutual proposal and was ready to acquire strategic plans for new normal creative tourism. The plan consists of 3 strategic issues; Strategy 1) the development of resources for new normal creative tourism, Strategy 2) the development of the organization for new normal creative tourism, and Strategy 3) the building of growth for life quality friendly with new normal environments. Such a strategic development plan can be guidance for the tourism development in such areas to be ready for supporting and responding to the tourists' needs after the Covid crisis, for the tourism recovery to be like the recent time soon.

Keywords---strategic plan, creative tourism, Hala-Bala forest, new normal environments.

Introduction

According to the guidance of developing Thailand pursuing the national strategy, a 20-year time period (2017-2036), Thailand has stability, wealth, and sustainability, it has the goal of country development as a nation is stable, people is happy, the economy is continually developing, society is equitable, and natural resources base is sustainable. One of the guidance to build the strength and sustainability for the domestic economy, it is necessary to increase the competency of the local community to improve their self-development and self-dependence as well as self-management for building the qualitative society. Regarding the survey about Thailand tourism trends in 2019, by Airbnb (2019), 84% of the tourists require the travel of using life the same as local people living there. And Expedia (2018) highlighted the tourism information in 2018 by revealing Thai tourists prefer to choose the destination of tourism as local community resources located in the secondary cities. Furthermore, the rate of tourism like this is increasing by over 50% compared to 2017. It reflects the tourism today follows the traditional ways of life toward various communities, considered the unique tourist attractions in terms of resources, environments, and cultures. It has been popular among tourists more. It affects the public sectors to continuously focus on tourism development and promotion managed by the community.

The situation of today, the whole world is suffering from the Covid-19 pandemic, and it causes enormous economic loss. Thailand is the same that has been being affected broadly toward the contraction of economic growth around 5.4%, approximately (Bank of Ayudhya Public Company Limited, 2020). Public

organizations have to rush for recovery and stimulate such situations to reach a normal condition soon. It can be done by rebuilding confidence for the tourists about the safety and hygiene following the Amazing Thailand Safety & Health Administration's Policy (SHA) of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), with the Ministry of Public Health, to support the tourists after Covid-19 crisis. The circumstance affects the economy of Yala Province, especially the tourism part since it has made 95% loss of tourists group from Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thai tourists traveling to Betong District. Incomes within the province have lost hugely (Siamrath, 2020). Concerning Hala-bala forest areas, they are accepted as Amazon of ASEAN, having the viewpoint of seas mist reflecting the abundance of natural resources. The place is ready for improvement to become the perfect ecological tourist attraction and has the root of traditional wisdom inherited for a long time. It is concordant with the goal of the development plan of Yala Province, a 5-year time period (2018-2022), which is to focus on the Stable Life Quality, Prosperous Agriculture, and Sustainable Tourism, which is developing the life quality, making incomes, and creating happiness. Moreover, the society is stable, equitable, and fair until it can be competitive in the economic system. The Research brought the body of knowledge derived from the field operation on tourism in Namtip Sub-district Municipality, Betong District, Yala Province, then expanded the results for nearby areas development, by piloting the community along the line of Hala-bala forest; Aiyerweng Sub-district Community located in Betong District and Chulabhorn Pattana 9 Village located in Mae Wat Sub-district, Than To District, Yala Province. Hence, the researchers emphasize the development goal by lifting the new normal creative tourism. This location is facing the situations after the COVID-19 pandemic in the community around the Hala-bala Forest, Yala Province. Moreover, the main goal is to operate under the participatory knowledge base management, which leads to the development, based on resource, wisdom, and culture, for sustainable achievement. Besides, it promotes and stimulates the economy at a root level to extend to the provincial level and national level, respectively, to reach strength and conform the policy of the Provincial Development Plan to be explicitly concrete further.

Literature Review

Several scholars have described the term of strategy as a combination of operations chosen by administrators to use for increasing competency for their organization compared to their rivals. If the result of using strategy helps the organization achieve competency more, it means the reachability of competition. Strategy is a form of purpose, policy, project, activity, decision, or allocation of resources as a factor to determine what the organization is, what it does, and why it has to do that. Each strategy is different depending on the level of organization and period. Furthermore, strategy is regarded as an orientation and scope of the organization in the long term, to gain benefits, through resources allocation under the changeable environments, to respond to the needs of markets and expectations of the involved. Moreover, strategy is an operation plan outlined systematically, which has various components relating concordantly. Strategy is a plan having the drawn vision or imagination, a kind of spiritual unity focusing on mutual purposes or freewill synergy of all parties, for the responsible mission to accomplish the determined objectives. A good strategic plan derives from the past analysis and present recognition to catch up with the future. A strategic plan is

also about past situations analysis, resources, and various costs considered the potentials or ability, however it has never been developed or has not fully developed, or competencies which hidden. An effective strategic plan is a result caused by a good plan process that is effective. It is a purposive plan generating a union, has principles which originate ideas sharing, participating of every related party that leads to a co-operation. In addition, a strategic plan divides the roles of management (Hill & Jones, 2009; Bryson, 1995; Johnson & Scholes, 1999; Seri Phongphit, 2005). Meanwhile, some research in foreign countries has studied strategy in various issues; Ladeiras *et al.* (2010) found that efficiently managing tourist attractions can be done by following the strategic framework developed carefully through stakeholders and educational institutes' participation for consideration. Besides, strategy can help develop the qualified work plan of any area and apply the conceptual strategy by emphasizing the required goals to coincide with the area, including realizing the importance of participating people in the community. Furthermore, the domestic research of Pirun Chinachot and Thirawat Chantuk (2016) revealed the creative tourism management style of Suan Peung, is about building or increasing values to the existing resources to the maximum. Then it brings such values to create the creative innovation to become the form of tourism activity, collaboration from both entrepreneurs and communities that enable tourists to participate, learn, and increase their skills. Moreover, the research proposed five components of creative tourism, which included 1) creative tourist attractions, 2) creative entrepreneurs, 3) creative community, 4) creative activities or products, and 5) creative communication. While Nitikorn Muangsornkhiaw *et al.*, (2018) indicated that it should accelerate the policies to improve the Singkhon Checkpoint from the special Check Point Border Trade to become permanent, customs checkpoint procedure system, organize the landscapes to be beautiful and outstanding telling the past story of Singkhon Checkpoint, have duty free shops and increase facilities for tourist. It is following the research of Sirima Charoensri *et al.*, (2019) which showed that around both boundaries of the country have the tourist attractions in terms of culture, religion, history, and unique livelihood, including the cost of living, is not too much high. For Prachuap Khiri Khan province, there are facilities and sufficient residences for tourists. However, the main problems are the lack of tour guides' knowledge on histories of the tourist attractions and communication skills on Myanmar and English Language, which make the community and personnel of tourism both Thai and Myanmar borders do not realize the essentials of cultural tourism. Besides, Chairat Jussapalo *et al.*, (2018) found that Betong areas mostly have the development gap, by comparing the strategic plan of tourism in various levels almost all of the sub-districts. This research generates the mechanism of cooperation for developing the tourism of Betong more. There was brainstorming to organize the tourism development strategy, and it got five strategies as follows: 1) products development and tourism services on identity, livelihood, culture, tradition, and environment, 2) infrastructure and facilities development to support the extension of the tourism industry, 3) potentials development of tourism personnel through all systems to reach the changing capacity of competition and tourism orientation, 4) balance building of tourists through niche market, and confidence on safety to the tourism management and enhancement of cooperation among the community, public sectors and private sectors. In addition, Somjin Chankrabi and Narin Sungrugsu. (2017) revealed that the tourism circumstances and creative tourism requirements of Suphanburi

Province have good potentials and be ready to develop creative tourism. For the creative tourism strategy of this province, four strategies as follows: 1) creating the model to develop economic cultures and wisdom from the identity base to the being of creative tourism, 2) enhancing the marketing strategy both domestic and foreign markets by focusing on the qualified tourists market, 3) connecting the tourism within the clusters to increase the staying period through the improvement of tourism activities and connection of tourism routes, and 4) developing the tourism personnel and supporting the participation of people for developing the tourism. Also, Patarporn Iamviriyawat (2020) indicated that Ban Phu Nam Ron, Dan Chang District, Suphan Buri province has tourist attractions that can be developed to become creative tourist attractions by having some strategies to improve the community to be creative tourism, and preserve traditions, cultures, and natural capital sustainably, by holding the participatory principle which consists of four strategies as follows: 1) creating the model from economic cultural and wisdom development for increasing the values and worth from the community identity base to the creative tourism, 2) developing the marketing strategies to build the tourists' recognition towards the community in terms of creative tourism, 3) connecting the tourism between community and networks to increase the period for going through the improving of tourism activities, and 4) developing personnel, knowledge base in the community, and supporting the participation of creative tourism development.

Research Methodology

This study is carried out by Qualitative Research using Participatory Action Research (PAR) technique. The Researchers' team selected the Purposive Sampling to recruit the targeted areas; Mae Wat Sub-district in Than To District, and Aiyerweng Sub-district in Betong District, Yala Province. The key informants included representatives of the related agencies regarding this operation according to the strategic plan of new normal creative tourism, both public and private sectors, by using the Focus Group, with 30 persons, and In-depth Interview, with eight representatives involved with tourism and Hala-bala forest community areas (Yothin Sawangdee, 2020) For data collection, the researcher team uses the Focus Group and Interview form to draft the guidelines of strategic proposal to develop the strategic plan of new normal creative tourism, Hala-bala forest areas community, Thailand. The Data Triangulate was used, and the data analysis was done by using the Frequency, Percentage, and Contents Analysis.

Research Result

The Research result studying the context and basic information of the Hala-Bala forest areas community Thailand, the Hala-bala forest is the hugest area on the Malay Peninsula. It has its foresting path connecting to the Belum Forest or Royal Belum State Park, Perak State, located in the northern part of Malaysia. This forest is plentiful and has unique biodiversity. For the whole geography of the Hala-bala forest, its characteristics are complex high mountains, moist rainforest or tropical rain forest, have high humidity, and rainstorms. This Hala-bala forest has three formal names; 1) Bang Lang National Park, 2) Suan Pa Phra Namapithai, and 3) Halabala Wildlife Sanctuary. In the past, it was an old village amidst the Hala-bala forest called Hala Village. After the Communist Party of

Malaya (CPM) situation, the government asked these people to move out and set up in Betong city (around Aiyerweng Sub-district today). They did not have an opportunity to return to the forests again since the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) ever had a movement during the fighting for political cause towards the Malaysian government authorized by the British government at that time. Later, when the Party became Thai Nation Development Cooperators, some members settled in Thailand by living in the boundaries, located in Hala-bala forest between Yala Province and Narathiwat Province. Furthermore, such a forest has the traditional native folks named Sakai or Orang Asli, an ethnic Group of Negrito or Nigrito. This group of people has lived in this Hala-bala forest as well.

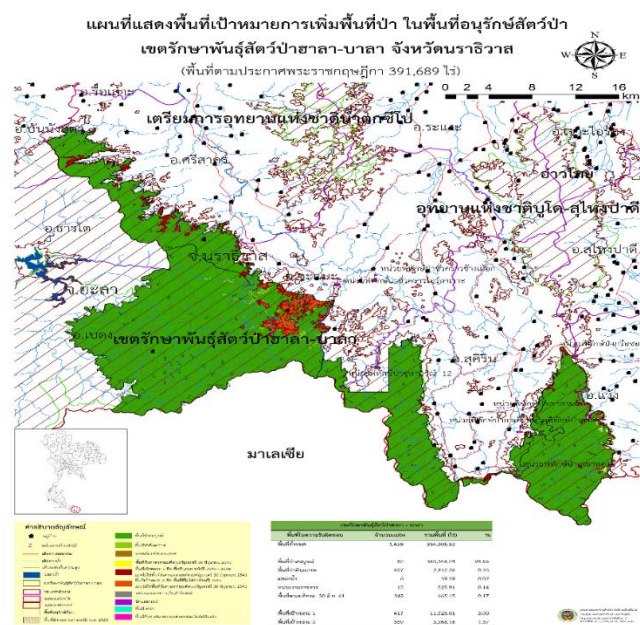


Figure 1. Map shown Hala-bala Forest Areas



Figure 2. Sakai who preserves Hala-bala Forest Areas

According to the strategic plan development result for new normal creative tourism, the Hala-Bala forest areas community Thailand, the study was done by opening the community forum using the Focus Group method. The thirty representatives were from the organizations operating under the strategic plans for new normal creative tourism. The details shown are in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1 Representatives from the organizations participated in the Focus Group Meeting

Names of Organization	Amount	Percentage
Office of Tourism and Sports	3	10.0
Ministry of Public Health, Yala Province	3	10.0
Southern Border Provinces Administration Centre (SBPAC)	2	6.67
Tourism Authority of Thailand, Yala Province and Narathiwat Province	3	10.0
Forest Protection and Development Division ^u , Yala Province	2	6.67
Tourism Association, Betong District	3	10.0
Local Administrative Organization	9	30.0
Tourism Business Entrepreneurs	5	16.7
Total	30	100

From Table 1, a number of participants relating to the operation of the strategic plan for new normal creative tourism, who joined the opening of the community forum done by Focus Group meeting, it was mostly the representatives from the Local Administrative Organizations, nine persons (30%), secondly was the tourism business entrepreneurs, five persons (16.7%). And the representatives who were from the of Tourism and Sports, Ministry of Public Health, Yala Province, Tourism Authority of Thailand, Yala Province, and Narathiwat province, and Tourism Association of Betong District, had the number of participants equally, three persons (10%), and from Southern Border Provinces Administration Centre (SBPAC), and Forest Protection and Development Division, Yala Province, had a number of participants equally, two persons (6.67%), respectively.

The activity of this community forum by Focus Group Meeting from the representatives involved with the operation following the strategic plan for new normal creative tourism was divided into two groups: 1) Group of Hala-Bala forest areas community, Aiyerweng Sub-district, Betong district, and 2) Group of Mae Wat Sub-district, Than To District, Yala Province. The participants had a mutual proposal on the outlines of the strategic plan for new normal creative tourism of Aiyerweng Sub-district in Betong district and Mae Wat Sub-district in Than To District. It was done by proposing the proposal outline of the strategic plan for new normal creative tourism. The plan was divided into three strategic issues as follows: 1) Development of new normal creative tourism, 2) Development of new normal creative tourism management, and 3) growth for life quality with new normal environments friendliness. And there were 11 strategies as follows: 1) to develop the tourist attractions according to the new normal, 2) to develop the residences by designing and having measures of residence management according to the new normal, 3) to organize the new normal public transportation system, 4)

to generate the measure of service use for the entrepreneurs to distribute the new normal products and services, 5) to develop the new normal tourism management system, 6) to develop the personnel and community to have a perception about the new normal tourism management system, 7) to connect the tourist routes in the country and ASEAN regions, 8) to develop the life quality of the community, personnel, and tourists physically, emotionally, intellectually, and environmentally, 9) to develop the new normal environmental system, 10) to create the guidelines of preservation and environmental friendliness, and 11) to improve the tourism by focusing on the environmental conservation. For In-depth Interviews from 8 representatives related to the operation according to the strategic plan for new normal creative tourism, the details are shown in Table 2 as follows:

Table 2 Representatives of the organization using In-depth Interview method

Number	Name of Organization
01	Office of Tourism and Sports
02	Ministry of Public Health, Yala Province
03	Southern Border Provinces Administration Centre (SBPAC)
04	Forest Protection and Development Division, Yala Province
05	Forest Protection and Development Division, Yala Province
06	Local Administrative Organization
07	Local Administrative Organization
08	Entrepreneurs of Tourism Business
Average Age	40.13

Regarding Table 2, there were eight representatives from 6 organizations using the In-depth Interview method relating to the operation of the strategic plan for new normal creative tourism. The researchers' staff used the Semi-Structured Interview and represented the result of qualitative analysis. The details are as follows:

From the interview of representatives from various organizations relating to the development of the strategic plan for new normal creative tourism, the development of strategic plan focuses on developing 3 points: 1) to develop the environmental system according to the new normal, 2) to build the guidelines of preservation and environmental friendliness, and 3) to improve the tourist attractions by emphasizing the environmental conservation. There were seven successful indicators: 1) there were eight creative tourist attractions according to the new normal that had been developed, 2) the percentage of satisfaction of the tourists toward the tourists' attraction was not less than 80%, 3) a number of tourists increased 20%, 4) incomes of the community increased 20%, 5) the developed products and services were 20 items, 6) the community and tourists had the happiness indicators increased for not less than 5%, and 7) there was two environmental management systems according to the new normal.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the research result, the abundant forest has unique biodiversity. It is concordant with the Local Promotion and Development Center (2021) information

which indicated that the Hala-bala forest or generally called Halabala Wildlife Sanctuary is the biggest in the Malay Peninsula. This forest is abundant and has much biodiversity therefore it is called the Amazon of ASEAN. The forest is a kind of rainforest zone or tropical rain forest, which has the boundary lines connected to the Belum Forest, located in the Perak State, the northern of Malaysia. The group of Hala-bala forest is a part of San Kala Khiri Mountain that blocked the boundaries between Thailand and Malaysia covered some areas of Songkla, Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat provinces.

For the development of strategic plan for new normal creative tourism of Hala-Bala forest areas community, Yala Province, it reveals that the development of the strategic plan for new normal creative tourism can be categorized to be 3 points: 1) development of new normal creative tourism consists of 4 strategies; to develop the new normal tourism, to develop the residences by designing and having the measure of new normal residences management, to organize the new normal public transportation system, and to generate the measure of services use for the entrepreneurs distributing products and services according to the new normal, which is consistent with Chairat Jussapalo et al., (2018) who found that the areas tourism strategy concordant with the government's policies comprise 5 strategies as follows: developing the tourism products and services in terms of identity, livelihood, culture, tradition, and environment, developing the infra-structure and facilities to support the expansion of tourism industry, developing the potentials of the tourism personnel in all systems to reach the competitive competence changing tourism orientation, balancing the tourists group through specific marketing and building confidence to the tourists, and integrating the tourism management and enhancing the cooperation among community, public sectors, and private sectors. Furthermore, it is aligned with Ladeiras *et al.* (2010) who revealed that the tourist attraction can be managed by following the strategic framework developed carefully, by considering the stakeholders and educational institutes' participation that helps develop the qualified work plan of each area, and bring the concept of strategy organization, by focusing on the required goals to be concordant with the areas, and emphasize the participation of people in the community, 2) development of new normal creative tourism organization, which consists of 3 strategies; developing the system of new normal tourism management, developing the personnel and community to be knowledgeable and understanding about new normal tourism management system, and connecting the tourist routes in the country and ASEAN Region. It is concordant with Somjin Chankrabi and Narin Sungrugsa. (2017) who found that the development of creative tourism strategy has to create the model to develop economic cultures and wisdom from the identity base to the being of creative tourism, by focusing on pushing and recovering the numbers and qualities of tourists both domestic and foreign countries. It should have the connection of tourism, and cooperative integration of every part and sector for managing tourism. Besides, Nitikorn Muangsornkeaw et al., (2018) found that to develop the local tourism smoothly has to rely on the facilitates development and access until being ready to support the tourists, have the public relations of information to the tourists, there was the improvement of tourist attractions in terms of location, residence, transportation system, and other tourism services efficiently according to the new normal, and 3) building of growth for life quality friendly with new normal environments, which comprises 4 strategies; developing the life quality of the community, developing

the personnel and tourists physically, emotionally, intellectually, and environmentally, developing the new normal environments system, generating the guidelines of preservation and environmental friendliness, and improving tourism attractions by focusing on environmental preservation. It complies with the Office of Community Based-Tourism (2017) which found that to develop the creative tourist attractions to be unique in terms of tourist attractions, residences, products and services, and infrastructures to the tourists can be the attractive point of tourism. Moreover, it is in line with Ladeiras *et al* (2010) who studied the essence of the strategic plan processes which are participatory in the national and regional tourism management, and strategy can give the cooperation of the goal development sustainably, by emphasizing the required goal, which supports the plan of strategic development for tourism regions, managing the tourist attractions effectively can be done by following the strategic framework developed carefully by considering all of the stakeholders' participation relating to the strategic plan. In addition, it coincides with Sirima Charoensri *et al.*, (2019) who found that the development of the new normal creative tourism management is really necessary to enhance the community to realize and create the identities of the tourist attractions, including developing the tourism personnel of the community to achieve the perception about their community for the most to lead to the new normal tourism management, by supporting the community to get the potentials of own management, promoting the relationships of the tourists and community, which motivates the revisit further. Besides, Logar (2010) indicated that to reach positive tourism development towards the environmental and economic tourism as a whole, it should have the policy of good enhancement, the relating organizations have to give cooperate, for example, the numbers of tourism personnel have to be sufficient to support the visitors, have the management system with nice environments and pollution management, to conserve the tourism resources, etc. And Lusetyowati (2014) indicated that connecting tourism with cultural heritage will be useful for local people in terms of economic growth, which has to use the strategic methods to develop the tourism for achieving the cooperation of tourist attractions development.

For the above research result, Bala-bala forest areas community Thailand as a whole emphasizes community tourism by preserving and developing the tourist attractions within the community continuously and regularly. It is considered the core to lead to the strategic plan development of new normal creative tourism. Hence, the government section should support the participation of the stakeholders in every sector developing such areas and help publicize through various activities such as cultural, traditional, and livelihood activities to generate the new normal creative tourism management sustainably. Besides, such research results can be used by related public organizations, local administrative organizations, or other organizations, including containing such results in the development plan in a short term for both provincial and regional sectors further.

Strategic Plan and Strategic Connection of Creative Tourism Aiyerweng Sub-district, the 5-Year Period (2022–2026)

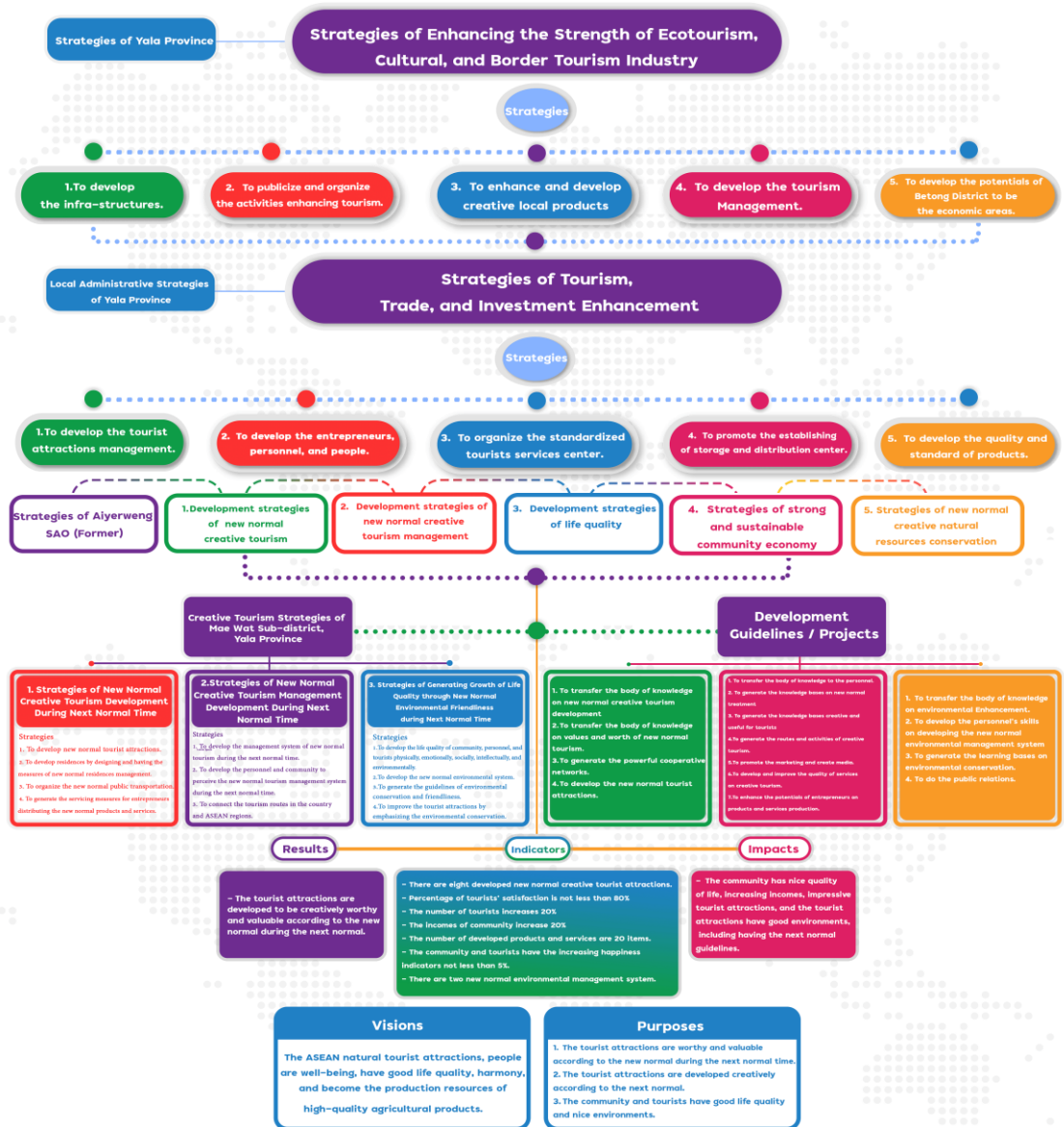


Figure 3 Strategic Plan and Tourism Strategy Connection of Aiyerweng Sub-district

Concerning this study, it can make conclusions as to the diagram below:

Strategic Plan and Strategic Connection of Creative Tourism Mae Wat Sub-district, the 5-Year Period (2022–2026)

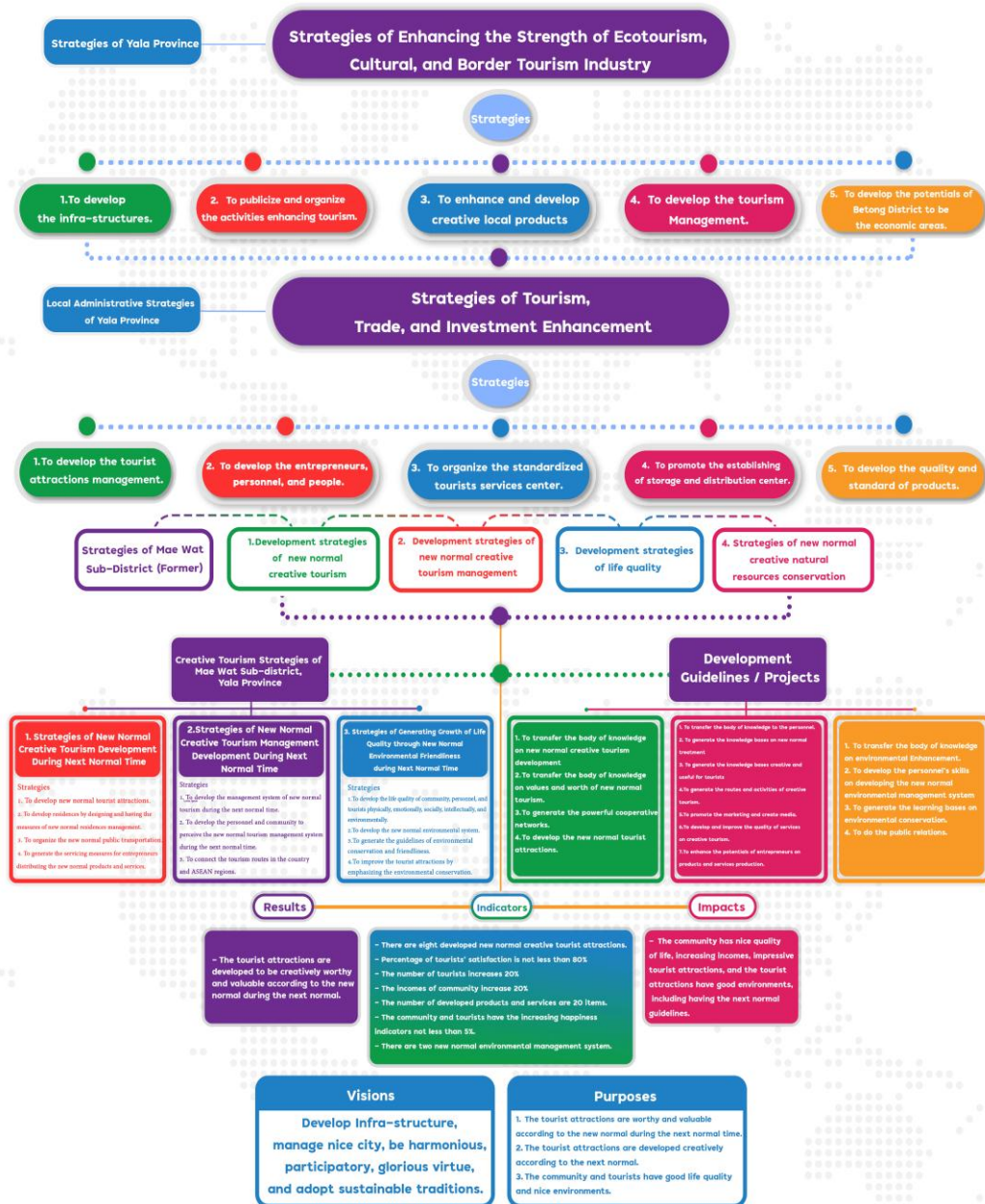


Figure 4 Strategic Plan and Tourism Strategy Connection of Mae Wat Sub-district

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