

PHUKET THAILAND

GSTC DESTINATION ASSESSMENT

December 2025

© Global Sustainable Tourism Council 2025

Copyright and ownership of the intellectual property contained in the report remain with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council unless otherwise agreed.

Document Control
This is version 2.0.

Prepared by

Dr. Mihee Kang, GSTC Chief Assurance Officer, GSTC Destination Assessor

Dr. Panate Manomaivibool, Assistant Professor, Burapha University, GSTC Destination Assessor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many individuals contributed to this GSTC Destination Assessment. The GSTC assessors appreciate the support of the following organizations and their representatives: The Sustainable Phuket Development Foundation, the Phuket Province and municipalities, various public agencies, local tourism associations, universities, individual experts, and residents.

The assessors would also like to express special thanks to the Foundation board members, Mr. Bhummikitti Ruktaengam, Ms. Angkana Tanetvisetkul, Mr. Tanawat Ongcharoen, Mr. Chanon Wongsatayanont, Dr. Pornthip Parinayok, Mr. Jak Tephabut, and Ms. Pat Thavornwongwongse, who participated in and supported the on-site assessment.

Lastly, the assessors thank Ms. Tiffany Chan, GSTC Destinations Program Manager, for her professional administrative support.

NOTE: GSTC has collaborated with Murmuration to analyze Phuket's sustainability on selected elements. Murmuration is the organization that provides the indicators needed to integrate environmental issues into all decision-making chains and for all stakeholders, governments, businesses, and the general public. The indicators are based on Earth observation data, allowing global coverage and an assessment of the past, an observation of the present, and a vision of the future.

- Murmuration website: <https://murmuration-sas.com/>
- Dashboard for Phuket: <https://services.murmureo.com/gstc-phuket-dashboard/>
 - Analyzed criteria: A10 (Climate change adaptation), D1 (Protection of sensitive environments), and D6 (Water stewardship)
 - Login information is given separately to the Sustainable Phuket Development Foundation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
LIST OF TABLES	6
LIST OF FIGURES	8
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	10
INTRODUCTION.....	11
Global Sustainable Tourism Council	11
GSTC Destination Assessment	11
OVERVIEW OF PHUKET.....	14
Introduction.....	14
ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY	18
GSTC Assessment Process	18
Phuket Assessment Process	18
Pre-desktop Assessment	19
Onsite Assessment.....	19
Desktop Assessment	19
Destination Involvement	20
GSTC Assessment Tools.....	23
Evaluation Criteria Compliance	23
ASSESSMENT RESULTS.....	25
Summary of Assessment Results.....	25
Assessment Results per Pillar	29
A. SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT.....	29
A1. Destination Management Responsibility	30
A2. Destination Management Strategy and Action Plan	32
A3. Monitoring and Reporting	35
A4. Enterprise Engagement and Sustainability Standards	36
A5. Resident Engagement and Feedback	41
A6. Visitor Engagement and Feedback.....	42
A7. Promotion and Information	44
A8. Managing Visitor Volumes and Activities	45
A9. Planning Regulations and Development Control.....	47
A10. Climate Change Adaptation	49
A11. Risk and Crisis Management	54
B. SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY.....	56
B1. Measuring the Economic Contribution of Tourism.....	57

B2. Decent work and career opportunities.....	60
B3. Supporting Local Entrepreneurs and Fair Trade.....	63
B4. Support for Community.....	65
B6. Property and User Rights.....	72
B7. Safety and Security.....	74
B8. Access for All.....	76
C. CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY.....	78
C1. Protection of Cultural Assets.....	79
C2. Cultural Artefacts.....	81
C3. Intangible Heritage.....	83
C4. Traditional Access.....	86
C5. Intellectual Property.....	87
C6. Visitor Management at Cultural Sites.....	89
C7. Site Interpretation.....	90
D. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY.....	91
D1. Protection of Sensitive Environments.....	92
D2. Visitor Management at Natural Sites.....	95
D3. Wildlife Interaction.....	97
D4. Species Exploitation and Animal Welfare.....	99
D5. Energy Conservation.....	101
D6. Water Stewardship.....	102
D7. Water Quality.....	105
D8. Wastewater.....	107
D9. Solid Waste.....	109
D10. GHG Emissions and Climate Change Mitigation.....	112
D11. Low-impact Transportation.....	113
D12. Light and Noise Pollution.....	115
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	116
Overview of Results.....	116
Recommended Priorities.....	116
A. Sustainable Management.....	116
B. Socio-Economic Sustainability.....	117
C. Cultural Sustainability.....	118
D. Environmental Sustainability.....	119
ANNEX.....	120
A. Completed Assessment Matrix.....	120

LIST OF TABLES

- Table 1. Phuket population composition per age and gender, as of 2021 15
- Table 2. Phuket Tourism Statistics, 2019-2020 16
- Table 3. Organizations responsible for each management area 21
- Table 4. Summary of GSTC Destination Assessment of Phuket 25
- Table 5. Numbers and percentages of criteria per performance level of Phuket..... 26
- Table 6. Phuket GSTC Destination Standard and Pillars’ Performance Scores..... 27
- Table 7. Criteria in Sustainable Management Pillar per score range..... 29
- Table 8. A1 Destination management responsibility assessment results..... 31
- Table 9. A2 Destination management strategy and action plan assessment results..... 34
- Table 10. A3 Monitoring and reporting assessment results..... 35
- Table 11. A4 Enterprise engagement and sustainability standards assessment results 40
- Table 12. A5 Resident engagement and feedback assessment results..... 41
- Table 13. A6 Visitor engagement and feedback assessment results 43
- Table 14. A7 Promotion and information assessment results..... 44
- Table 15. A8 Managing visitor volumes and activities assessment results 46
- Table 16. A9 Planning regulations and development control assessment results 48
- Table 17. A10 Climate change adaptation assessment results 53
- Table 18. A11 Risk and crisis management assessment results 55
- Table 19. Criteria in Socio-economic Sustainability Pillar per score range 56
- Table 20. B1 Measuring the economic contribution of tourism assessment results..... 59
- Table 21. B2 Decent work and career opportunities assessment results 62
- Table 22. B3 Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair-trade assessment results 64
- Table 23. B4 Support for community assessment results 67
- Table 24. B5 Preventing exploitation and discrimination assessment results..... 71
- Table 25. B6 Property and user rights assessment results 73
- Table 26. B7 Safety and security assessment results..... 75
- Table 27. B8 Access for all assessment results..... 77
- Table 28. Criteria in Cultural Sustainability Pillar per score range 78
- Table 29. C1 Protection of cultural assets assessment results..... 80
- Table 30. C2 Cultural artefacts assessment results..... 82
- Table 31. C3 Intangible heritage assessment results 85
- Table 32. C4 Traditional access assessment results..... 86

Table 33. C5 Intellectual property assessment results	88
Table 34. C6 visitor management at cultural sites assessment results	89
Table 35. C7 Site interpretation assessment results	90
Table 36. Criteria in Environmental Sustainability Pillar per score range	91
Table 37. D1 Protection of sensitive environments assessment results	94
Table 38. D2 Visitor management at natural sites assessment results	96
Table 39. D3 Wildlife interaction assessment results	98
Table 40. D4 Species exploitation and animal welfare assessment results.....	100
Table 41. D5 Energy conservation assessment results.....	101
Table 42. D6 Water stewardship assessment results.....	104
Table 43. D7 Water quality assessment results.....	106
Table 44. D8 Wastewater assessment results.....	108
Table 45. D9 Solid waste assessment results.....	111
Table 46. D10 GHG emissions and climate change mitigation assessment results	112
Table 47. D11 Low-impact transportation assessment results	114
Table 48. D12 Light and noise pollution assessment results	115

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1. Closing workshop 13
- Figure 2. Location of Phuket 15
- Figure 3. GSTC Destination Assessment Process 18
- Figure 4. Phuket Assessment Process 18
- Figure 5. Interview sessions 20
- Figure 6. Site visits 20
- Figure 7. Scoring process..... 23
- Figure 8. Indicator, Criterion, and Pillar Evaluation 24
- Figure 9. Performance of each pillar, with percentage of indicators per colour 26
- Figure 10. Phuket performance level per pillar 28
- Figure 11. Phuket subdistricts 30
- Figure 12. Example of provincial development plans..... 32
- Figure 13. 10+ key pillars and SDGs..... 33
- Figure 14. Green Hotel website 36
- Figure 15. Map of the CF-Hotels 37
- Figure 16. Three STAR levels 38
- Figure 17. STAR businesses in Phuket (As of February 5, 2025) 39
- Figure 18. Logo of Certified MICE Venue 39
- Figure 19. Sea level rise of Phuket..... 51
- Figure 20. Climate projections..... 52
- Figure 21. Climate Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs)..... 52
- Figure 22. Phuket Province’s risk management information on its website 54
- Figure 23. Guidelines for emergency responses at tourism facilities..... 55
- Figure 24. Year-on-year growth rate of Phuket tourism sector revenue..... 58
- Figure 25. Thailand Gross Provincial Product contribution by sector 58
- Figure 26. Trend of Phuket Gross Provincial Product 58
- Figure 27. Sothern Thailand tourism sector comparison in Gross Provincial Product..... 59
- Figure 28. Trend of Phuket unemployment rate 60
- Figure 29. Phuket Old Town Carbon Neutral 2030 Initiative event..... 66
- Figure 30. Regulating illegal labor..... 68
- Figure 31. Children at risk..... 69
- Figure 32. LGBT rights in Phuket 70

Figure 33. Unsafe pedestrian walking paths.....	75
Figure 34. First aid at tourist sites and Tourist Rescue Center at Chalong Bay	75
Figure 35. Wheelchair-accessible beaches.....	76
Figure 36. Wheelchair-accessible trails	76
Figure 37. Wheelchair-accessible activities	77
Figure 38. Wheelchair-accessible hotel information from Google search	77
Figure 39. Accessible toilets at public facilities.....	77
Figure 40. Illegal trades of artefacts in Thailand	81
Figure 41. Example of cultural experience in Phuket	83
Figure 42. Monthly trends in vegetation health, Phuket.....	92
Figure 43. Biobalance in Phuket.....	93
Figure 44. Example of clean-ups in Racha Island, Phuket	95
Figure 45. OCEANS FOR ALL's 'More Sustainable Vacation Tips'	97
Figure 46. Responsible Travel Tips by Phuket Elephant Nature Reserve	98
Figure 47. Water stress map, Phuket.....	102
Figure 48. Typical yearly trends in water stress in Phuket	103
Figure 49. Water conservation campaign.....	104
Figure 50. Changes in suspended matter in water, Phuket.....	105
Figure 51. A wastewater facility near Patong Beach	107
Figure 52. A waste container for mixed waste placed a local fish market.....	110
Figure 53. A waste container for mixed waste placed a local fish market.....	110
Figure 54. A real-time tracking system for electric airport shuttles.....	113

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Phuket 2025

GSTC Assessors completed an impartial assessment of how the destination adheres to the GSTC Destination Standard (GSTC-D), the global benchmark for sustainable destinations.

Phuket is a significant tourist destination, surrounded by many stunning beaches and rich cultural elements, including traditions and festivals influenced by Peranakan Chinese culture, as well as distinct Sino-Portuguese architecture.

Several sustainability initiatives led by the private sector are underway, along with efforts by various government agencies and private organizations to protect the environment.

The GSTC Chief Assurance Officer, Dr. Mihee Kang, led the assessment with Dr. Panate Manomaivibool, Assistant Professor at Burapha University, serving as co-assessor. The assessment consisted of an extensive desktop analysis of current tourism activities and management approaches, followed by a five-day onsite visit by the assessors, during which they interviewed relevant authorities and stakeholders to verify compliance with the GSTC-D objectively. The combined findings of those efforts are provided in this report.

Key findings: GSTC-D consists of 4 pillars: (A) Sustainable Management; (B) Socioeconomic Sustainability; (C) Cultural Sustainability; and (D) Environmental Sustainability. For Pillars A, B, and C, Phuket received average scores of 1.70, 1.67, and 1.64, respectively, which indicate a status of "Needs Improvement" (Level 3 out of 5). In contrast, Pillar D received an average score of 1.43, categorizing it as an "Area of Moderate Risk" (Level 2). The overall average score across all four pillars is 1.61, indicating a "Needs Improvement" (Level 3) status.

The assessment revealed that Phuket performs relatively well in sustainable management, socio-economic sustainability, and cultural sustainability; however, it faces significant challenges in environmental sustainability that require urgent attention.

Additionally, the evaluation highlighted Phuket's strengths in destination management strategies and action plans, risk and crisis management, and intellectual property protection. On the other hand, climate change adaptation, monitoring and reporting, protection of cultural assets, and visitor management were identified as high-risk areas needing urgent improvement.

INTRODUCTION

Global Sustainable Tourism Council

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council® (GSTC®) is an independent and neutral organization, legally registered in the USA as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that represents a diverse and global membership, including national and provincial governments, leading travel companies, hotels, tour operators, NGO's, individuals, and communities – all striving to achieve best practices in sustainable tourism. It is a virtual organization without a main office, with staff and volunteers working from all six populated continents. Financial support from donations, sponsorship, and membership fees allows us to provide services at low costs and to create, revise, and make available the GSTC Standard. GSTC is an ISEAL Community Member.

The GSTC establishes and manages global standards for sustainable travel and tourism, known as the GSTC Standard. There are four sets: Destination Standard for public policy-makers and destination managers, Industry Standard for Hotels and Tour Operators, MICE Standard for Venues, Event Organizers, and Events & Exhibitions, and Attraction Standard for tourist attractions such as theme parks, museums, and national parks. They are the result of a worldwide effort to develop a common language about sustainability in tourism. They are arranged in four pillars: (A) Sustainable management; (B) Socioeconomic impacts; (C) Cultural impacts; and (D) Environmental impacts. Since tourism destinations each have their own culture, environment, customs, and laws, the Standards are designed to be adapted to local conditions and supplemented with additional criteria specific to the location and activity.

The GSTC Standards form the foundation for Accreditation for certification bodies that certify hotels/accommodations, tour operators, and destinations as having sustainable policies and practices in place. GSTC does not directly certify any products or services, but provides an accreditation program to accredit certification bodies.

GSTC Destination Assessment

GSTC Destination Assessment is designed to introduce the destination management team to the core elements required to develop sustainable policies and practices by applying the GSTC Standard to the destination. The Assessment process allows a destination to participate directly in the GSTC application

of the Standard to the destination, to understand the destination’s sustainability status against the world’s leading standard, and to identify areas for improvement based on the GSTC Standard.

The GSTC Standard aims to address “sustainability” from a holistic perspective—reviewing overall governance, socio-economic benefits to the destination, cultural and heritage preservation, and environmental performance. These factors all lead to a positive investment climate, a strong sense of place, and a high quality of life for both residents and visitors in the destination. The GSTC Destination Assessment is not an audit and does not constitute any kind of verification or endorsement of the destination’s policies, practices, or status by the GSTC. The objective of the assessment is to provide the destination with an overview of current good practices and risk areas, a demonstration of the practical application of the GSTC-D for stakeholder capacity-building purposes, and a tool for internal use to improve destination policy and practice to align with international best practice and the GSTC Standard.

The GSTC-D has been built on decades of prior work and experience around the world, and it considers the numerous guidelines and standards for sustainable tourism from every continent. The GSTC-D v2.0 is the first revision to GSTC-D. The GSTC-D v2.0 includes performance indicators designed to guide in measuring compliance with the Standard. Applying the Standard will help a destination contribute towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The Sustainable Tourism Development Foundation aims to research, educate, and innovate to create a future where tourism thrives in harmony with the environment. To achieve this, the Foundation has engaged and communicated with tourism businesses and relevant public agencies about sustainability, action plans, and feasible initiatives. As one of the hosts for the GSTC Global Conference held in 2026, the Foundation aims to achieve more tangible improvements in the areas where the assessment results recommend urgent action.

Based on the GSTC Destination Assessment, Phuket cannot claim GSTC's endorsement of the destination or its policies. However, it would be appropriate for the destination to market that it participated in the assessment and is committed, if true, to adopting the world’s leading sustainability standard for tourism development.

It is recommended that findings and recommendations resulting from this GSTC assessment be used:

- to inform action on destination sustainability planning and project work
- to catalyze decision-maker support for a destination tourism sustainability agenda
- as a training and education tool

- for monitoring and evaluation of destination performance
- as an input into an ongoing strategic planning process that Phuket Province or other public agencies underway for sustainable tourism development in Phuket

Figure 1. Closing workshop



OVERVIEW OF PHUKET



Introduction

Phuket is Thailand's largest island, with a land area of 543.034 sq.km. It is located in southern Thailand off the west coast, approximately 860 km from Bangkok. Phuket is connected to the mainland by the Sarasin Bridge. It is accompanied by 32 smaller surrounding islands, all situated within the Andaman Sea. Phuket is a popular tourist destination renowned for its beautiful beaches and vibrant culture.

Phuket, as a province, is divided into three districts: Mueang Phuket District, i.e., the city, located in the south, Thalang District in the North, and Kathu District in the west-central area. Like all other provinces in Thailand except Bangkok, Phuket has a governor appointed by the Ministry of Interior, as well as many regional, provincial, and district offices that serve as the extended arms of the central government.

Decentralization is mainly at a sub-district level, where 12 municipalities and six (6) sub-districts administrative organizations (SAO) operate. The Phuket Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO) coordinates work beyond the boundaries of a single municipality or SAO. These local governments have elected mayors.

At the end of 2021, Phuket's total population was 418,785. Of this, 60% had registered addresses in the Mueang Phuket District, 26% in the Thalang District, and 14% in the Kathu District.

Table 1 shows the composition of local populations.

Figure 2. Location of Phuket

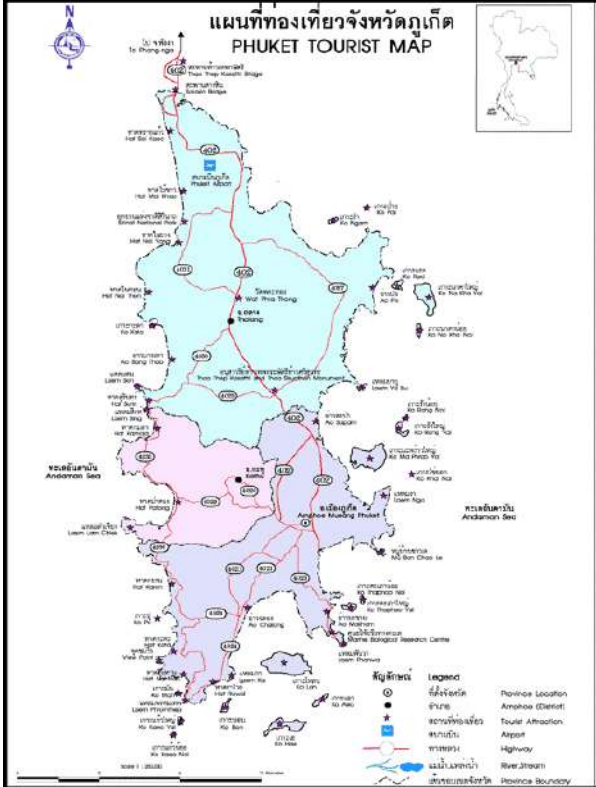


Table 1. Phuket population composition per age and gender, as of 2021

Age range	Male	Female
0-4	11,615	10,932
5-9	14,244	13,456
10-14	14,557	13,905
15-19	13,564	13,400
20-24	12,793	13,883
25-29	14,879	16,864
30-34	14,620	17,422
35-39	15,111	18,909
40-44	16,822	20,534
45-49	14,785	17,652
50-54	13,601	16,107
55-59	11,218	12,950
60-64	8,070	9,899
65-69	5,442	6,891
70-74	4,046	5,091
75-79	2,250	2,955
80 and over	2,520	4,095

Source: 2022 Phuket Provincial Statistical Report

Tourism Status

Tourism is the cornerstone of Phuket's economy, driving its development and shaping its identity. The island's picturesque beaches, vibrant nightlife, and rich cultural heritage attract millions of visitors annually, making it one of Southeast Asia's premier tourist destinations. Before the pandemic, Phuket saw consistent growth in tourist arrivals, with numbers reaching over 10 million international visitors in peak years. Phuket reported a tourism receipt of 442,890 million THB in 2019, before the figure was reduced to one-fourth in the following year.¹ Table 2 summarizes the situation before and after the pandemic. While recent years have seen fluctuations due to global events, Phuket's tourism sector is actively recovering. During the first 10 months of 2024, the number of visitors exceeded 10 million, and Phuket was on track to meet the target of generating more than 420,000 million THB.

Table 2. Phuket Tourism Statistics, 2019-2020

Statistics	2019	2020
Number of rooms	92,667	93,348
Number of visitors	14,576,466	4,028,829
Foreigner	10,598,921	2,073,729
Thai	3,977,545	1,955,100
Average length of stay (day)	4.09	3.61
Foreigner	4.61	4.59
Thai	2.67	2.57
Average expenditure (THB/person/day)	7,716.61	8,230.89
Foreigner	8,311.74	10,020.55
Thai	4,927.29	4,868.08
Tourism receipt (million THB)	442,890.67	113,173.15
Foreigner	393,164.90	89,923.83
Thai	49,725.77	23,249.32

Source: 2022 Phuket Provincial Statistical Report

The abundance of operators reflects the sheer scale of the tourism industry. Thousands of hotels and resorts, from budget-friendly to luxurious five-star accommodations, cater to diverse visitor

¹ 2022 Phuket Provincial Statistical Report

preferences. Occupancy rates can exceed 90% in peak months such as January and February. The island also boasts many restaurants, offering everything from authentic Thai cuisine to international fare. Many tour operators, dive centers, and entertainment venues contribute to the overall infrastructure of the tourism experience. This extensive network of businesses provides employment opportunities and generates significant revenue, underscoring tourism's vital role in Phuket's economy. The tourism sector is so large that it accounts for a large percentage of the island's GDP.

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

GSTC Assessment Process

The GSTC Destination Assessment process consists of the following phases, as summarized below.

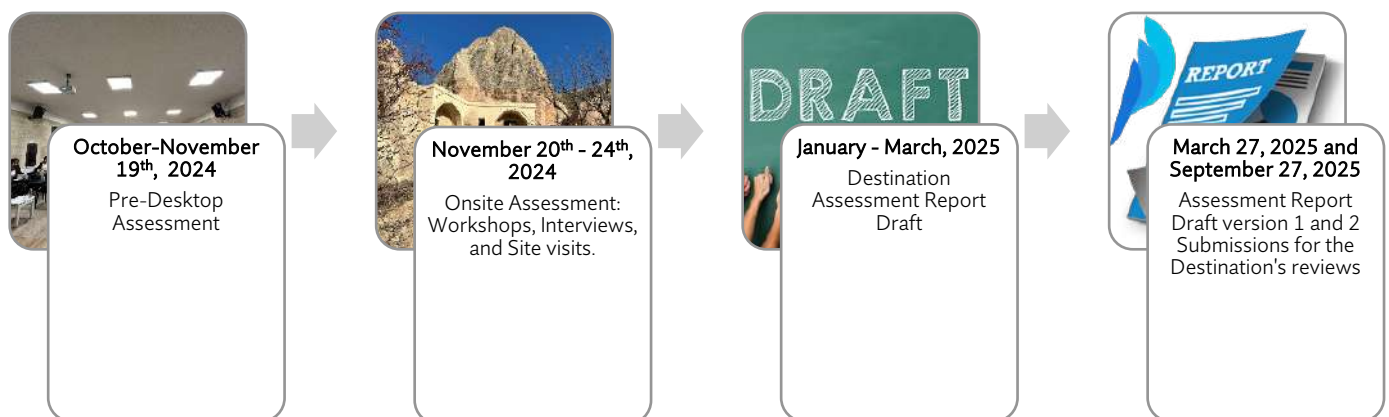
Figure 3. GSTC Destination Assessment Process



Phuket Assessment Process

GSTC assessors conducted the assessment following the process and schedule below.

Figure 4. Phuket Assessment Process



Pre-desktop Assessment

Two main tasks for the pre-desktop assessment were stakeholder mapping and document mapping. These tasks were executed through close communication with a destination liaison team of the Sustainable Tourism Development Foundation. The liaison team consisted of several Foundation Board members to support the preparation and implementation of the assessment.

Stakeholder Mapping: Identify the key stakeholders who should be involved in the assessment, including those who represent all stakeholders from the private and public sectors. The co-assessor completed the stakeholder mapping with the foundation's support, as described in the tables below.

Document Mapping: Identify the policy documents that address the GSTC-D. This includes relevant legal data, such as laws, regulations, or guidelines, that are included in the assessment result per each criterion.

Onsite Assessment

The liaison team supported the plan for the on-site assessment. During the on-site assessment, they arranged site visits and stakeholder group meetings and organized the opening and closing workshops with relevant stakeholders.

The onsite work began with stakeholder meetings on November 20 and had an introductory workshop on November 21, 2024. The destination's operation, management, and cooperation systems are assessed based on the GSTC-D by interviewing various stakeholders and visiting significant sites in Phuket. Interviews were planned based on the stakeholder mapping and the desktop assessment. The places visited were chosen to represent the destination's tourism and have an impact on sustainability.

The onsite assessment concluded with a workshop on the 24th, during which preliminary findings from the GSTC assessors were shared, and stakeholders voiced their opinions regarding the assessors' preliminary findings.

Desktop Assessment

During the desktop assessment, a report was created based on the results of the onsite assessment and additional secondary data analysis. The GSTC assessors once again analyzed the destination's feedback before finalizing and submitting the destination's sustainable tourism assessment report.

Destination Involvement

In the process above, various stakeholders from both the public and private sectors were identified as involved in Phuket management and their primary responsibilities.

Many of them attended the meetings held during the Phuket Destination Assessment.

Figure 5. Interview sessions



Figure 6. Site visits

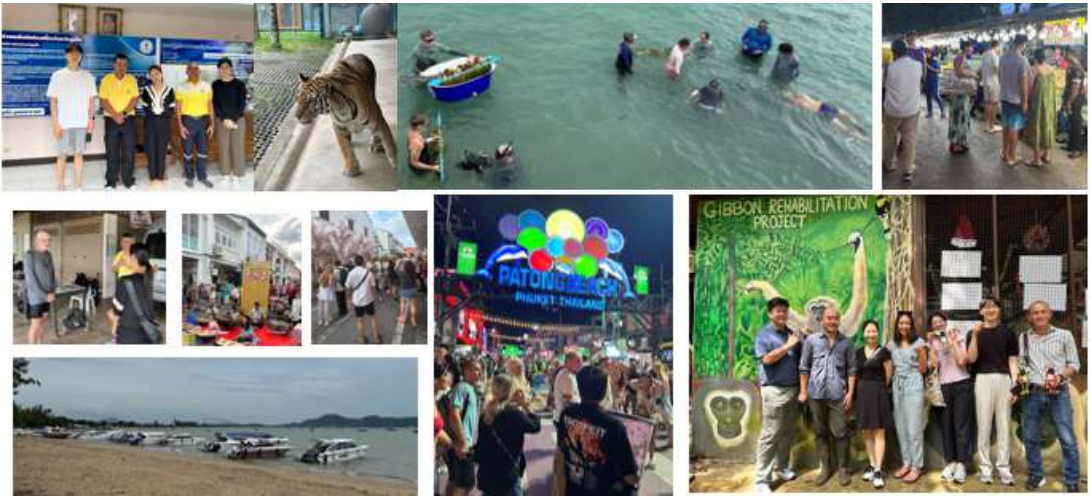


Table 3. Organizations responsible for each management area

AREA	Organization/Office/Department(s) Responsible
TOURISM	
Tourism planning	Ministry of Tourism and Sports / Phuket Provincial Office
Tourism attraction site management	Marine and Coastal Resources Office 10 (Krabi) / Protected Area Regional Office 5 (Nakhon Si Thammarat) / Phuket Fine Arts Office 15 / Local governments
Tourism marketing	Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) / Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB)
Tourist safety	Tourist Police / Phuket Tourist Assistance Center
Tourism statistics	Department of Tourism / National Statistical Office (Phuket Office)
Tourism training	Phuket Office of Tourism and Sports / Department of Skill Development (Phuket Office) / Vocational schools and higher education institutions
Tourism and community issues and engagement	Local governments / Community Development Department (Phuket Office)
Tourism impact monitoring	Marine and Coastal Resources Office 10 (Krabi) / Protected Area Regional Office 5 (Nakhon Si Thammarat) / Phuket Fine Arts Office 15 / Local governments
Tourism quality standards	Department of Tourism / Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) / Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB)
Tourism sustainability standards	Department of Tourism / Tourism Authority of Thailand / Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA) / Department of Climate Change and Environment (DCCE – Green Hotel)
Tourism licensing	Department of Tourism (for guides) / Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA for hotels and entertainment places)
Tourism SME support	Community Development Department (Phuket Office) / Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion / Small and Medium Enterprise Development Bank of Thailand
Tourism industry association(s)	Phuket Chamber of Commerce / Phuket Tourist Association (PTA) / Phuket Hotels Association (PHA) / Thai Hotel Association, Southern Chapter / Kata & Karon Hotel Association (KKHA) / Phuket Travel Agents Association / Andaman Guide Association / Sustainable Tourism Development Foundation (STDF)
PLANNING	
Property rights (physical and intellectual property)	Department of Land (Phuket Office) / Department of Intellectual Property (DIP)
Health and safety	Phuket Provincial Public Health Office / Phuket Police / National institute for Emergency Medicine / Phuket Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Office / Local governments
Zoning/land use	Phuket Provincial Office of Public Works and Town & Country Planning / Phuket Provincial Land Reform Office / Marine and Coastal Resources Office 10 (Krabi) / Protected Area Regional Office 5 (Nakhon Si Thammarat) / Forest Resource Management Office 12 (Krabi)
Legislation	Phuket Provincial Office / Local Governments
Law enforcement	Phuket Provincial Office / Local government / Office of Provincial Public Prosecution / Phuket Police

Transportation authority	Phuket Transport Office / Department of Rural Road (Phuket Office) / Phuket Highway District / Phuket International Airport /Marine Department (Phuket Office)
Planning authority	Phuket Provincial Office / Phuket Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Office / Local governments
Sustainable development authority	Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC)
ENVIRONMENT/UTILITIES	
Sustainability reporting agency	Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP)
Energy/power authority	Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA)
Drinking water consumption and monitoring	Provincial Waterworks Authority (PWA) / Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
Waste and recycling management	Local governments (waste collection and recycling) / Phuket City Municipality (waste incineration) / Phuket Provincial Administrative Organization (household hazardous waste)
Pollution agency	Environment and Pollution Control Office 15 (Phuket)
Conservation agency	Marine and Coastal Resources Office 10 (Krabi) / Protected Area Regional Office 5 (Nakhon Si Thammarat) / Forest Resource Management Office 12 (Krabi)
Parks and wildlife	Marine and Coastal Resources Office 10 (Krabi) / Protected Area Regional Office 5 (Nakhon Si Thammarat)
Climate change	Department of Climate Change and Environment (DCCE) / Thailand Greenhouse Gas Management Organization (TGO)
CULTURE	
Culture and heritage agency	Ministry of Culture (Phuket Office) / Phuket Fine Arts Office 15
Historical and cultural sites authority/trust	The Thai Peranakan Association
ECONOMY	
SME agency	Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion / Small and Medium Enterprise Development Bank of Thailand

GSTC Assessment Tools

Evaluation Criteria Compliance

The destination is assessed against all GSTC-D, and the results are shown with different colors and scores. The evaluation starts with individual indicators. The compliance level of each criterion and pillar is calculated based on the average of the indicators and criteria, respectively.

Figure 7. Scoring process



Indicator Scoring: Each indicator is evaluated based on evidence discussed, produced, or observed. Indicators are scored “0” if no documents or evidence exist, “1” suggests that documentation exists, but there is no evidence of implementation or ongoing work, “2” means there is evidence and implementation, and “3” states that there is evidence and implementation, as well as improving trends.

Criterion Scoring: Once indicators are reviewed, a score is calculated for each criterion. The criterion score provides an overview of performance, ranging from “Areas of Risk” <1, “Areas of Moderate Risk” 1.00-1.49, “Needs Improvement” 1.50-1.99, “Good Performance” 2.00-2.49, and “Excellent Performance” >2.5.

Pillar Scoring: Each pillar score is calculated based on the average of its criteria scores. The pillar score provides an overview of performance, ranging from “Level 1” <1 to “Level 2” 1.00-1.49, “Level 3” 1.50-1.99, “Level 4” 2.00-2.49 and “Level 5” >2.5.

Figure 8. Indicator, Criterion, and Pillar Evaluation

Indicator Scoring		Criterion Scoring		Pillar Scoring	
No document exists	0	Areas of Risk	<1	Level 1	<1
Document exists	1	Areas of Moderate Risk	1.00 - 1.49	Level 2	1.00 - 1.49
Document and evidence of implementation	2	Needs Improvement	1.50 - 1.99	Level 3	1.50 - 1.99
Document, evidence, and improving trends	3	Good Performance	2.00 - 2.49	Level 4	2.00 - 2.49
Not applicable in the destination	NA	Excellent Performance	≥2.50	Level 5	≥2.50

ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Summary of Assessment Results

Out of the 174 indicators analyzed, 35 (20.1%) were rated "green," 48 (27.6%) were rated "yellow," 72 (41.4%) were rated "orange," 18 (10.3%) were rated "red," and 1 (0.6%) was deemed not applicable. The GSTC assessment results indicate that Phuket urgently needs to improve its performance across the four pillars of destination sustainability.

Among the pillars, the Cultural Sustainability Pillar had the highest percentage of green indicators, followed closely by the Socio-economic Sustainability Pillar. Notably, the Cultural Sustainability Pillar showed significantly higher percentages of red and orange indicators, indicating a mix of good and poor performance. The Environmental Sustainability and Sustainable Management Pillars also showed a notably higher percentage of orange indicators.

The following tables present an overview of the GSTC Destination Assessment of Phuket.

Table 4. Summary of GSTC Destination Assessment of Phuket

GSTC Indicators Scoring	A	B	C	D	Total # Indicators	Percentage of Indicators (%)
	Sustainable management	Socio-economic Sustainability	Cultural Sustainability	Environmental Sustainability		
No document exists	5	3	5	5	18	10.3
Document exists	16	12	10	34	72	41.4
Document and evidence of implementation	17	11	2	18	48	27.6
Document, evidence, and improving trends	13	6	9	7	35	20.1
Not applicable in the destination	0	0	0	1	1	0.6
Total	51	32	26	65	174	100

The following charts show the destination's assessment results per pillar, and the following one is the performance level per pillar based on the scoring of indicators and criteria.

Figure 9. Performance of each pillar, with percentage of indicators per colour

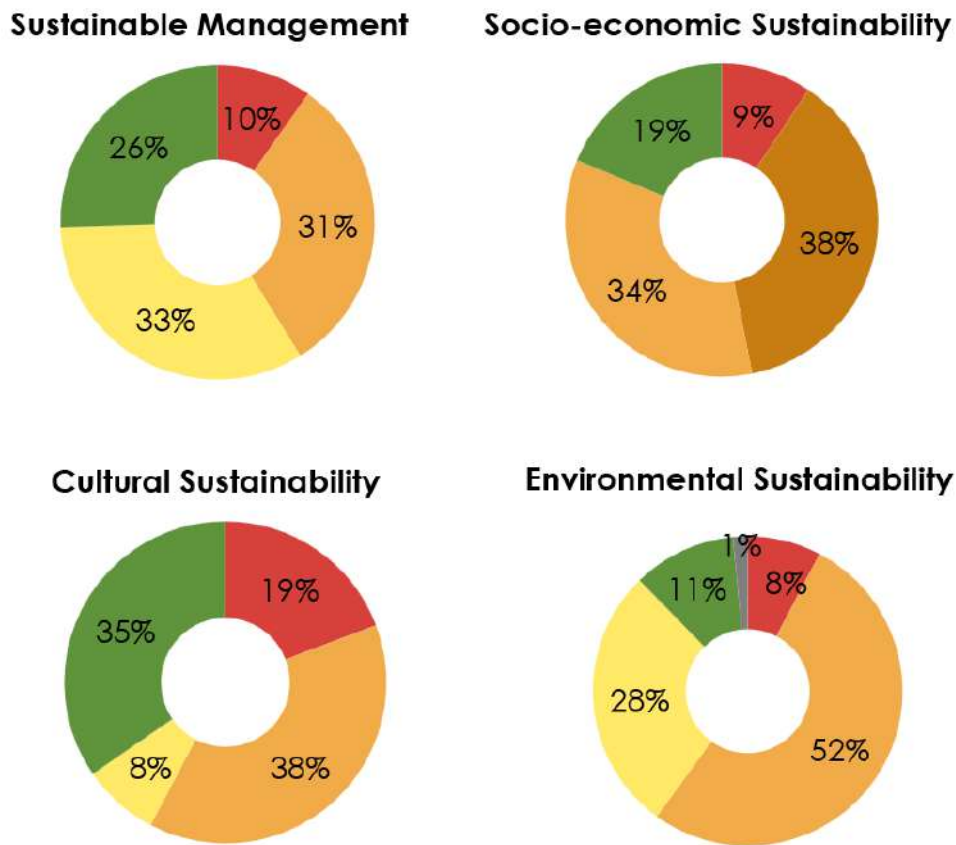


Table 5 displays the performance levels of 38 criteria. 47.4% of these criteria were assessed as “Areas of Risk” and “Area of Moderate Risk”, while 7.9% demonstrated “Excellent Performance.”

Table 5. Numbers and percentages of criteria per performance level of Phuket

Performance level (Criterion Score)		# of CRITERIA	% of CRITERIA
AREA OF RISK	<1	3	7.9
AREA OF MODERATE RISK	1.00 - 1.49	13	34.2
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	1.50 - 1.99	10	26.3
GOOD PERFORMANCE	2.00 - 2.49	8	21.1
EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE	≥2.50	4	10.5
Total		38	100

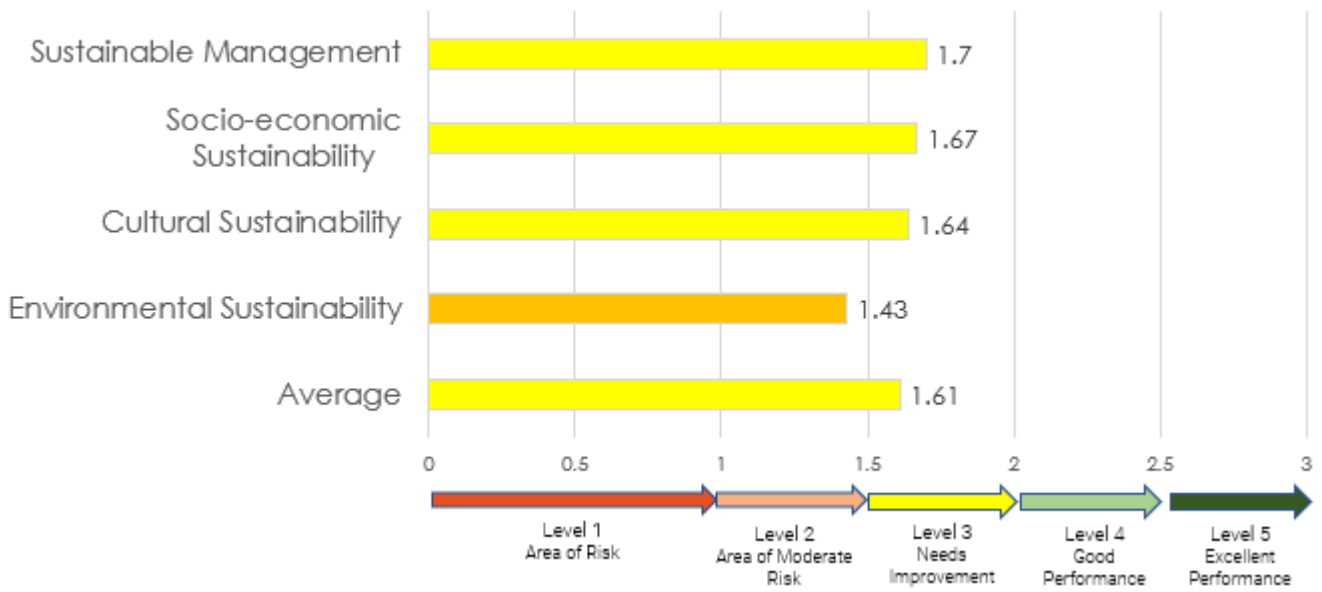
Table 6 shows scores per criterion and pillar. Pillars A, C, and D were assessed as “Area of Moderate Risk,” and Pillar B was assessed as “Needs Improvement.”

Table 6. Phuket GSTC Destination Standard and Pillars' Performance Scores

CRITERION	CRITERION NAME	Criterion SCORE	Pillar SCORE
A1	Destination management responsibility	1.80	1.70
A2	Destination management strategy and action plan	3.00	
A3	Monitoring and reporting	0.50	
A4	Enterprise engagement and sustainability standards	2.00	
A5	Resident engagement and feedback	1.40	
A6	Visitor engagement and feedback	0.50	
A7	Promotion and information	2.00	
A8	Managing visitor volumes and activities	1.40	
A9	Planning regulations and development control	1.33	
A10	Climate change adaptation	2.00	
A11	Risk and crisis management	2.75	
B1	Measuring the economic contribution of tourism	1.33	1.67
B2	Decent work and career opportunities	1.50	
B3	Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade	2.00	
B4	Support for community	2.00	
B5	Preventing exploitation and discrimination	1.50	
B6	Property and user rights	2.00	
B7	Safety and security	2.00	
B8	Access for all	1.00	
C1	Protection of Cultural Assets	1.00	1.64
C2	Cultural artefacts	2.00	
C3	Intangible heritage	2.50	
C4	Traditional access	1.00	
C5	Intellectual Property	3.00	
C6	Visitor management at cultural sites	0.20	
C7	Site interpretation	1.80	
D1	Protection of sensitive environments	1.17	1.43
D2	Visitor management at natural sites	1.33	
D3	Wildlife interaction	1.67	
D4	Species exploitation and animal welfare	1.71	
D5	Energy Conservation	1.50	
D6	Water stewardship	1.25	
D7	Water Quality	1.80	
D8	Wastewater	1.25	
D9	Solid waste	1.13	

D10	GHG emissions and climate change mitigation	1.20	
D11	Low-impact transportation	1.50	
D12	Light and noise pollution	1.67	
AVERAGE SCORE of Criterion and Pillar		1.60	1.61

Figure 10. Phuket performance level per pillar



Assessment Results Per Pillar

A. SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

The sustainable management of Phuket received an overall average score of 1.70. This score was based on an average of the overall scores of each of the 11 criteria. Within the Sustainable Management Pillar, two criteria of A2 and A11 were identified as "Excellent Performance" and three criteria of A4, A7, and A10 were identified as "Good Performance" areas. However, the criteria that fell into the "Area of Risk" and "Area of Moderate Risk," require prioritization for actions.

Table 7. Criteria in Sustainable Management Pillar per score range

Criterion Score	# of criteria	Criteria
AREA OF RISK <1	2	A3. Monitoring and reporting A6. Visitor engagement and feedback
AREA OF MODERATE RISK 1.00-1.49	3	A5. Resident engagement and feedback A8. Managing visitor volumes and activities A9. Planning regulations and development control
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT 1.50-1.99	1	A1. Destination management responsibility
GOOD PERFORMANCE 2.00-2.49	3	A4. Enterprise engagement and sustainability standards A7. Promotion and information A10. Climate change adaptation
EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE ≥ 2.50	2	A2. Destination management strategy and action plan A11. Risk and crisis management
TOTAL	11	

A1. Destination Management Responsibility

The destination has an effective organization, department, group, or committee responsible for a coordinated approach to sustainable tourism, with involvement by the private sector, public sector, and civil society. This group has defined responsibilities, oversight, and implementation capability for the management of socio- economic, cultural, and environmental issues. The group is adequately funded, works with a range of bodies in delivering destination management, has access to sufficient staffing (including personnel with experience in sustainability), and follows principles of sustainability and transparency in its operations and transactions.

Phuket is Thailand's only island province and the country's smallest province in terms of area. The capital, Phuket City, is the administrative center, though it is still commonly called "Phuket Town." It was given city status in 2004 when it was upgraded to a thesaban nakhon. Phuket is administered at a provincial level by a governor and provincial council (OrBorJor), the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (PPAO). The island is divided into three administrative districts (amphoes): Thalang to the north, Kathu to the west, and Muang to the south. These districts are subdivided into 17 subdistricts (tambons), administered differently according to their municipal or saban status, and 103 villages (muban). There are three levels of municipalities on the island: city (thesaban nakhon), town (thesaban mueang), and subdistrict (thesaban tambon). Phuket City is the only city on the island, while Patong and Kathu have town status. Thalang is divided into six subdistricts and 46 villages, Kathu has three subdistricts and 14 villages, and Phuket has eight subdistricts and 44 villages.

Figure 11. Phuket subdistricts



The provincial governor is appointed by the central government in Bangkok, while the PPAO council members and president are elected. All mayors, presidents, and councils are elected at the municipal level. Local government elections generally follow a four-year cycle.

The Phuket provincial government manages Phuket as a destination. They establish overall destination management policies and strategies, while 17 subdistricts focus on area management, emphasizing tourism promotion, environmental conservation, waste management, events, and more.

The provincial government of Phuket has received funding from the central government and collected local taxes. However, it needs to be reviewed whether the budget is sufficient for more effective plan implementation.

Based on the interviews with stakeholders from both the public and private sectors, including national tourism agencies such as TAT(Tourism Authority of Thailand), Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau(TCEB), communities, academics, conservation organizations, civil societies, and tourism businesses, the provincial government engages stakeholders in formal and informal meetings to share ideas and concerns. The interviews show that most stakeholders are aware of the provincial government’s multi-year plans and are committed to contributing to Phuket’s sustainable tourism development.

The regulations relevant to A1 are as follows:

- The Act on the Administrative Regulations, B.E. 2534 (1991 with the 8th Amendments in 2010)
- The Act on the Determination of Plan and Procedure for the Decentralization to Local Administrative Organizations, B.E. 2542 (1999 with the 2nd Amendments on 2006)

Table 8. A1 Destination management responsibility assessment results

A1 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Documentary evidence showing relevant make-up and responsibilities of the group.	2	1.80
b	A financial plan and budget showing current and future funding sources.	1	
c	Evidence of links and engagement with other bodies.	3	
d	Records of permanent staff and contracted personnel, indicating relevant experience.	1	
e	Management guidelines and processes that demonstrate awareness and adherence to sustainability principles and transparency in operations and letting of contracts.	2	

A2. Destination Management Strategy and Action Plan

The destination has established and is implementing a multi-year destination management strategy and action plan that is publicly available, is suited to its scale, was developed with stakeholder engagement and is based on sustainability principles. The strategy includes an identification and assessment of tourism assets and considers socio-economic, cultural and environmental issues and risks. The strategy relates to and influences wider sustainable development policy and action in the destination.

The provincial government has developed its 5-year (2023-2027) Provincial Development Plan following its 20-year Development Goals for 20 Years (2023-2042). The municipalities in Phuket build their plans, which are aligned with the national and provincial plans and policies. Phuket also developed '10+ Phuket Economic and Social Pillars' prepared by the Phuket Provincial Office – Provincial Development Strategy and Information Group in 2023. The multi-year development planning is legally required, while the Master Plan of 10+ Economic and Social Pillars of Phuket Province² was voluntarily made.

Figure 12. Example of provincial development plans

- Annual Operation Plan 2025 **new**
- Phuket Provincial Development Plan 5 Years (2023-2027) Revised Edition 2025 **new**
- Annual Operation Plan 2024
- Phuket Provincial Development Plan 5 Years (2023-2027) Revised Edition 2024
- Phuket Provincial Development Plan 5 years (2023-2027)
- Annual Operation Plan 2023
- Proposal for consideration of Smart City Project, Phuket Smart City in Phuket Province
- Phuket Provincial Development Plan 5 Years (2018-2022) (Revised 2022 Edition)
- Annual Operation Plan 2022
- Phuket Provincial Development Plan 5 Years (2018-2022) (Revised 2021 Edition)
- Annual Operation Plan 2021
- Phuket Provincial Development Plan 5 Years (2018-2022) (Revised 2020 Edition)
- Annual Operation Plan 2020
- Phuket Smart City Action Plan 2018-2021
- Phuket Provincial Development Plan 4 years (2018-2021) (as of 5 January 2018)

Source: <https://www.phuket.go.th/webpk/contents.php?str=plan>

² <https://www.phuket.go.th/webpk/contents.php?str=plan2>

Phuket’s 20-year development goal is defined as “Phuket, a new economy city focused on sustainable development and balancing quality of life”. That is, the 20-year vision is to make Phuket a new economy city based on sustainable development for balanced living, with the focus on the following:

- Environmental Sustainability and the Sufficiency Economy
- Reducing economic and social inequality
- Building a new economy through Phuket’s 10 economic and social pillars

Additionally, the five-year Phuket Development Plan and the 10+ master plan aim to establish Phuket as a hub for tourism, education, and innovative services that meet international standards and are sustainably developed. The ten key pillars are: Gastronomy and Creative City; Education Hub; Maritime Destination Hub; Medical & Wellness Hub; MICE City; Smart City; Sports Tourism; Sustainable Tourism; Fisheries Hub; and Fusion Farm. The plan also includes promoting and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by improving product and service standards, developing innovative packaging, and increasing sales to lead the tourism market in Asia.

All the recent plans developed for Phuket management focus on sustainability and align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Figure 13. 10+ key pillars and SDGs



Based on interviews with stakeholders from both the public and private sectors, including national tourism agencies such as TAT (Tourism Authority of Thailand) and Thailand Convention and Exhibition

Bureau(TECEB), communities, academics, conservation organizations, civil societies, and tourism businesses, the provincial government engages stakeholders in developing and implementing the plan.

Table 9. A2 Destination management strategy and action plan assessment results

A2 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	A published document setting out the current destination strategy and action.	3	3.00
b	The strategy/plan clearly visible and available on- line.	3	
c	Evidence of stakeholder consultation, meetings etc. in developing the plan.	3	
d	Reference to sustainability principles and an assessment of assets, issues, and risks, contained in the strategy and action plan.	3	
e	Specific references in the strategy/action plan to wider sustainable development policy (including pursuit of the SDGs), and vice versa	3	

A3. Monitoring and Reporting

The destination is implementing a system to monitor and respond to socio-economic, cultural, and environmental issues and impacts arising from tourism. Actions and outcomes are regularly monitored, evaluated, and publicly reported. The monitoring system is periodically reviewed.

According to the interviews, TCEB, TAT, and two universities (Prince of Songkla University and Phuket Rajabhat University) have conducted some monitoring research and published the reports. TCEB conducts tourism events' social, economic, and environmental impacts, while TAT focuses on visitor surveys and hotel room occupancy rates. Universities have worked closely with the national and local governments to implement this research. Universities are also conducting impact assessment research with funding from international organizations, such as UNDP. Other relevant natural environment agencies also work on environmental monitoring and protection, including coastal and marine environments.

However, Phuket has no official monitoring system managed by the provincial government. While it's okay to be monitored by different agencies or organizations, it requires centrally controlled collections of monitoring results, reviews of the results, and necessary actions. Consequently, no regular reports detailing actions to improve or resolve identified issues and problems are publicly shared.

Table 10. A3 Monitoring and reporting assessment results

A3 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Specific quantifiable socio-economic, cultural, and environmental indicators and targets identified.	1	1.00
b	Measurement against these indicators, with results recorded and publicised at least annually.	2	
c	Written evidence of monitoring and reporting of actions and outcomes.	1	
d	Previous reviews of monitoring system and schedule for future reviews.	0	

A4. Enterprise Engagement and Sustainability Standards

The destination regularly informs tourism-related enterprises about sustainability issues and encourages and supports them in making their operations more sustainable. The destination promotes the adoption of sustainability standards, promoting the application of GSTC-I Recognized standards and GSTC-I Accredited certification schemes for tourism enterprises, where available. The destination publicizes a list of sustainability certified enterprises.

Different public organizations, such as TAT and TCEB, share sustainability issues or sustainability certification programs. The most popular and public sector-initiated standards and certification programs applied to tourism businesses are [Green Hotels](#), [Carbon Footprint \(CF\) Hotels](#), [Sustainable Tourism Acceleration Rating \(STAR\)](#), and MICE Standard and Certification. Among them, Green Hotel Plus Standard has had the GSTC-Recognized status since 2024.

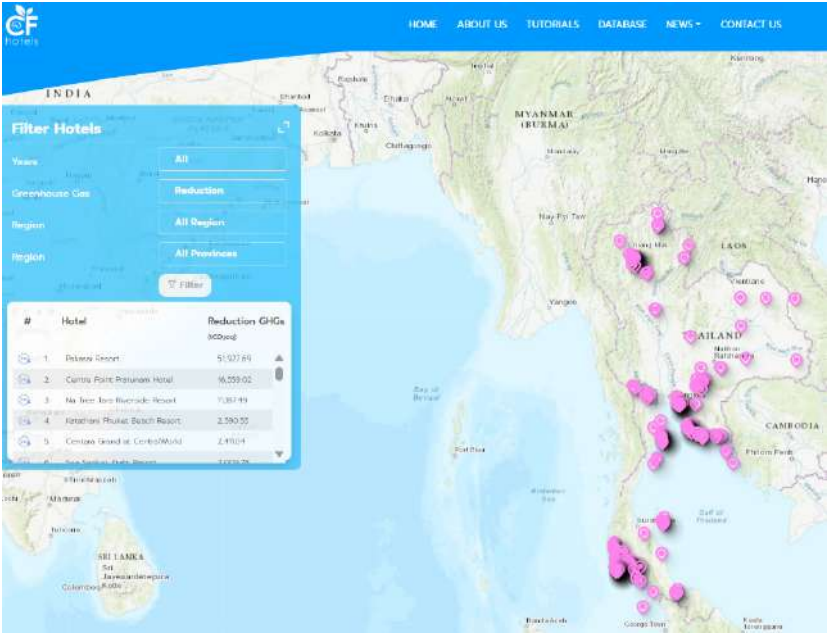
Figure 14. Green Hotel website



TAT has pushed both the policy and the operational level to change the business behavior of entrepreneurs in terms of production and service that are friendly to the environment. This includes increasing the opportunity to access and expand the market for environmentally friendly products and services for tourists. TAT also delivers that those environmentally friendly operations can reduce the cost of entrepreneurs by using resources and energy cost-effectively and efficiently. The Green Hotel Website delivers the objectives and benefits of the certification and provides the certified hotels.

TAT has collaborated with the Research Unit for Energy Economic and Ecological Management at the Institute of Science and Technology Research, Chiang Mai University, under the guidelines of the Thailand Greenhouse Gas Management Organization, to create an online platform. This platform enables hotel and lodging operators to develop an environmental inventory database (energy, water, waste, and greenhouse gases) and to calculate the carbon footprint of their hotel and lodging activities. This will reflect the impact of hotel and accommodation businesses' operations on the environment and can indicate the effectiveness of past management in terms of sustainable practices. Additionally, it can be analyzed to identify ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.³ This information will assist in business management decisions to increase revenue and reduce energy consumption costs effectively. Measuring the carbon footprint per night and per tourist, and reducing carbon emissions, are key elements of the certification. The website provides a list of certified hotels per scope.

Figure 15. Map of the CF-Hotels



³ <https://www.tourismthailand.org/Articles/cf-hotels>

Based on the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the TAT has developed tourism guidelines for sustainability from the context of Thailand's tourism. The approach includes driving tourism to align with the Sustainable Tourism Goals (STGs) strategy and establishing a standard for sustainability via the Sustainable Tourism Acceleration Rating (STAR) project. The project aims to encourage business operators to be aware of their products and services and to take social and environmental responsibility, leading to sustainable tourism in the future.

There are three levels of STAR, and the lowest level of three stars needs to satisfy three STGs: STG13- Strive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the tourism sector while promoting resilience and adaptation to climate change (Climate Action); STG16-Prioritize safety in all tourism sectors (Safety for all); STG17-Achieve the STGs through multi-stakeholder collaboration(Partnership for STGs). The project covers the following business types: Accommodations and homestay, travel agency, restaurant, recreation and tourism⁴vehicles, health and beauty, department stores and shopping centers, sports for tourism, organizing events/meetings/theaters/entertainment, souvenir shops, and other shops.

<https://cf-hotels.com/>A total of 112 Phuket businesses joined the STAR Project, including 64 accommodations and homestays, 32 travel agencies, 11 recreation and tourism, two souvenir shops and other shops, two sports for tourism, and one vehicle, according to the STAR website as of January 5, 2025⁵.

Figure 16. Three STAR levels



⁴ According to the STAR ranked businesses, it includes attractions and community tourism enterprises.

⁵ <https://tatstar.org/companies>

Figure 17. STAR businesses in Phuket (As of February 5, 2025)

The screenshot displays a web interface for STAR businesses in Phuket. On the left, there are two filter panels: 'STAR Statistics' with a 'Map data' button and a 'Select province' dropdown (set to Phuket), and 'Business information' with dropdowns for 'Number of stars' (set to 'Show all'), 'Type of entrepreneur' (set to 'Show all'), and 'province' (set to 'Phuket'). The main content area shows a grid of business cards. At the top, it states 'Total of 112 locations found' and '1 of 4 pages'. The visible businesses are:

- Savanu Travel Co., Ltd.** (Travel agency): Red background with 'SAWANU TRAVEL' logo.
- M Charters Company Limited** (Travel agency): Image of a boat on water with 'M CHARTERS' logo.
- In Phuket House** (Accommodation and homestay): Image of a modern interior lounge.
- Vana Nava Company Limited, Branch 0003** (Recreation and tourism): Image of a water park.
- Laya Resort Hotel Phuket Island** (Accommodation and homestay): Brown background with 'LAYA RESORT PHUKET ISLAND' text.
- Clarion Hotel Beach Patong** (Accommodation and homestay): Image of a poolside deck.

 A 'Feedback' button is visible on the right side of the grid.

TCEB has developed a Thailand MICE Venue Standard (TMVS) for the first time in Thailand and the ASEAN region. In addition to the TMVS, TCEB has introduced 6 MICE standards to date as follows: ISO 50001: Energy Management System, ISO 22000: Food Safety Management System, TISI 22300: MICE Security Management System (MSMS), ISO 20121: Event Sustainability Management System, ISO 22301: Business Continuity Management System⁶. TCEB has certified 311 MICE venues as of February 5th, 2025⁷. As of November 2024, eight venues in Phuket are certified.

As mentioned earlier, the central government agencies have promoted sustainable tourism operations and management by offering training, holding meetings, and providing certification programs. However, Phuket Province has not launched an independent initiative to require or encourage tourism

Figure 18. Logo of Certified MICE Venue



⁶ <https://www.micecapabilities.com/micestandards/about.html>

⁷ <https://www.businesseventsthailand.com/en/communities/venues?page=3&cid=0&pid=0>

businesses to become more sustainable. According to interviews with the private sector, they need stronger leadership from the provincial government in sustainability, even though they appreciate the Province’s governance and support for ongoing activities.

Table 11. A4 Enterprise engagement and sustainability standards assessment results

A4 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Evidence of regular communication of sustainability issues to tourism-related businesses (Media, meetings, direct contact, etc.).	2	2.00
b	Sustainability support and advice to tourism- related business – available and promoted.	2	
c	Number and percentage of businesses certified against tourism sustainability standards (and whether GSTC recognised/accredited), with targets for wider outreach.	2	
d	Evidence of promotion of certification schemes.	2	
e	List of tourism-related certified enterprises, kept up to date.	2	

A5. Resident Engagement and Feedback

The destination enables and promotes public participation in sustainable destination planning and management. Local communities' aspirations, concerns and satisfaction with tourism sustainability and destination management are regularly monitored and publicly reported, and action is taken in response to them. The destination has a system to enhance local understanding of sustainable tourism opportunities and challenges and to build the capacity of communities to respond.

There is no regular meeting between the provincial government and the residents regarding Phuket's destination management; however, there is more communication between the residents and the local government level. The residents shared their views on collaborating with various public organizations, including TAT, TCEB, DASTA, Thailand Environment Institute, and Big Data Institute. Residents of the Phuket Old Town are primarily involved in tourism businesses and work closely with tourism stakeholders from the public and private sectors.

The universities conducted resident surveys as part of projects funded by the government or international organizations such as UNDP. Still, these are not regular surveys, and there is no evidence that the Phuket provincial government or relevant organizations reviewed the results and made necessary improvements.

Training programs for community-based tourism (CBT) development include guiding service, product development, and product marketing. Bang Rong and Old Town are regarded as successful cases of training and actual CBT development.

Table 12. A5 Resident engagement and feedback assessment results

A5 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Evidence of the promotion and facilitation of public participation in destination planning/management.	2	1.40
b	Information on the type and level of such participation.	1	
c	Surveys of residents and other systematic feedback mechanisms, covering tourism issues.	1	
d	Evidence of action taken in response to residents' feedback.	1	
e	Programme of information, education and training on tourism provided for residents.	2	

A6. Visitor Engagement and Feedback

The destination has a system to monitor and publicly report visitor satisfaction with the quality and sustainability of the destination experience and, if necessary, to take actions in response. Visitors are informed about sustainability issues in the destination and the part that they can play in addressing them.

The Office of Tourism and Sports Economics, under the Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, conducted a survey on the attitudes, satisfaction, and behaviors of about 18,000 Thai and international tourists, along with related factors such as economic, social, and political influences—including tourism during the COVID-19 outbreak—in their home countries and Thailand in 2022. It was to develop consistent and effective tourist attractions that could sustainably support the increasing number of Thai and foreign tourists. The report⁸ provides a dedicated analysis for Phuket, allowing for a focused understanding of the visitor experience in terms of their expectation and actual satisfaction, separately for Thai and foreign tourists. While the survey is extensive, the satisfaction metrics focus primarily on service quality, infrastructure, and general tourism products. There is a lack of specific questions addressing visitor perceptions of sustainability issues.

Figure 19. Final Report of Visitor Survey (2022)



According to the interview, TAT and TCEB have also conducted visitor surveys for national visitor data collection and event evaluation. However, no regular visitor survey is conducted onsite using a standardized questionnaire for Phuket tourism management. There is no evidence that the Phuket provincial government used the survey results of other organizations to review the areas requiring improvement or corrective actions.

The Phuket Provincial Tourism and Sports Office employs Tourist Assistance Officers (TAC) stationed at three designated service points: Phuket International Airport, Ao Chalong Pier, and Patong Tourist Police Station. Their duties encompass gathering information pertinent to tourists, managing

⁸ https://secretary.mots.go.th/ewtadmin/ewt/policy/download/article/article_20230616112721.pdf

complaints, providing facilitation and assistance, and attentively listening to their suggestions. The operational logs show that the TAC primarily serves a reactive function, responding to incidents as they happen. Most interventions involve safety incidents, tourist complaints, and general assistance that often requires language support. While this system is essential for ensuring safety and welfare, it is not designed to proactively gather broader feedback from visitors, especially regarding sustainability issues.

Different public and private organizations at the national and Phuket levels have sustainability initiatives related to single-use plastics and food waste management, but these initiatives are not communicated to visitors or involve them in the efforts.

Figure 20. Tourist Assistance Center



Table 13. A6 Visitor engagement and feedback assessment results

A6 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Visitor surveys (and other feedback mechanisms) – carried out and reported.	1	0.50
b	Surveys and feedback include visitor reaction to sustainability issues.	1	
c	Evidence of actions taken in response to visitor survey/feedback findings.	0	
d	Examples of visitor information that covers sustainability issues and how to respond to them.	0	

A7. Promotion and Information

Promotion and visitor information material about the destination is accurate regarding its products, services, and sustainability claims. Marketing messages and other communications reflect the destination's values and approach to sustainability and treat local communities and natural and cultural assets with respect.

The official website introducing Phuket is operated by TAT, which features the main Thai tourism destinations.

- <https://www.tourismthailand.org/Destinations/Provinces/Phuket/350>

Many other sites introduce Phuket, but the provincial government doesn't provide an official tourism website.

TAT has a process for reviewing the promotional materials by inviting stakeholders, but there is no evidence of who was involved in developing the tourism information about Phuket. According to the residents interviewed, they were not invited to share their information or review the content on the websites, promotional materials, or onsite signboards despite having no issues with the content.

Table 14. A7 Promotion and information assessment results

A7 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Current information and promotional material with appropriate content.	3	2.00
b	A process exists for checking the accuracy and appropriateness of destination promotion and information.	2	
c	Evidence of consultation with local communities and environmental and cultural bodies on communications content and delivery.	1	

A8. Managing Visitor Volumes and Activities

The destination has a system for visitor management which is regularly reviewed. Action is taken to monitor and manage the volume and activities of visitors and to reduce or increase them as necessary at certain times and in certain locations, working to balance the needs of the local economy, community, cultural heritage, and environment.

The destination's plans encompass strategies for developing various tourism products to attract visitors year-round while ensuring quality and luxury tourism. However, those strategies do not address how to spread visitation with a specific visitor volume target. The current volume is based on infrastructure, including accommodations and transportation supply. Although some stakeholders are satisfied with the profits from tourism, private-sector stakeholders expressed concerns about limited road and airport capacity, wastewater management, congestion, and solid waste disposal.

The destination has conducted valuable, site-specific carrying capacity assessments at locations such as Bang Pae Waterfall and Phuket Old Town. These studies effectively identify the impacts of visitor volumes; for example, the 2018 research at Bang Pae Waterfall highlighted parking limitations and moderate visitor satisfaction with facilities. In contrast, a 2020 study on the Old Town concluded that it had exceeded its capacity for waste management.

However, while these academic studies successfully pinpoint critical issues, there is a significant gap in translating these findings into actionable management measures. Despite clearly identifying challenges such as waste and infrastructure strain, there is no evidence of concrete corrective or improvement actions being implemented in response. This failure to act on research findings represents a significant weakness and highlights a gap in meeting established criteria.

The plans have identified specific target markets for the key 10 tourism pillars of Gastronomy and Creative City, Education Hub, Maritime Destination Hub, Medical & Wellness Hub, MICE City, Smart City, Sports Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Fisheries Hub, and Fusion Farm.

Table 15. A8 Managing visitor volumes and activities assessment results

A8 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	The destination management strategy and action plan addresses seasonality and spread of visitation.	2	1.40
b	Variation in visitor volumes throughout the year is monitored, including in the most visited locations.	1	
c	Impacts of visitor volumes and activities are identified through observation and community and stakeholder feedback	2	
d	Actions taken to manage visitor flows and impacts.	0	
e	Marketing strategy and selection of target markets takes account of visit patterns, the impact of activities and destination needs.	2	

A9. Planning Regulations and Development Control

The destination has planning guidelines, regulations and/or policies which control the location and nature of development, require environmental, economic, and socio-cultural impact assessment, and integrate sustainable land use, design, construction, and demolition. Regulations also apply to operations, including property rental and concessions for tourism purposes. The guidelines, regulations and policies were created with public participation and are widely communicated and enforced.

According to the law, all government development projects must have public consultation.

The regulations relevant to planning and development, including property rental and operation for tourism, are as follows:

- Town Planning Act, B.E. 2518 (1975 with the 5th Amendments in 2019)
- The Office of Prime Minister's Regulations on the Conservation and Development of Rattanakosin and Old Towns, B.E. 2546 (2003 as Amended in 2021)

However, short-term rentals from non-legally registered accommodations, such as Airbnb, are not regulated nationwide. Phuket has similar situations, but no data is collected or legally regulated.

A more serious issue is that many unregistered accommodations, including short-term rental rooms, operate outside of regulations. These options are available in the market, but their social, cultural, and environmental impacts cannot be regulated or ensured. According to the interview, approximately 900 out of 3,000 hotels are not registered. There was an attempt to help illegal hotels register, but many remain unregistered.

According to interviews with private sector stakeholders, they see no significant problems with development control. However, there is no evidence regarding how they engage stakeholders in planning and developing tourism.

Table 16. A9 Planning regulations and development control assessment results

A9 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Specific policies/regulations/ guidelines which control development – documented and identified by title and date.	2	1.33
b	Impact assessment requirements are set out, covering environmental, economic, and socio- cultural impacts, at sufficient scale to address long term issues for the destination.	1	
c	Specific regulations on property rental and operation for tourism, with evidence of their application and enforcement.	1	
d	Evidence of public participation in the development of policies/regulations/guidelines.	1	
e	Evidence of consultation with, and consent from Indigenous people or minority ethnic groups when tourism development has been proposed or has occurred in their territories.	2	
f	Evidence of communication and enforcement of the policies/regulations/guidance, at planning, development, and implementation stages	1	

A10. Climate Change Adaptation

The destination identifies risks and opportunities associated with climate change. Climate change adaptation strategies are pursued for the siting, design, development, and management of tourism facilities. Information on predicted climate change, associated risks and future conditions is provided for residents, businesses, and visitors.

At the national level, climate change is addressed by the establishment of the Thailand Greenhouse Gas Management Organization (TGO) in 2007 and the transformation of the Department of Environmental Quality Promotion into the Department of Climate Change and Environment (DCCE) in 2023. Currently, the parliament is considering three draft laws on climate change that will cover both climate mitigation and adaptation.⁹

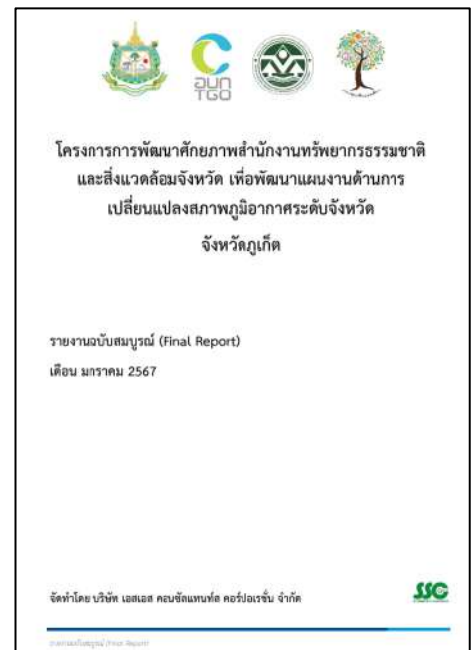
The Phuket climate change adaptation plan was developed in 2024, encompassing several regulations and measures designed to reduce emissions, assess climate risks, and mitigate coastal erosion. The plan includes risk analysis and action plans for climate change adaptation at the local level in Part II. The risk analysis of Phuket Province's tourism sector has identified potential risks and evaluated the associated impacts, including the development of an impact chain (Figure 22).

The report highlighted risks in the tourism sector across three specific areas:

- Disruption of activities
- Risks to tourists' health and safety
- Disruption of transportation and public services

The report provides a comprehensive analysis of risks and suggests high-level measures; however, it lacks evidence to demonstrate that these findings have been officially incorporated into specific regulations, development guidelines, or zoning plans for the tourism sector. Additionally, the document

Figure 21. Phuket Province Climate Change Plan



⁹ See the article on the comparison of the drafts: <https://www.ilaw.or.th/articles/49357>

serves as a technical report for provincial authorities. It does not outline a strategy or provide examples of how information regarding climate change risks and adaptation has been made accessible to visitors, residents, and tourism operators.

Figure 22. Tourism Impact Chain in Relation to Climate Change



The data in the climate projections graph below show a steady increase in tropical nights, reflecting rising temperatures and fluctuations in rainfall. These trends underline the need to anticipate potential impacts on tourism, infrastructure, and ecosystems.

- Tropical nights
 - Description: The number of nights with minimum temperatures exceeding 20°C. This metric helps measure the intensity of warming and its potential impact on human comfort and ecosystems.
 - Interpretation for Phuket: The number of tropical nights (minimum temperature above 20°C) has remained almost constant over the past few years, with very slight variations. The percentage change in tropical nights over the area is reported as 0%, indicating no significant increase or decrease. This suggests that while high nighttime temperatures persist, they have not worsened drastically. However, consistent tropical nights may still impact human comfort, energy demand, and ecosystem stress.
- Sea Level Rise

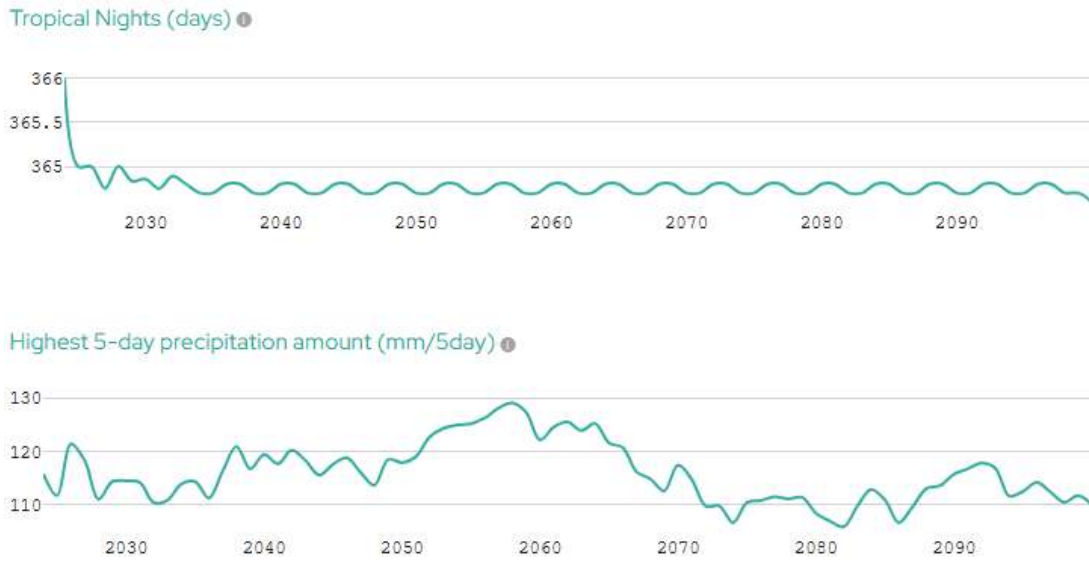
- Description: Sea Level Rise refers to the long-term increase in the average level of the world's oceans due to climate change. It is primarily caused by the melting of land ice (glaciers and ice sheets) and by the thermal expansion of seawater as it warms. SLR leads to coastal flooding, erosion, and saltwater intrusion, posing significant risks to ecosystems and human communities.
- Interpretation for Phuket: Under the RCP 8.5 scenario, nearly 60% of tourist infrastructure and 28.3% of the total area are at risk of flooding due to sea level rise. This threat necessitates immediate action to protect critical areas and infrastructure. Measures such as coastal defenses, managed retreats, and wetland restoration are key to mitigating these impacts.

Figure 23. Sea level rise of Phuket



- Highest 5-day precipitation amount
 - Description: The metric tracks the maximum precipitation accumulated over any 5-day period, providing insight into the frequency and intensity of extreme rainfall events.
 - Interpretation for Phuket: The highest accumulated precipitation over any five-day period has shown a decreasing trend, with a reported -5% change over the area. This could indicate a reduction in the frequency or intensity of extreme rainfall events, possibly suggesting a shift in weather patterns. While this might reduce risks of flash floods, it could also impact water availability and soil moisture levels, particularly during dry seasons.

Figure 24. Climate projections



- Climate Projection
 - Description: Scenarios of future concentrations of greenhouse gases and other forcings. They are used as input for climate models to project future climate change. RCP 8.5 is a high-emission scenario, leading to a global warming of 4.5°C by 2100.
 - Interpretation for Phuket: The climate projections extend until 2100, providing insights into long-term trends under RCP 8.5, a high-emission scenario. The persistence of tropical nights suggests continued warming, while fluctuations in extreme rainfall could have mixed consequences on water resources, agriculture, and disaster preparedness. These projections should be integrated into long-term adaptation strategies.

Figure 25. Climate Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs)



Table 17. A10 Climate change adaptation assessment results

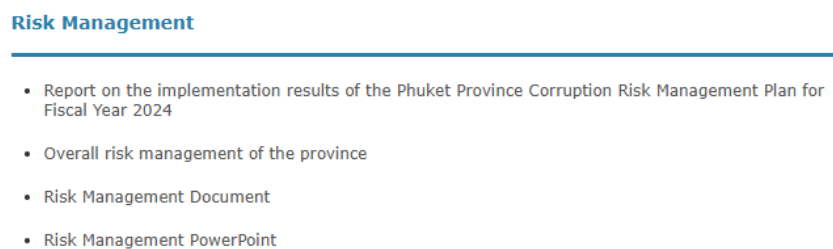
A10 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	The destination management strategy and action plan identifies and addresses climate issues.	3	2.40
b	Regulations, guidelines and zoning for tourism development and activities accommodate the consequences of climate change.	2	
c	A climate risk assessment, covering current and future risks – undertaken and made publicly available.	3	
d	Evidence of consideration of impact on, and contribution of, local ecosystems to climate change adaptation.	3	
e	Information on climate change that has been made publicly available.	1	

A11. Risk and Crisis Management

The destination has a risk reduction, crisis management and emergency response plan that is appropriate to the destination. Key elements are communicated to residents, visitors, and enterprises. Procedures and resources are established for implementing the plan and it is regularly updated.

Phuket's provincial government, municipal governments, tourist police, and general police are responsible for risk and crisis management, including safety and emergencies. These public agencies have a protocol and handbook for responding to crises. The provincial government posted relevant risk management documents on its website. Due to a technical error with 'Overall risk management of the Province,' the risks identified by the Province and its management plan were not assessed. The Risk Management PowerPoint needs to be updated. But the Province has identified natural disasters and assessed their risk levels for selected areas¹⁰.

Figure 26. Phuket Province's risk management information on its website



Source: <https://www.phuket.go.th/webpk/contents.php?str=managerisk>

The Tourist Police is a department of the Royal Thai Police. Its mission is to serve and protect tourists and foreigners living in Thailand. Its priorities include assisting tourists, helping them coordinate with other police departments, eliminating fraud, protecting tourists' interests, and preparing reports for insurance companies on behalf of victims of theft. The Tourist Police also recruit foreign nationals living in Thailand.

The Marine Police Division looks after the sea around Phuket Island to ensure there are no illegal activities by boats and ships. In May 2025, the Marine Police, working with multiple agencies, launched its 'Andaman Dawn' campaign to target illegal fishing, drug trafficking, and other criminal offenses while

¹⁰ https://www.phuket.go.th/webpk/file_data/risk/PK_risk.pdf

also aiming to ensure the safety of marine tourists. A force of 70 officers from various units has been assigned to join the crackdown, including Marine Police Regions 8 and 9, Highway Police, Crime Suppression Division, Tourist Police, Phuket Immigration, Phuket City Police, and Wichit Police.¹¹

Municipalities assign lifeguards to the beaches around the clock and provide speedboats for rescue operations. The Land Transportation Department offers training for rental car businesses, tourism boat drivers, and rescue crews to reduce accidents. Additionally, the department collaborates with the Port Department to provide boat maintenance training to prevent incidents, including first aid training. Communication on the appropriate actions for different emergency cases is made on the beach, in the hotel lobby area, or in the room, as shown below. However, it is unclear whether the plan encompasses a comprehensive analysis of all potential risks, including those associated with climate change.

Figure 27. Guidelines for emergency responses at tourism facilities



Table 18. A11 Risk and crisis management assessment results

A11 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	A documented risk reduction, crisis management and emergency response plan for tourism in the destination.	3	2.75
b	The plan recognises a wide range of risks, including natural disasters, terrorism, health, resource depletion, and others appropriate to the location.	2	
c	Communication procedures identified for use during and after an emergency.	3	
d	Programme for local delivery of information and training on risk and crisis management.	3	

¹¹ <https://www.thepuketnews.com/marine-police-launch-operation-andaman-dawn-92466.php>

B. SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Phuket's socio-economic sustainability has received an average score of 1.67 based on a combination of eight criteria. B3, B4, B6, and B7 have been identified as performing well across these criteria. However, B1 and B8 have been categorized as moderate risk areas requiring attention to resolve issues.

Table 19. Criteria in Socio-economic Sustainability Pillar per score range

Criterion Score	# of criteria	Criteria
AREA OF RISK <1	0	
AREA OF MODERATE RISK 1.00-1.49	2	B1. Measuring the economic contribution of tourism B8. Access for all
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT 1.50-1.99	2	B2. Decent work and career opportunities B5. Preventing exploitation and discrimination
GOOD PERFORMANCE 2.00-2.49	4	B3. Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade B4. Support for community B6. Property and user rights B7. Safety and security
EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE ≥ 2.50	0	
TOTAL	8	

B1. Measuring the Economic Contribution of Tourism

The direct and indirect economic contribution of tourism to the destination's economy is monitored and publicly reported. Appropriate measures may include levels of visitor volume, visitor expenditure, employment and investment and evidence on the distribution of economic benefits.

In 2022, the annual revenue growth of the tourism sector in Phuket, Thailand, increased by 966 percent, compared to the previous year. In that same year, the revenue of Phuket's tourism sector amounted to around 139 billion Thai baht¹².

According to the Department of Tourism under the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, revenue generated by visitors to the island hit 246 billion baht in the first half of 2024. Spending was expected to reach 50 billion baht a month during the busiest months of November and December¹³.

According to the report of 'Phuket Economy Report 2023/2024' by C9HOTELWORKS¹⁴, Phuket tourism contributes 50% of the Gross Provincial Product(GPP), which is the same as GDP but scaled to a provincial level as of 2019¹⁵. In 2019, Phuket's GPP reached THB 232.75 million, with a per capita GPP of THB 395,915, outstripping the national GDP per capita by 63% (THB 243,658), and exhibited a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 8.3% from 2015 to 2019. The growth of the GPP was influenced by factors such as the expanding tourism industry, which constitutes the primary sector contributing to Phuket's GPP. The development of the tourism industry also increased labor demand, thereby stimulating growth in the real estate market. Phuket's GPP per capita saw a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 7.2% from 2015 to 2019. A significant 29.7% of Phuket's workforce is employed in the hospitality sector as of Q3 2023, a key driver of its superior GPP per capita relative to the national average.

The top three sectors contributing to the GPP are tourism, transportation, logistics and IT, and real estate. The tourism sector alone accounts for 49.8% of the total GPP. The transportation, logistics, and IT sector accounts for 20% of GPP, totaling THB 46,653 million. This significant contribution underscores the essential role of connectivity and infrastructure in bolstering Phuket's economic activities, demonstrating the sector's importance in the region's overall economic framework. In 2019,

¹² Year-on-year tourism revenue growth in Phuket, Thailand 2019-2022, published by [Andreas Walderich](#), Jun 1, 2023.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1388068/thailand-tourism-revenue-growth-phuket/>

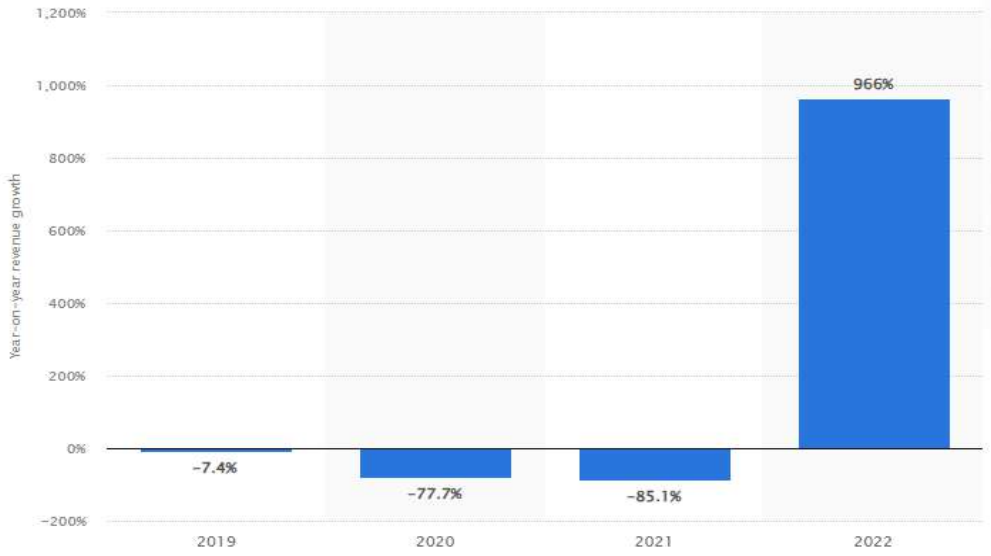
¹³ <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/2892336/bumper-year-expected-for-phuket-tourism>

¹⁴ <https://www.c9hotelworks.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2023-2024-the-phuket-report.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.c9hotelworks.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2023-2024-the-phuket-report.pdf>

Phuket's GPP in the accommodation and food services sector significantly outshone its neighbors, twice as high as Surat Thani's THB 49.8 billion and six times Krabi's THB 17.6 billion. This marked disparity underscores Phuket's unrivaled dominance in the regional tourism market.

Figure 28. Year-on-year growth rate of Phuket tourism sector revenue



Source: Phuket Economy Report 2023/2024' by C9HOTELWORKS

Figure 30. Trend of Phuket Gross Provincial Product

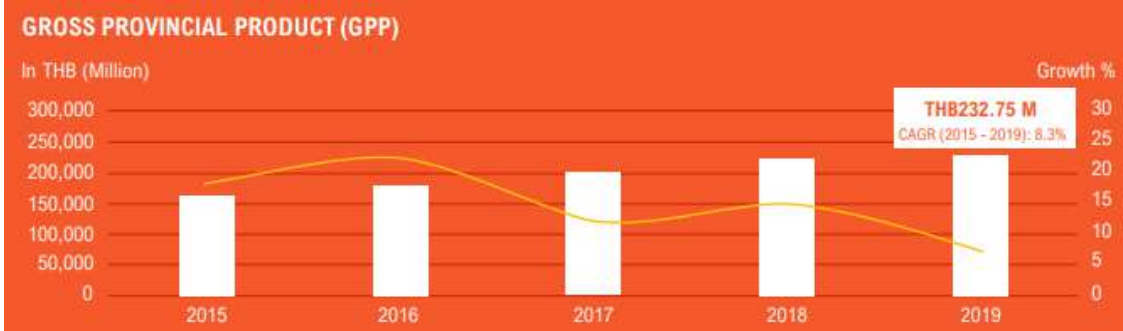
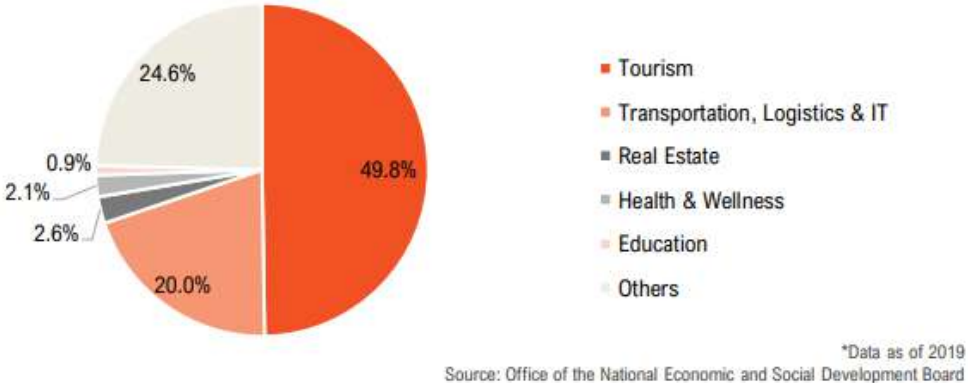


Figure 29. Thailand Gross Provincial Product contribution by sector



National agencies such as TAT collect data through visitor surveys or big data analysis, such as credit card data analysis. TAT also conducts sample surveys of 300 hotels to analyze room occupancy.

As mentioned above, multiple organizations collect tourism data and analyze tourism impact. Tourism has contributed positively to the Phuket economy, and it is expected to have more positive growth in the coming years.

However, the Phuket provincial government does not directly collect economic data on tourism, such as the numbers of domestic and overseas visitors, overnight stays, visitors' expenditures, tourism businesses, and employment. Data collection or analysis does not need to overlap, but it would be great if the Province provided an annual report on tourism's economic contribution.

Figure 31. Sothern Thailand tourism sector comparison in Gross Provincial Product

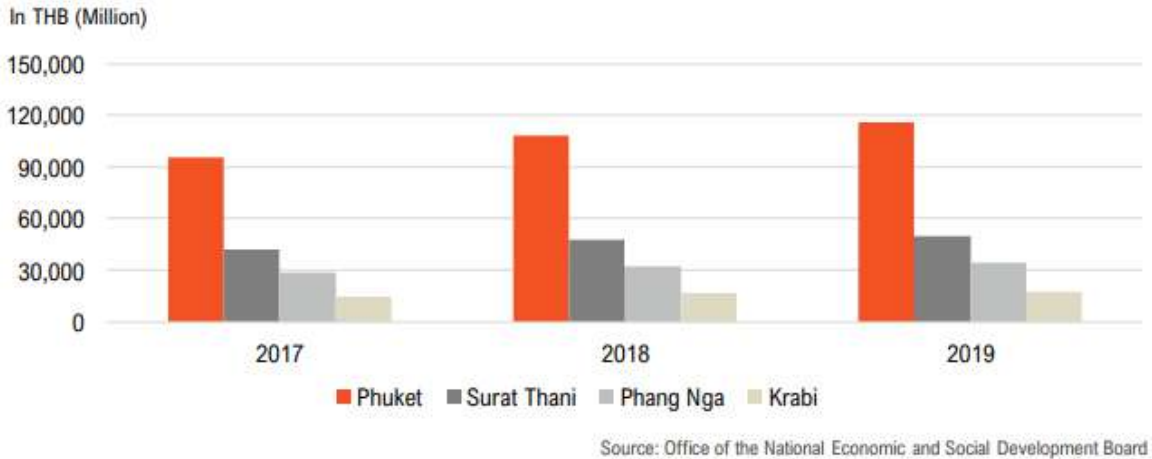


Table 20. B1 Measuring the economic contribution of tourism assessment results

B1 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Programme of economic data gathering.	2	1.33
b	Annual reports on the direct and indirect economic contribution of tourism in the destination.	1	
c	Data covering a range of measures of economic impact (e.g., volume, expenditure, employment, investment and spread of economic benefit in the destination).	1	

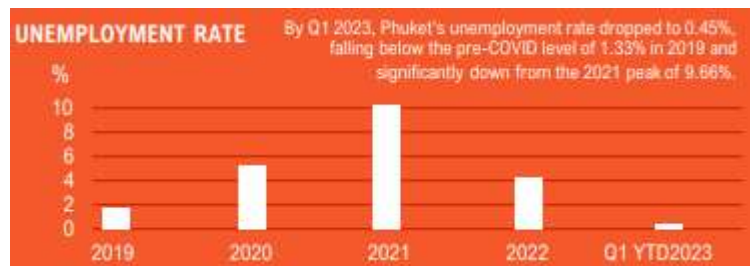
B2. Decent work and career opportunities

The destination encourages and supports career opportunities and training in tourism. The destination's tourism enterprises commit to providing equality of opportunity for local employment, training and advancement, a safe and secure working environment, and a living wage for all.

Two universities, PSU and PKRU, and Phuket Vocational College, are the leading academic bodies providing skilled human resources for the tourism sector. Public agencies, tourism associations, and private training centers offer other training programs. The Tourism Ministry and DASTA train CBT guides and personnel, primarily from the communities, to develop and manage CBT. However, under the Ministry of Labor, the Skill Development Department, an official public training organization, has a limited training capacity, permitting a maximum of 40 participants per session. Therefore, tourism associations have organized their own training programs.

Due to the increasing demand for human resources in tourism, there are many employment opportunities. According to the research¹⁶As of Q1 2023, Phuket's unemployment rate decreased to 0.45%, below Bangkok's and the national average, indicating economic recovery from tourism returns.

Figure 32. Trend of Phuket unemployment rate



The Department of Tourism held a 130-hour training workshop for the Regional Guide Course (Southern Region) to enhance tourism personnel in Phuket communities from November 11 to December 4, 2024. A total of 33 Phuket community tourism network members applied and passed the exam given by the Department of Tourism, earning a regional guide certificate (Southern Region). By June 30, 2025, 21 individuals had received the certification, including 19 who passed the exam in January 2025, one in March 2025, and one in April 2025.

¹⁶ <https://www.c9hotelworks.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2023-2024-the-phuket-report.pdf>

Thailand is also a signatory to the United Nations Committee on Eliminating Discrimination Against Women, which formulates general recommendations. At a national level, there is the Gender Equality Act, B.E. 2558 (2015). Seventeen associations and businesses from the tourism sector became signatories to the non-discrimination agreement and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with TCEB.

The regulations on decent work and opportunities are as follows:

- Labor Protection Act, B.E. 2541(1998)

The Act outlines the rights and responsibilities of both workers and employers. It covers important aspects of employment, such as working hours, employee benefits, severance pay, and workplace safety. The Act undergoes regular updates to adapt to the changing needs of the labour market. Recent updates have made changes to severance pay, maternity leave, and other aspects of employee welfare to better protect and support workers. Under the Act, various guidelines are provided to protect all types of workers, including:

- Working hours and holidays: The LPA stipulates a maximum of 48 regular working hours per week. After completing a full year of service, employees are eligible for at least one day off per week and six paid leave.
- Remuneration: Employees are guaranteed fair compensation for their work, including overtime, holiday pay, and other benefits, ensuring they receive what they have rightfully earned.
- Welfare and Safety: The Act mandates that employers must provide a safe and healthy work environment, reducing the risk of workplace accidents and promoting the overall well-being of employees.
- Severance pay: In the event of employment termination under qualifying circumstances, employees are entitled to severance pay, calculated according to the length of their service.
- Maternity leave: Female employees are granted maternity leave of up to 98 days, with pay for 45 days, safeguarding their rights and health during and after pregnancy.
- Equal treatment: The LPA prohibits discrimination based on gender, nationality, race, or religion, fostering an inclusive workplace culture.
- Child labour protection: There are strict regulations to protect minors, including limitations on working hours and prohibitions on dangerous work, ensuring that their education and welfare are not compromised.

- Unfair termination protection: Employees are protected from unfair dismissal. If an employer terminates an employee without just cause, the employee may be entitled to statutory compensation.

Private-sector stakeholders did not see a high risk of illegal labor or discrimination, including child labor. But they suspect there may be illegal laborers working for tour operators. The public sector regularly inspects safety and working conditions, including minimum payment requirements and water quality, but these measures apply only to legally registered businesses. And it is unclear how illegal businesses manage these factors, including employment.

Table 21. B2 Decent work and career opportunities assessment results

B2 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Provision of relevant skills training programmes/courses, available locally.	2	1.50
b	Statements of commitment by tourism enterprises to the provision of decent work/ career opportunities.	1	
c	Training and employment opportunities promoted to and taken up by local people, including women, young people, minorities, and people with disabilities.	2	
d	Channels for checking working conditions and receiving/handling grievances (e.g., involvement of labour unions).	1	

B3. Supporting Local Entrepreneurs and Fair Trade

The destination encourages the retention of tourism spending in the local economy through supporting local enterprises, supply chains and sustainable investment. It promotes the development and purchase of local sustainable products based on fair trade principles and that reflect the area's nature and culture.

These may include food and beverages, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.

TCEB supports small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in improving their products and packaging and connects them with MICE businesses. Meanwhile, TAT aids SMEs, including street food stalls, in applying for the Michelin Star and covering the evaluation fees. As of August 2024, there are eight Michelin-Approved street foods: A Pong Mae Sunee, Hong Khao Tom Pla, Chuan Chim, Go Benz, Mu Krop (Chi Hong), Kha Mu Boran (Kathu), Pathongko Mae Pranee, and Mor Mu Dong¹⁷.

The above agencies encourage businesses in Phuket to purchase local products and services. However, there are not enough farms to meet the demand of Phuket hotels, even though Phuket businesses prefer local products and services, including souvenirs.

There are many souvenir shops and weekend or night markets, including Chillva Market, Lard Yai in Old Town, Fun Friday Boat Avenue Market, Naka Market (Phuket Weekend Market), Phuket Indy Night Market, Kathu Market, OTOP Night Market, G Market, Karon Temple Market, and Banzan Fresh Market. Many high-quality handicrafts, including locally sourced and handwoven Thai silk products, as well as ceramics made by local artisans, are available.

However, there are growing concerns about foreign business operators, including Russians, who run tourism and tourism-related businesses using Thai nominees.

There is no evidence of how the provincial government supports establishing and implementing local purchasing and fair trade policies for local enterprises, promotes these initiatives to visitors, and creates a sustainable supply chain in tourism.

¹⁷ <https://www.villa-phuket.com/magazine/2024/08/michelin-approved-street-food-in-phuket>

Table 22. B3 Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair-trade assessment results

B3 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Advice, finance, or other support – available in the destination for tourism-related SMEs.	2	2.00
b	Assistance with market access for local tourism- related SMEs.	2	
c	Action to encourage and assist local tourism enterprises to purchase goods and services locally.	2	
d	Initiatives to help local farmers, artisans, and food producers to engage in the tourism value chain.	2	
e	Local produce and crafts identified, promoted and available for sale to visitors in the destination.	2	

B4. Support for Community

The destination has a system to enable and encourage enterprises, visitors, and the public to contribute to community and sustainability initiatives in a responsible manner.

Government agencies like TAT and DASTA, as well as universities such as PSU and PKRU, assist communities in grasping sustainable tourism and formulating policies and strategies for their community-based tourism (CBT) development and management, including educating them about carbon credits.

Many organizations are providing various support for Phuket communities, as follows¹⁸:

- Phuket Youth Sailing Squadron: Local sail training for underprivileged kids in Phuket. At the Phuket Yacht Club, Ao Yon.
- Life Home Project: Registered foundation to help improve the situation of those who are HIV positive, primarily women and their children and other disadvantaged children.
- Miracles Asia: Drug and alcohol addiction treatment programs.
- Child-Watch Phuket: Helps abused children and children at risk. Registered charity.
- Phuket International Women's Club: This non-profit social and networking group provides educational opportunities for needy children.
- Lions Club of Phuket Andaman Sea: This club is part of the International Lions Club Association and provides support and help for various causes across Phuket.
- Lions Club of Phuket Pearl: This is part of the international Lions Club and supports different causes across Phuket.
- Rotary Club of Patong Beach: This Rotary club in Patong holds weekly meetings and events throughout the year.
- Tsunami Volunteer Center: This center is based in Khao Lak and aims to assist in restoring tsunami-affected communities through empowerment.

¹⁸ <https://www.angloinfo.com/phuket/directory/phuket-support-groups-338>

- Narcotics Anonymous Thailand: Fellowship of men and women for whom drugs have become a problem to provide help and support for those who want to stay free of drugs. With a 24-hour narcotics anonymous helpline.
- Phuket Has Been Good To Us Foundation: Registered charity providing English language education for children in government schools in Phuket, emphasizing conversational skills.
- Phuket Community Foundation: Community foundation to maintain or improve the quality of life for everyone through poverty alleviation, preserving the environment, promoting art and culture, improving public safety and boosting public health.
- Alcoholics Anonymous: Meetings are held in English except for the Scandinavian meeting, which is held in five locations in Phuket and one in Krabi.

Moreover, an E-bike in the old town provides discounted rates to local community members. The local private tourism sector, led by the Phuket Sustainable Tourism Development Foundation, has collaborated with the Phuket City Municipality, the Big Data Institute, and the local community for the Phuket Old Town Carbon Neutrality 2030 initiative. This initiative focuses on efficient resource management, reduction of greenhouse gas, systematic waste handling, development of low-carbon transportation, and public awareness campaigns. One of the activities under the initiative, an organic waste digester, has been installed, and it has already reduced landfill waste by at least 400 kg a day, according to the report. According to the interviews conducted during the on-site assessment, there is no system to guide and assess volunteer programs to ensure they do not negatively impact the community, such as through intrusion or exploitation, even though there is no report on the harmful activities or results by stakeholders.

Figure 33. Phuket Old Town Carbon Neutral 2030 Initiative event



Source: <https://mgronline.com/south/detail/9670000112985>

Two training courses, “Low Carbon Tourism The Way of Sustainable Tourism” and “Sustainable Tourism Management and Exchange System,” were offered to community members to improve knowledge in community tourism management on January 14-15, 2025, and February 10-11, 2025, respectively. A total of 62 participants attended, including 20 from the Phuket Community Tourism Network.

The Phuket Community Tourism Network, comprising 16 communities, leverages the area's strengths to enhance tourism activities. This is combined with the local people's lifestyles and identities, including food and clothing, along with developing tourism initiatives and marketing efforts through event activities under the concept of “Phuket Soft Power: Buildings, Food, Apparel and Emotions.” The 10 communities of the Phuket Community Tourism Network were invited to participate in the Andaman Community Tourism Network Promotion Fair, held from February 4 to 6, 2025, at Satun Geopark Gateway, Khuan Don Subdistrict, Khuan Don District, Satun Province.

These activities offer communities the opportunity to promote their community tourism products; however, it is also essential to assist communities in initiating additional sustainability initiatives and engaging tourism businesses and visitors to support such endeavors.

Table 23. B4 Support for community assessment results

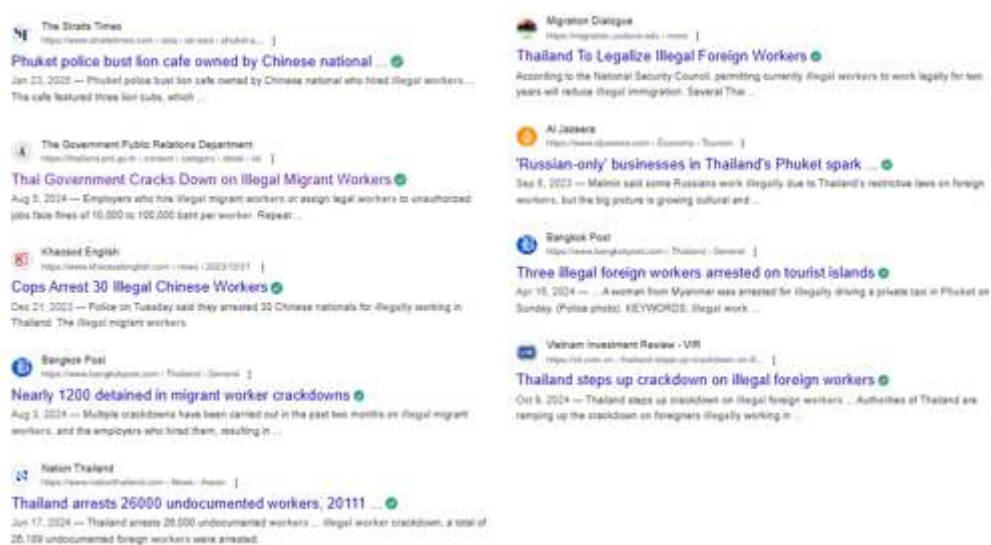
B4 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Support for local community and sustainability initiatives by local tourism enterprises is encouraged and facilitated.	3	2.00
b	Schemes exist, and are promoted, for visitors to support local community and sustainability initiatives.	2	
c	Volunteering and engagement with the community does not involve intrusion or exploitation.	1	

B5. Preventing Exploitation and Discrimination

The destination upholds international standards on human rights. It has laws, practices, and an established code of conduct to prevent and report on human trafficking, modern slavery and commercial, sexual, or any other form of exploitation, discrimination, and harassment of or against anyone, particularly children, adolescents, women, LGBT, and other minorities. The laws and established practices are publicly communicated and enforced.

The public sector regularly investigates illegal labor and takes appropriate action. Every year, there are many cases found as illegal, including foreign workers, not only child labor.

Figure 34. Regulating illegal labor



Thailand ratified the ILO Convention to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in 2001. Also, it endorsed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, committing to end all forms of child labor by 2025. To reaffirm Thailand's commitment, Labor Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn launched a campaign urging all sectors to eradicate child labor by next year. According to a Bangkok Post article published on June 12, 2024, the goal remains unattainable due to inconsistencies in labor laws. For instance, the Labor Protection Act prohibits the employment of children under 15, allowing 15- to 18-year-olds to work under certain conditions. Additionally, children under 18 can be employed if they are compensated directly. Migrant children over 15 can also be hired in non-hazardous jobs. While gaps in labor laws need to be addressed, the most effective solution to end child labor is ensuring that every child receives an education that will keep them in school until they turn 18. Despite concerted efforts to end child labor, much more needs to be done to fulfill these promises.

The Child Watch Phuket Association, which is one of the organizations dedicated to child protection, is combating child abuse and exploitation, striving to assist child laborers and enslaved child prostitutes in leading normal and healthy lives and finding a way out of exploitation.

In March 2020, the World Vision Foundation of Thailand and Patong Municipality signed an agreement on continuing efforts to protect children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism. Since 2017, ECPAT International and The Code have also encouraged travel and tourism businesses to protect children from sexual exploitation. Both hotel staff, teachers, and children have been trained to spot and protect children from this crime, and with this agreement, another important step was taken. This agreement is the first of its kind in Thailand, and it's essential to the ongoing initiative to improve the protection of children in Phuket through engagement, collaboration, and partnerships between the Network on Child Protection and Patong's local community. The MoU was officially endorsed by Ms. Chalermluck Kebsup, the Mayor of Patong Municipality, and Mr. Itthichot Kulrattanachot, the Chair of the Network on Child Protection, and show their strong commitment to the protection of children¹⁹.

Figure 35. Children at risk



However, the assessors noticed that children were engaged in tourism activities without knowing whether it was voluntary or forced. Children were at commercial performances on the streets of the Phuket Old Town and Bangla Walking Street, and underage visitors were also being exposed to harmful scenes on Bangla Walking Street in the evening without any control over sexual promotion.

Phuket's Equality Index score is 72 out of 100, and the legal rights of LGBT individuals score is 75 out of 100. Equality Index is a rating from 0 to 100 (with 100 being the most equal) to help visualize the

¹⁹ <https://ecpat.org/together-to-protect-phukets-children-from-sexual-exploitation/>

legal rights and public attitudes towards LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, asexual, intersex, and other) people in each region. The Equality Index is an average of two indices: the legal index and the public opinion Index. The LGBT legal index measures the legal status of 13 different issues, ranging from the legal status of homosexuality, same-sex marriage, transgender rights, LGBT discrimination protections, LGBT censorship laws, and more²⁰.

The relevant regulation is as follows:

- Labor Protection Act, B.E. 2541 (1998 with the 8th Amendments in 2023)
- Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, B.E. 2551 (2008)
- Gender Equality Act, B.E. 2558 (2015)

There are numerous efforts underway to prevent discrimination and protect human rights, including those of children. However, there is still a need for more practical and tangible management of these issues within tourism activities. Additionally, it is important to enhance visitors' awareness of human rights, protect children from any form of exploitation, and promote zero tolerance for discrimination..

Figure 36. LGBT rights in Phuket



²⁰ <https://www.equaldex.com/equality-index>

Table 24. B5 Preventing exploitation and discrimination assessment results

B5 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Reference (title, date) to specific laws that pertain in the destination regarding human rights, exploitation, discrimination, and harassment.	3	1.50
b	Evidence of communication and enforcement of above laws and related good practice (including to tourism enterprises and visitors).	1	
c	Risk and impact analysis regarding human rights, including human trafficking, modern slavery, and child labour – conducted regularly.	1	
d	Destination and key tourism players are signatories to the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism.	1	

B6. Property and User Rights

Laws and regulations regarding property rights and acquisitions are documented and enforced. They comply with communal and indigenous rights, ensure public consultation, and do not authorize resettlement without free prior and informed consent and fair and just compensation. Laws and regulations also protect user and access rights to key resources.

By law, there have been no issues related to property rights. The relevant regulations on property and user rights are as follows:

- The Land Code, B.E. 2497 (1945)
- Act on Land Reformation for Agriculture, B.E. 2518 (1985)
- Expropriation and Acquisition of Real Estate Act, B.E. 2562 (2019)
- Copyright Act, B.E. 2537 (1994 with the 5th Amendments in 2022)

There was little discriminatory treatment of the rights of communal and indigenous groups in Phuket. For instance, the Bang Rong Community is a Muslim community with second- and third-generation members. Based on their interviews, they report no property and user rights issues.

However, there are also instances of inadequately protected communal rights regarding property and resource access. For example, according to an article by Thai Post published on September 2, 2022²¹, Phuket still has areas that tourists and the general public often overlook, such as the sea gypsy community that faced eviction by a businessman who developed the land for tourism. Additionally, there are issues of overcrowded communities in mangrove forests and on public land, with over 30 communities lacking stable housing, although these laborers helped build Phuket and contributed to the growth of this tourist city. After the tsunami in 2004, the land problem became more severe. Capitalists used title deeds to sue and evict the sea gypsies who had been there before, causing us hardship. Professionals, NGOs, and other public agencies have worked to support these communities on this issue.

²¹ <https://www.thaipost.net/public-relations-news/213040/>

Table 25. B6 Property and user rights assessment results

B6 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Reference (title, date) to specific laws that pertain in the destination regarding property rights and acquisitions and user and access rights to resources.	3	2.00
b	Reference in the above laws to communal and Indigenous rights, public consultation, and resettlement.	3	
c	Evidence of enforcement of the above laws in the context of tourism development and activity.	1	
d	Evidence of community consultation, consent, and compensation.	1	

B7. Safety and Security

The destination has a system to monitor, prevent, publicly report, and respond to crime, safety, and health hazards that addresses the needs of both visitors and residents.

The relevant regulations on safety and security are as follows:

- Public Health Act, B.E. 2535 (1992 with the 3rd Amendments in 2017)
- Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Act, B.E. 2550 (2007)
- Land Transportation Act, B.E. 2522 (1979 with the 13th Amendments in 2022)

The Land Transport Department, the Port Department, the Royal Thai Police, and the Tourist Police Bureau are the primary agencies responsible for safety and security in Phuket.

The Tourist Police Bureau was formed on 1 September 2017. It was elevated from the Tourist Police Division. The tourist police is a department of the Royal Thai Police, the country's primary law enforcement agency. The priorities of the tourist police include cooperation with foreign nationals and promoting their security. The Tourist Police Bureau has the following powers and responsibilities:

- Plan development strategies, monitor, and provide advice to other police departments
- Ensure the safety of the king, regent, privileged persons, and members of the royal family
- Increase the confidence of tourists in their safety as well as that of their property
- Assist tourists
- Eliminate fraud, protecting the interests of tourists
- If necessary, help tourists cooperate with other police departments
- Contribute to the improvement of the country's tourism image

The Royal Thai Police and the Tourist Police have worked to ensure a safe Phuket. They have translators and volunteers at the police stations, installed 1,107 CCTV cameras, and conduct regular inspections. An emergency call center is available at 191. The other relevant government agencies regularly inspect tourism facilities with legal requirements for safety and hygiene. However, over 70% of Phuket accommodations that are not legally registered have no safety and hygiene inspections by public agencies. This could create an unsafe environment for visitors.

The interviews with businesses and residents proved that people feel safe in Phuket. However, there is no system to identify visitors' safety needs. During the on-site assessments, unsecured pedestrian paths were observed in many areas, even though public agencies also have well-established safety provisions.

Figure 38. First aid at tourist sites and Tourist Rescue Center at Chalong Bay



Figure 37. Unsafe pedestrian walking paths



Table 26. B7 Safety and security assessment results

B7 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Security and health services are well established and active in the destination.	3	2.00
b	Visitors are identified and addressed in the delivery of security and health services.	2	
c	Tourism facilities are inspected for compliance with safety and hygiene standards.	1	

B8. Access for All

Where practical, sites, facilities, and services, including those of natural and cultural importance, are accessible to all, including persons with disabilities and others who have specific access requirements or other special needs. Where sites and facilities are not immediately accessible, access is afforded through the design and implementation of solutions that consider both the integrity of the site and such reasonable accommodations for persons with access requirements as can be achieved. Information is made available on the accessibility of sites, facilities, and services.

The relevant regulations on accessibility are as follows:

- The Act on the Promotion and Development of the Quality of Life of Persons with Disabilities B.E. 2550 (2007 with the 2nd Amendments in 2013)

Phuket has many wheelchair-accessible facilities and activities, including hotels, beaches, trails, and attractions, and private sector players provide that information. Public facilities such as port terminals or national parks can have wheelchair-accessible toilets and parking lots. However, they may not be fully accessible, as the assessors found a toilet in the outdoor site locked, and the toilet facilities may not fully comply with accessibility requirements, such as the location and design of toilet flush and the type of sliding door.

Figure 40. Wheelchair-accessible trails



Source: <https://www.alltrails.com/thailand/phuket/ada>

Figure 39. Wheelchair-accessible beaches

This rainforested, mountainous country is a popular port of call for several tourists heading to Thailand in search of sun, sea, and sand. But what **beaches are best** for those of us in a wheelchair? And what other attractions or activities are available in Phuket?

Best beaches

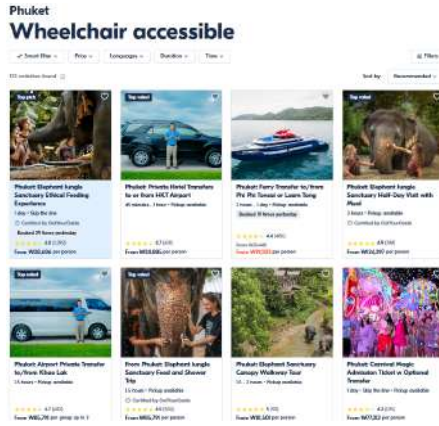
Karon – The second largest of Phuket's tourist beaches and arguably the best for wheelchair users because there is a sidewalk running alongside.
Rawai – Located near a sea gypsy village selling various handicrafts. Make your way along the pier and look at the fish through crystal clear water.
Yanui – One of Phuket's best-kept secrets, with few tourists even in high season, giving you more room for maneuverability.
Kata – The smallest of Phuket's main beaches, but perfect for swimming.

Source: <https://curbfreewithcorylee.com/2016/11/28/wheelchair-accessible-phuket-thailand/>

Even though there are quite a number of facilities and activities, these are primarily focused on wheelchair accessibility. Other types of disabilities need to be identified and considered for tourism facilities and activities. Public agencies must take a leadership role in sharing guidelines for accessibility and encouraging all tourism businesses to adopt these guidelines in their implementation. Public

facilities and attractions may show a model of accessibility. However, there are no official sites providing information on accessibility.

Figure 41. Wheelchair-accessible activities



Source: <https://www.getyourguide.co.uk/phuket-132123/wheelchair-accessible-tc239/>

Figure 42. Wheelchair-accessible hotel information from Google search

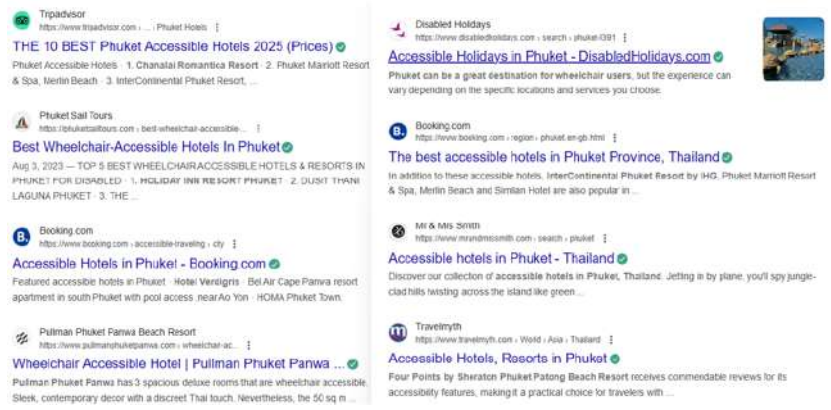


Figure 43. Accessible toilets at public facilities



Table 27. B8 Access for all assessment results

A4 Indicators		Score / Average
a	The existence of any regulations and standards regarding the accessibility of visitor sites, facilities, and services.	3
b	Consistent application of accessibility standards in public facilities.	2
c	Data on the extent/proportion of visitor sites and facilities that are accessible.	0
d	Evidence of programmes to improve access for people with a range of access needs.	1
e	Information on accessibility included in communications about the destination as a whole.	0
	Details of accessibility included in visitor information about key sites.	0
		1.00

C. CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY

The cultural sustainability of Phuket has been rated with an overall score of 1.64. This score takes into account the average of the scores given to each of the seven criteria evaluated. In terms of cultural sustainability, the criteria of Intangible heritage(C3) and Intellectual property (C5) were rated as "Excellent Performance" area. However, the Visitor Management at Cultural Sites (C6) criterion was rated "Areas of Risk". Urgent action is needed to address issues in this area.

Table 28. Criteria in Cultural Sustainability Pillar per score range

Criterion Score	# of criteria	Criteria
AREA OF RISK <1	1	C6. Visitor management at cultural sites
AREA OF MODERATE RISK 1.00-1.49	2	C1. Protection of cultural assets C4. Traditional access
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT 1.50-1.99	1	C7. Site interpretation
GOOD PERFORMANCE 2.00-2.49	1	C2. Cultural artefacts
EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE ≥ 2.50	2	C3. Intangible heritage C5. Intellectual property
TOTAL	7	

C1. Protection of Cultural Assets

The destination has a policy and system to evaluate, rehabilitate, and conserve cultural assets, including built *heritage* and cultural landscapes.

Thailand signed the World Heritage Convention in 1987. The conservation and management of Thailand's cultural heritage primarily falls under the jurisdiction of the Fine Arts Department. This is governed by the Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art, and National Museums, B.E. 2504 (1961). Under this law, the department is responsible for managing and protecting architectural sites, known as "ancient monuments" (Thai: โบราณสถาน, RTGS: borannasathan), antiques (โบราณวัตถุ, borannawatthu), and objets d'art (ศิลปวัตถุ, sinlapawatthu) that have significant artistic, historical, or archaeological value. As of September 2015, the department has listed 5,678 ancient monuments, with 2,087 officially registered, including 10 historical parks.²²

Phuket also safeguards cultural heritage through legal measures. The most notable cultural attractions, including those that are protected, are Old Phuket Town with its Sino-Portuguese mansions, the Big Buddha on the top of Nakkerd Hill, Wat Chalong with its ornate architectural style and beautiful wall paintings, the Heroine's Monument on Thepkasattri Road in Thalang, and Siam Niramit, which features cultural elements such as traditional dance and music performances, Thai boxing, and fountain shows.

Aside from the Chartered Bank House, which has been assessed, renovated, and handed over to the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (PPAO), there is insufficient evidence regarding cultural assets being evaluated for their vulnerability.

The PPAO is funded by a local hotel tax (1% of the hotel's room charge) and partially by the central government. PPAO is managing the Chartered Bank House to be Thailand Creative and Design Center (TCDC) Phuket, scheduled to open to the public in late 2025. Nevertheless, there is a lack of evidence on how tourism income is used to conserve cultural assets in Phuket.

²² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_heritage_conservation_in_Thailand

Table 29. C1 Protection of cultural assets assessment results

C1 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Lists of cultural assets, including evaluation and indication of vulnerability.	1	1.00
b	Programme of rehabilitation and conservation of assets.	1	
c	Mechanisms for using income from tourism to support conservation of cultural assets.	1	

C2. Cultural Artefacts

The destination has laws governing the proper sale, trade, display, or gifting of historical and archaeological artefacts. The laws are enforced and publicly communicated, including to tourism enterprises and visitors.

The Fine Arts Department operates 43 national museums across the country dedicated to the safekeeping of artefacts under the Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museums, B.E. 2504 (1961).

Authorities in Thailand and other countries have intercepted illegal trade in Thai artefacts. Those cases do not originate from Phuket, but they warn Phuket about the risks of illegal artefact trade.

Figure 44. Illegal trades of artefacts in Thailand

The figure displays six news snippets related to illegal trade of artifacts in Thailand:

- Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project | OCCRP**
https://www.occrp.org › news › thailand-seizes-antiquiti...
Thailand Seizes Antiquities Traded on Facebook ✓
Sep 6, 2023 — Thailand's Central Investigation Police (CIB) seized approximately 1,000 art artifacts and antiques on Tuesday and detained three people ...
- Asia Media Centre**
https://www.asiamediacentre.org.nz › features › thailan...
Thailand's art repatriation and the power of netizens ✓
Dec 13, 2021 — UNESCO reports that the illicit trade in cultural goods – of which antiquities trafficking is a part – is worth US\$10 billion a year. (Left) ...
- ICE | U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (gov)**
https://www.ice.gov › news › releases › hsi-investigation-...
HSI investigation leads to the return of 2 Thai religious ... ✓
Jan 24, 2025 — These religiously significant lintels are alleged to have been exported from Thailand in violation of Thai law over 50 years ago and ...
- Southeast Asian Archaeology**
https://www.southeastasianarchaeology.com › 2023/09/05
Illegal Artifact Trade Busted: Three Arrested with Over ... ✓
Sep 5, 2023 — Traders arrested with hundreds of illegal artefacts | Bangkok Post, 04 Sep 2023 ...
Antique hunters nabbed with over 1,000 artefacts and 10 million ...
- Bangkok Post**
https://www.bangkokpost.com › Thailand › General
Traders arrested with hundreds of illegal artefacts ✓
Sep 4, 2023 — Three men were arrested for illegally digging up and selling antiquities online, and almost 1,000 artefacts were seized, during police raids ...

However, there is no evidence that relevant laws have been communicated to tourism businesses and visitors, despite cases in which the law was enforced to manage illegal artefact trade.

Table 30. C2 Cultural artefacts assessment results

C2 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Reference to relevant laws relating to historical artefacts pertaining in the destination (title, date)	3	2.00
b	Evidence of communication of relevant laws to tourism enterprises and visitors.	0	
c	Evidence of enforcement of relevant laws.	3	

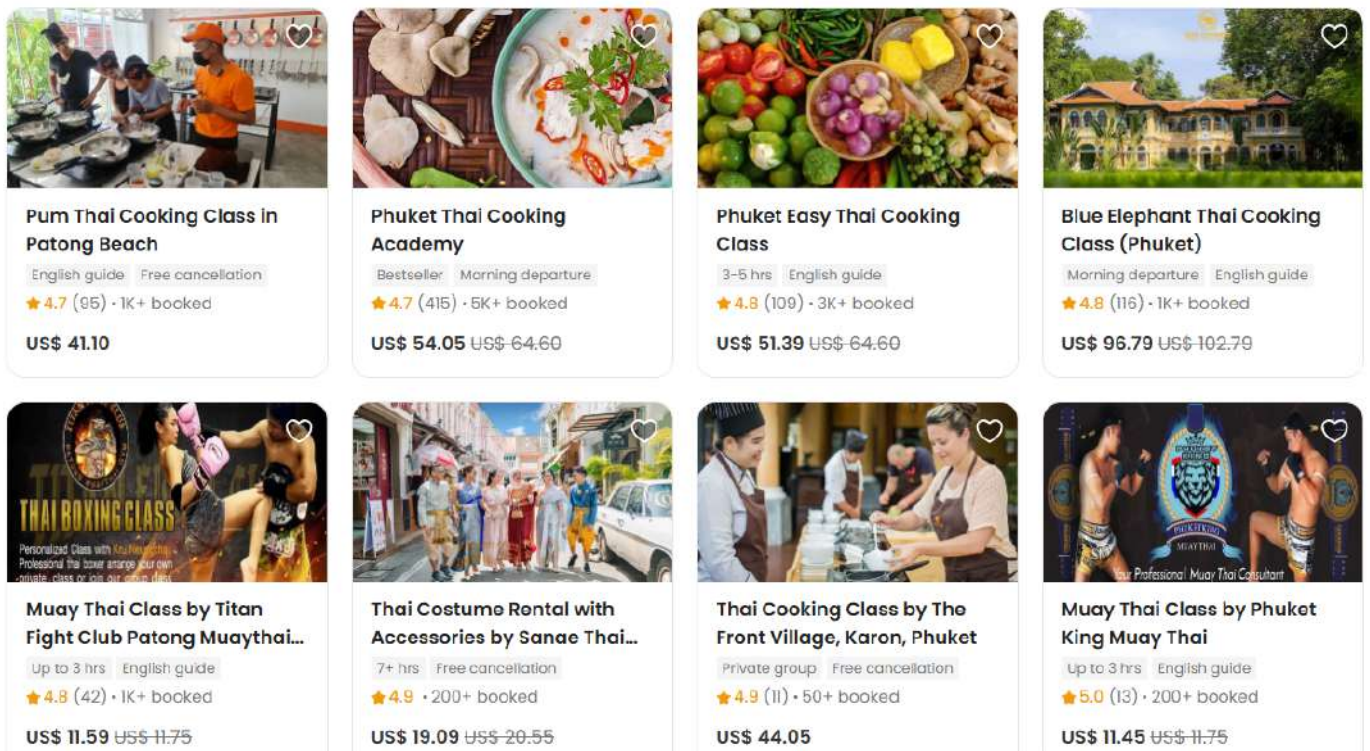
C3. Intangible Heritage

The destination supports the celebration and protection of intangible cultural heritage, including local traditions, arts, music, language, gastronomy and other aspects of local identity and distinctiveness. The presentation, replication and interpretation of living culture and traditions is sensitive and respectful, seeks to involve and benefit local communities, and provides visitors with an authentic and genuine experience.

Phuket's intangible heritage is similar to national elements, such as traditional dishes, traditional costumes, and Muay Thai. Phuket's cultural assets are appointed and registered annually by the governor, intended for promotion and conservation. However, this list is not accessible to the public in a digital format.

In addition, the Provincial Committee for the Promotion and Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Phuket is responsible for surveying, compiling, and proposing items for registration as

Figure 45. Example of cultural experience in Phuket



provincial intangible cultural heritage, such as local food, martial arts, Phor Tor "Hungry Ghosts" Festival, Kebaya dress, etc. Tour operators provide those intangible heritage experiences through different activities.

Source: <https://www.klook.com/experiences/list/phuket-cultural-experiences/c7-cate122/>

In 2023, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) added “Songkran in Thailand, Traditional Thai New Year Festival” to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The Songkran Festival occurred nationwide in Thailand in 2024. Phuket also hosted ‘Songkran No Alcohol 2024’ on Dibuk Road on April 13, 2024.

Phuket also highlighted the island’s cultural heritage with the launch of the ‘Travel Old Town, Telling Phuket’ tourism festival. Organized by the Phuket Provincial Tourism and Sports Office, the event aims to immerse visitors in the heritage of Phuket Old Town, bridging the past and present for a memorable cultural experience by engaging communities. The event occurred at the dragon statue in Queen Sirikit Park on Thalang Road in Phuket Town from November 27 to December 1, 2024.

Phuket is also a member of the UNESCO Creative City Network. While the sector of gastronomy records a significant contribution of \$3.6 billion to the local economy each year, important efforts have been undertaken to implement a more balanced, environmental-friendly and sustainable production and exploitation plan surrounding local food resources. Within the city, gastronomy plays a vital role, as it harbours the ability to transmit and uphold the ancient recipes, passed down through generations within families and communities. This commitment to preserve, perpetuate and promote traditional expressions is highlighted by the annual Old Town Festival, which restores ancient know-how in gastronomy, crafts and folk art, and visual arts. This three-day event attracts a local and international audience of more than 400,000 people. In addition, the Andaman Hoteliers event offers vocational training for young people to pursue careers in the field of gastronomy. In recent years, the municipality has invested extensively in raising awareness surrounding the safe food chain, notably through the Phuket Food Safety and Andaman Kitchen programmes. To make headway with sustainable urban development, Phuket is also committed to foster capacity building and enhance local and international cooperation in the field of research and development (R&D) by working towards achieving responsible and sustainable production and consumption of local food resources.²³

However, visitors are not provided with official information on Phuket's intangible heritage, even though they may be able to find that information on different websites, mostly provided by tour operators or online travel agencies.

²³ <https://www.unesco.org/en/creative-cities/phuket>

Table 31. C3 Intangible heritage assessment results

C3 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Identification and listing of intangible cultural heritage	3	2.50
b	Examples of celebration and visitor experiences of intangible cultural heritage (events, distinctive products, etc).	3	
c	Evidence of involvement of local and Indigenous communities in developing and delivering visitor experiences based on intangible cultural heritage.	3	
d	Feedback from visitors and local communities on delivery of intangible heritage experiences.	1	

C4. Traditional Access

The destination monitors, protects, and when necessary, rehabilitates or restores local community access to natural and cultural sites.

No report of local residents' limited access to natural and cultural sites has been made. This is related to the issue of property and user rights described in B6. There are unresolved issues regarding indigenous communities' access to resources, such as sea gypsies.

However, no evidence of how the public sector checks the local community's access and gets their feedback on this matter to take appropriate actions accordingly.

Table 32. C4 Traditional access assessment results

C4 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Monitoring of accessibility to natural and cultural sites for the local community.	1	1.00
b	Evidence of engagement with the local community regarding traditional access.	1	
c	Specific action to protect and/or rehabilitate local community access.	1	

C5. Intellectual Property

The destination has a system to contribute to the protection and preservation of intellectual property rights of communities and individuals.

Thailand's intellectual property regime is governed by several key statutes, which are aligned with international agreements such as the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). The main areas of intellectual property protection in Thailand include patents, trademarks, copyrights, and trade secrets.²⁴ In Thailand, intellectual property (IP) enforcement is handled by several agencies, including the Department of Special Investigation, the Economic Crime Investigation Division, the Metropolitan Police Bureau, the Provincial Police Bureau, and the Food and Drug Administration.

- Patent Act BE 2522 (1979): A patent grants the inventor exclusive rights to their invention, allowing them to prevent others from making, using, selling, or importing the patented invention without permission. There are three types of patents in Thailand: Invention Patents, Petty Patents, and Design Patents.
- Copyright Act B.E. 2537 (1994): Copyright protection is automatically granted to original works of authorship in the literary, artistic, and scientific domains, including books, music, films, software, and architectural designs. Copyright protection in Thailand lasts for the life of the author plus 50 years, or 50 years from the date of publication for works of corporate authorship.
- Trademark Act, B.E. 2534 (1991): A trademark is a distinctive sign that identifies certain goods or services as those produced or provided by a specific person or enterprise. Trademarks can include words, logos, symbols, sounds, and combinations thereof. To be registered, a trademark must be distinctive, not deceptive, not identical or similar to existing trademarks, and not contrary to public order or morality.
- Trade Secrets Act B.E. 2545 (2002) A trade secret is any confidential business information that provides a competitive edge. Protection is granted to information that is secret, has

²⁴ <https://www.phuket-property-lawyer.com/intellectual-property-in-thailand/>

commercial value, and has been subject to reasonable steps to keep it confidential. Unlike patents and trademarks, trade secrets do not require registration.

The intellectual property is protected under the above laws. The stakeholders are aware of the intellectual property rights, and there was no issue raised during the interviews with stakeholders.

According to the private sector interview, a resident tried to register his intellectual property rights for his products but could not do so due to a lack of information and support.

Table 33. C5 Intellectual property assessment results

C5 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Reference to laws on intellectual property pertaining in the destination (title, date).	3	3.00
b	Communication of intellectual property rights to tourism stakeholders.	3	
c	Evidence that intellectual property rights are protected in the development of cultural experiences for visitors.	3	

C6. Visitor Management at Cultural Sites

The destination has a system for the management of visitors within and around cultural sites, which takes account of their characteristics, capacity and sensitivity and seeks to optimize visitor flow and minimize adverse impacts. Guidelines for visitor behavior at sensitive sites and cultural events are made available to visitors, tour operators and guides before and at the time of the visit.

There is no scheme to monitor visitor flows and impacts on cultural sites in Phuket. Without understanding visiting patterns and their impacts, no action is taken to minimize the negative impact while maximizing the positive impact.

There are various training programs for guides; however, no training materials or programs have been verified for visitor management at cultural sites, specifically regarding providing a code of conduct and appropriate guiding practices.

Written evidence of a code of practice for tour operators and tour guides and evidence that they have engaged in visitor management in Phuket is needed.

Table 34. C6 visitor management at cultural sites assessment results

C6 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Monitoring of visitor flows and impact on cultural sites, with results shared across the destination.	0	0.20
b	Evidence of action to manage tourism-related impacts in or around cultural sites.	0	
c	Existence and distribution of published guidelines on visitor behaviour at sensitive sites and cultural events and periodic monitoring of compliance.	0	
d	A code of practice for tour operators and tour guides and/or other engagement with them on visitor management at cultural sites.	0	
e	Provision of training for guides.	1	

C7. Site Interpretation

Accurate interpretative material is provided which informs visitors of the significance of the cultural and natural aspects of the sites they visit. The information is culturally appropriate, developed with host community collaboration, and clearly communicated in languages pertinent to visitors and residents.

There are many websites providing information about Phuket and its attractions and tour activities, but those are mainly by the private sector and the public sector's information, such as the ones provided on the Province²⁵ and TAT²⁶ Websites are limited.

Many museums provide specific topic-based information, but visitors may have difficulty finding site interpretation information during their site visits, including at Old Phuket Town. Most information highlights their significance but may not include sensitivity/fragility based on scientific research. The community members confirmed there was no issue with the accuracy of the interpretation or promotional information; however, they were not involved in developing the content according to the onsite interviews.

Table 35. C7 Site interpretation assessment results

C7 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Provision of informative interpretative material on site and in formats that are accessible pre-arrival.	2	1.80
b	Evidence that interpretative material has been well researched and is accurate.	3	
c	Interpretation material that identifies the significance and sensitivity/fragility of sites.	1	
d	Evidence of host community collaboration in preparation of relevant interpretative material.	1	
e	Interpretative material available in relevant languages.	2	

²⁵ <https://www.phuket.go.th/webpk/contents.php?str=travel>

²⁶ <https://www.tourismthailand.org/Destinations/Provinces/Phuket/350>

D. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Phuket’s environmental sustainability received an overall average score of 1.43, based on the average of the overall scores of each of the 12 criteria.

Within the environmental sustainability pillar, six criteria were identified as “Needs Improvement,” while the rest fell into “Areas of Risk,” requiring urgent action to solve issues.

Table 36. Criteria in Environmental Sustainability Pillar per score range

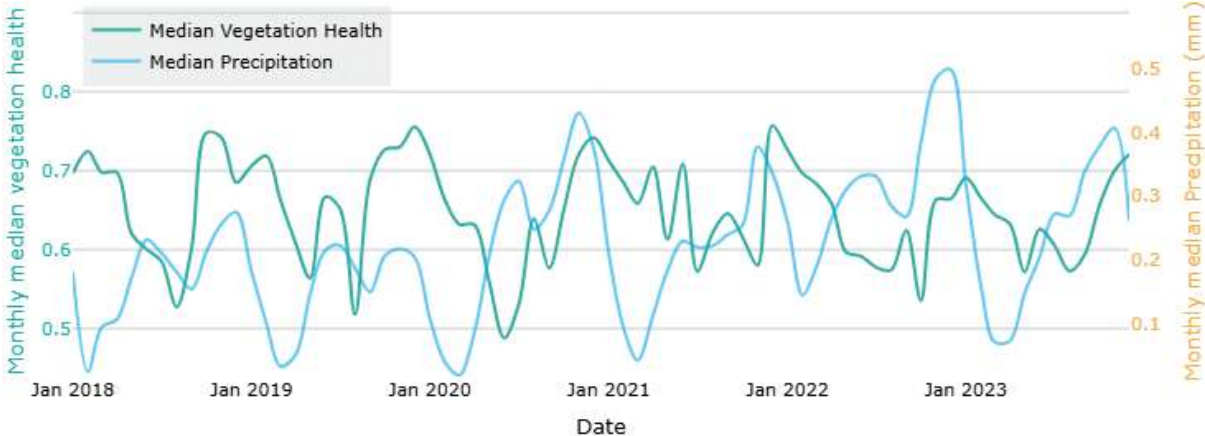
Criterion Score	# of criteria	Criteria
AREAS OF RISK <1	0	
AREAS OF MODERATE RISK 1.00-1.49	6	D1. Protection of sensitive environments D2. Visitor management at natural sites D6. Water stewardship D8. Wastewater D9. Solid waste D10. GHG emissions and climate change mitigation
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT 1.50-1.99	6	D3. Wildlife interaction D4. Species exploitation and animal welfare D5. Energy conservation D7. Water quality D11. Low-impact transportation D12. Light and noise pollution
GOOD PERFORMANCE 2.00-2.49	0	
EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE ≥ 2.50	0	
TOTAL	12	

D1. Protection of Sensitive Environments

The destination has a system to monitor, measure and respond to the impacts of tourism on the natural environment, conserve ecosystems, habitats and species, and prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.

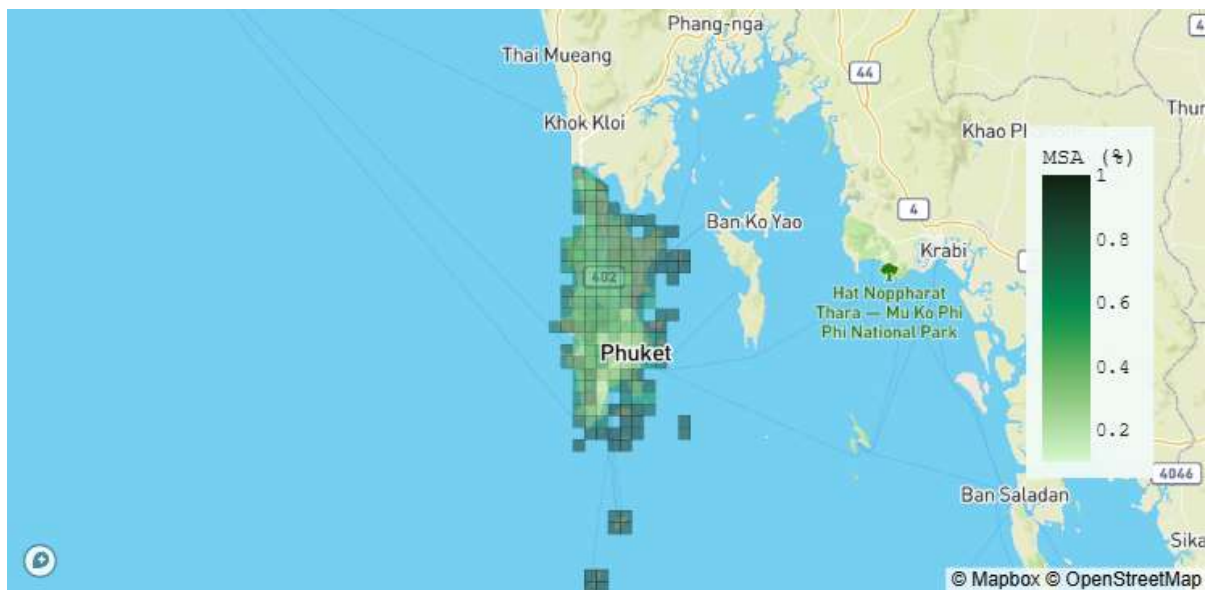
Phuket has in total 70,175 Rai of conserved areas including 56,250 Rai of national parks and 13,925 Rai of non-hunting areas.²⁷ This is equal to 20.68% of the province’s land areas. These areas are under the supervision of the Protected Area Regional Office 5 (Nakhon Si Thammarat). In addition, there are 107,578 Rai of preserved forests under the Forest Resource Management Office 12 (Krabi) including 9 land-based forests and 7 mangrove forests.²⁸ A visit to one of the sites shows that the green areas and biodiversity have been somewhat restored and keystone species like gibbons have recovered their population owing to conservation efforts.²⁹ The trends are in line with the indicators measuring vegetation health (with values closer to 1 indicating dense, healthy vegetation) and biodiversity level (where 1 represents pristine conditions), shown in Figures 42 and 43. Over the past 6 years, the plant cover has increased by 3% in Phuket.

Figure 46. Monthly trends in vegetation health, Phuket



²⁷ <https://portal.dnp.go.th/Content/NakhonSiThammarat?contentId=35>
²⁸ <https://www.forest.go.th/krabi/>
²⁹ <https://www.gibbonproject.org/>

Figure 47. Biobalance in Phuket



At sea, all 17 sub-districts in Phuket are connected to the ocean. The management of the areas covering 2,247,543 Rai in Phuket's sea and coastlines is under the Marine and Coastal Resources Office 10 (Krabi).³⁰ There is one marine national park in Phuket, Racha Island, and four strict marine reserve areas that protect coral reefs.³¹ When climate change and a warm ocean affected their habitat in Trang in 2024, more than 30 dugongs took refuge in Phuket, where seagrass remains rich. The authorities and conservation groups have been working with fishers and local communities to protect the endangered animals.³²

Despite the efforts mentioned above, there is no active programme to monitor tourism impacts on biodiversity or effective programmes to control invasive species. This presents a risk to the integrity of the land-based and marine ecosystems. At the same time, there is a lost opportunity as tourists are not well informed about Phuket's natural heritage. Besides the small gate fees at the national parks and reserve areas, tourism does little to benefit the ongoing conservation programs on the island.

³⁰ <https://directory.dmcr.go.th/detail?g=34>

³¹ <https://bigdata.dmcr.go.th/conservation-area/area/76>

³² <https://mgronline.com/south/detail/9670000113954>

Table 37. D1 Protection of sensitive environments assessment results

D1 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	List of natural heritage sites and assets, indicating type, conservation status and vulnerability.	3	1.17
b	Programmes to conserve biodiversity and natural heritage.	2	
c	Programmes to eradicate and control invasive species.	1	
d	Action to identify, monitor and mitigate tourism impacts on biodiversity and natural heritage.	1	
e	Mechanisms for using income from tourism to support conservation of natural assets.	0	
f	Communications with visitors and enterprises on reducing spread of alien species.	0	

D2. Visitor Management at Natural Sites

The destination has a system for the management of visitors within and around natural sites, which takes account of their characteristics, capacity and sensitivity and seeks to optimize visitor flow and minimize adverse impacts. Guidelines for visitor behaviour at sensitive sites are made available to visitors, tour operators and guides before and at the time of the visit.

In general, there is no system to manage the flow of tourists at natural sites in Phuket. The only site with some restrictions is Racha Island. The marine national park is closed during the monsoon season from mid-May to mid-November every year, allowing the ecosystem to recover. During the opening period, the park officers also work with conservation groups and tourists to keep the island clean by picking up litter and marine debris (see the Figure below).

Figure 48. Example of clean-ups in Racha Island, Phuket



Source: Department of Marine and Coastal Resources

Most tourism-related impacts are not monitored, with the exception of marine litter. Tourists may notice signs about anti-littering and smoke-free beaches, a long-standing initiative of the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR). The department also maintains a record of beach cleanups under the name Thailand Coastal Cleanup.³³ However, other issues, including the impacts of the sheer volume of visitors, are rarely communicated to tourists. Most guidelines and codes of conduct focus on safety issues and pay only passing attention to potential ecological damages. An interview with the Marina managers did not show that sufficient training was provided to guides and tour operators.

³³ <http://tcc.dmcrc.go.th/>

Table 38. D2 Visitor management at natural sites assessment results

D2 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Monitoring of visitor flows and impact on natural sites, with results shared across the destination.	1	1.33
b	Evidence of action to manage and mitigate tourism-related impacts in or around natural sites.	1	
c	Existence and distribution of published guidelines on visitor behaviour at sensitive sites, and periodic monitoring of compliance.	2	
d	A code of practice for tour operators and tour guides and/or other engagement with them on visitor management at natural sites.	1	
e	Cooperation with local conservation bodies to identify environmental risks associated with tourism and measures to reduce them.	2	
f	Provision of training for guides.	1	

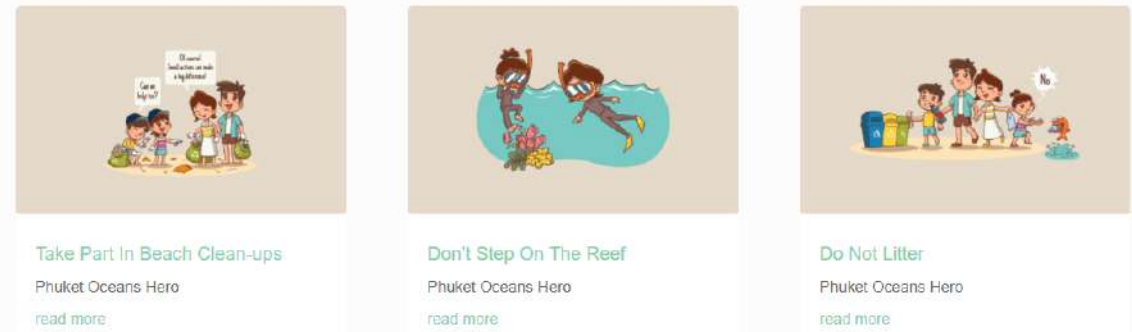
D3. Wildlife Interaction

The destination has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards for wildlife interactions. Interactions with free roaming wildlife, taking into account cumulative impacts, are non-invasive and responsibly managed to avoid adverse impacts on the animals concerned and on the viability and behaviour of populations in the wild.

Wildlife conservation and animal protection laws regulate interactions with wildlife. The details of the Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act and the Cruelty Prevention and Welfare of Animal Act will be found in the next section on D4. In addition, the government is considering the Draft Ministerial Announcement on Measures to Protect the Coral Reefs from Tourists' Diving Activities, proposed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE).³⁴

Local NGOs and tourism businesses offer a code of conduct for visitors that outlines specific tour expectations and general responsible behavior guidelines. However, it remains unclear how effectively these guidelines are communicated to or shared with visitors.

Figure 49. OCEANS FOR ALL's 'More Sustainable Vacation Tips'



Source: <https://www.oceansforallfoundation.org/en/the-foundation/>

If passed, the tourists who inflict damages to the coral reefs may be fined no more than 200,000 THB and/or serve up to 2 years in prison. In the past, some mishandling of marine wildlife by tourists caused an uproar³⁵ but these incidents have raised the awareness of society and local tour operators alike.

³⁴ <https://www.thaigov.go.th/news/contents/details/91943>

³⁵ <https://www.thairath.co.th/news/local/2704536>

On land, at Khao Rang Viewpoint, which overlooks Phuket's downtown, tourists can interact with wild monkeys, but they have to exercise caution, as warned by the signs and local people around the area.

Figure 50. Responsible Travel Tips by Phuket Elephant Nature Reserve

How to Travel Sustainably in Phuket

Firstly, it's important to understand how you can travel sustainably in Phuket, ensuring each part of your journey is as conscious as possible. We've put together some of the following tips for eco-friendly and respectful travel in Thailand:

- **Avoid plastics:** Phuket faces huge challenges with plastic pollution, which has a detrimental impact on the ecosystem and wildlife. Make sure you bring reusable bags and bottles to ensure you are not purchasing items that incorporate plastic.
- **Clean up:** Always make sure you discard your trash and leave nothing behind on beaches or in natural areas. If rubbish bins are not easily accessible, keep your trash with you until you find a suitable place to discard it.
- **Choose accommodation carefully:** You can help support communities by staying in locally-run accommodation. You can even find places to stay in that use renewable energy to run.
- **Be respectful:** Always treat local communities with respect. When visiting places of worship, make sure you dress appropriately.
- **Go on eco-friendly activities:** When exploring, try choose eco-friendly activities such as hiking, cycling, and kayaking to reduce your carbon footprint.

Supporting Local Communities in Phuket

There are numerous ways you can support local communities during your travels in Phuket. Here are our top suggestions:

Choose local tour operators in Phuket

When choosing your tours and travel activities, it's always best to go with local guides. Many of the guides in Phuket have insider knowledge and they will be able to offer you further suggestions for where to go and what to do. Choosing local tour operators means you are helping uplift businesses as well as families. You'll not only boost the economy, but you'll also invest in more meaningful experiences.

Community-based tourism in Phuket

Speaking of meaningful experiences, a growing trend in Phuket is community-based tourism. This is where visitors seek out local communities or villages, engaging in activities whereby the profits go directly back into the community, allowing them to choose how to use it.

In Phuket, it's possible to visit local villages or even take part in a homestay, where you live with a local Thai family. While in the village, you can learn from community members how to cook typical meals, make traditional handicrafts, or discover more about their culture. This will expose you to a much more authentic side of Phuket, enhance your cultural knowledge, and improve the livelihoods of communities.

Buy local products in Phuket

Phuket is filled with markets where you'll find countless vendors selling all sorts of souvenirs, knick-knacks, and cheap clothing. While it's tempting to get more bang for your buck, many of these items are often mass-produced and may have been made using exploitative labor. While shopping in Phuket, try instead to buy from artisans who have handmade their crafts with great expertise and care. You'll be supporting more sustainably produced goods as well as local culture and artisanship.

For tips on what to buy and where, read our blog on [Sustainable Souvenirs: Eco-Friendly Shopping in Phuket](#).

Source: <https://phuketelephantnaturereserve.com/responsible-travel-in-phuket-supporting-local-communities-and-conservation-efforts/>

Table 39. D3 Wildlife interaction assessment results

D3 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Reference (title, date) to international, national and local laws that apply in the destination regarding interaction with wildlife.	3	1.67
b	Endorsement of international standards for wildlife viewing for both marine and terrestrial species.	1	
c	Distribution of a code of practice for wildlife interaction, including viewing, which reflects international standards.	1	
d	System for checking compliance with regulations, and code of practice amongst tourism operations.	2	
e	Actions to monitor wildlife wellbeing and minimize disturbance, in locations where interactions occur.	1	
f	Provision of information to visitors on harmful wildlife interaction, such as touching and feeding	2	

D4. Species Exploitation and Animal Welfare

The destination has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards that seek to ensure animal welfare and conservation of species (animals, plants and all living organisms). This includes the harvesting or capture, trade, display, and sale of wildlife species and their products. No species of wild animal is acquired, bred or held captive, except by authorized and suitably equipped persons and for properly regulated activities. Housing, care and handling of all wild and domestic animals meets the highest standards of animal welfare.

Thailand has two laws protecting animal welfare and conserving species. The first is the Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act, B.E. 2503 (the 4th amendments in 2019). The second is the Cruelty Prevention and Welfare of Animal Act, B.E. 2557, which was passed in 2014. Thailand has been a party to CITES since 1983, and the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) and the Customs Department have played active roles in its implementation, including printed materials and billboards at the airports.

Phuket once had many animal attractions before COVID-19, including private zoos, elephant sanctuaries, aquariums, tiger parks, crocodile farms, dolphin shows, and bird shows. However, several were forced to close down and sell their animals. For the elephant sanctuaries still in operation, they have to register with the Department of Livestock Development and follow the TAS 6413-2564 on Good Practices for Elephant Sanctuaries. The names of registered operators can be found on the TAS-license website.³⁶ There is also a lesser-known voluntary standard for elephants in tourism by the Department of Tourism.³⁷ Overseas tourists are generally concerned about ethical tourism, and some are opposed to elephant riding in particular.

In addition, Phuket faces challenges with stray animal pollution. There are non-profit organizations dedicated to this issue, notably the Phuket Animal Welfare Society (PAWS)³⁸ and Soi Dog Foundation.³⁹ These organizations, which benefited from tourism through donations and volunteers, struggled to maintain their operations during the pandemic.

³⁶ https://tas.acfs.go.th/nsw/index.php?option=com_rservice&view=sme&mokoso_id=1&stdid=9&limit=20&limitstart=160

³⁷ https://tts.dot.go.th/services/uploads/standard/document/files_01042019192732/16468941445c55.pdf

³⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/pawsphuket>

³⁹ <https://www.soidog.org/>

Table 40. D4 Species exploitation and animal welfare assessment results

D4 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Reference (title, date) to specific international, national and local laws, standards and guidelines that apply in the destination regarding animal welfare and conservation of species.	3	1.71
b	Notification of laws, standards and guidelines to tourism enterprises and guides.	2	
c	A system for inspection of the conditions of captive wildlife and domestic animals, including their housing and handling.	1	
d	Licensing and checking of qualifications of personnel responsible for captive wildlife.	1	
e	Action to promote the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in the tourism sector and to ensure compliance with it.	3	
f	Provision of information to visitors on avoiding trade in endangered species, e.g. in purchase of souvenirs derived from threatened species of wildlife notified by IUCN or CITES.	1	
g	Enforcement of legislation to ensure that any hunting activity is part of a scientifically based, properly managed and strictly enforced approach to conservation.	1	

D5. Energy Conservation

The destination has targets to reduce energy consumption, improve efficiency in its use, as well as increase the use of renewable energy. The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report their contribution to these targets.

Phuket has not yet set a province-level energy consumption target, although energy conservation is a key component to the STDF’s sandbox project: “Phuket Old Town Carbon Neutrality 2030”. Only large public and private establishments with more than 2,000 sq m of floor area are obliged to report their energy consumption and make improvements according to the Building Energy Code (BEC) under the Energy Conservation Promotion Act, B.E. 2535 (The 2nd Amendment in 2017).

Many hotels and resorts in Phuket have implemented energy-saving technologies, such as LED lighting, key card systems, solar panels for water heating, air conditioners, and other appliances, that meet EGAT’s No. 5 Energy Label.⁴⁰ This movement has benefited from an increased interest among hoteliers in standards and certification programs. Large hotels also work with energy providers to expand renewable energy capacity, as seen in a project to install 476 kW of solar panels on hotel rooftops.⁴¹ Such projects can benefit from the incentive packages offered by the Energy Conservation and Promotion Fund.

Table 41. D5 Energy conservation assessment results

D5 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Energy consumption targets are publicised and promoted.	0	1.5
b	Programme to increase energy efficiency – e.g. promoting and supporting insulation.	2	
c	Investment in renewable energy and percent of total provision/consumption.	2	
d	Support and incentives for energy monitoring and reduction by enterprises.	2	

⁴⁰ <https://labelno5.egat.co.th/home/>

⁴¹ <https://www.andsolartech.com/th/phuket-hotel---476kw-project-in-phuket-thailand>

D6. Water Stewardship

The destination encourages enterprises to measure, monitor, publicly report and manage water usage. Water risk in the destination is assessed and documented. In cases of high water risk, water stewardship goals are identified and actively pursued with enterprises, to ensure that tourism use does not conflict with the needs of local communities and ecosystems.

Based on water stress data from 2018 to 2023, Phuket faces low risk in terms of water security according to the WRI scale, as shown in Figure 45. The annual mean of water stress stood at 3% owing to high precipitation during the monsoon season and the average water stress during summer months at 8%.

Figure 51. Water stress map, Phuket

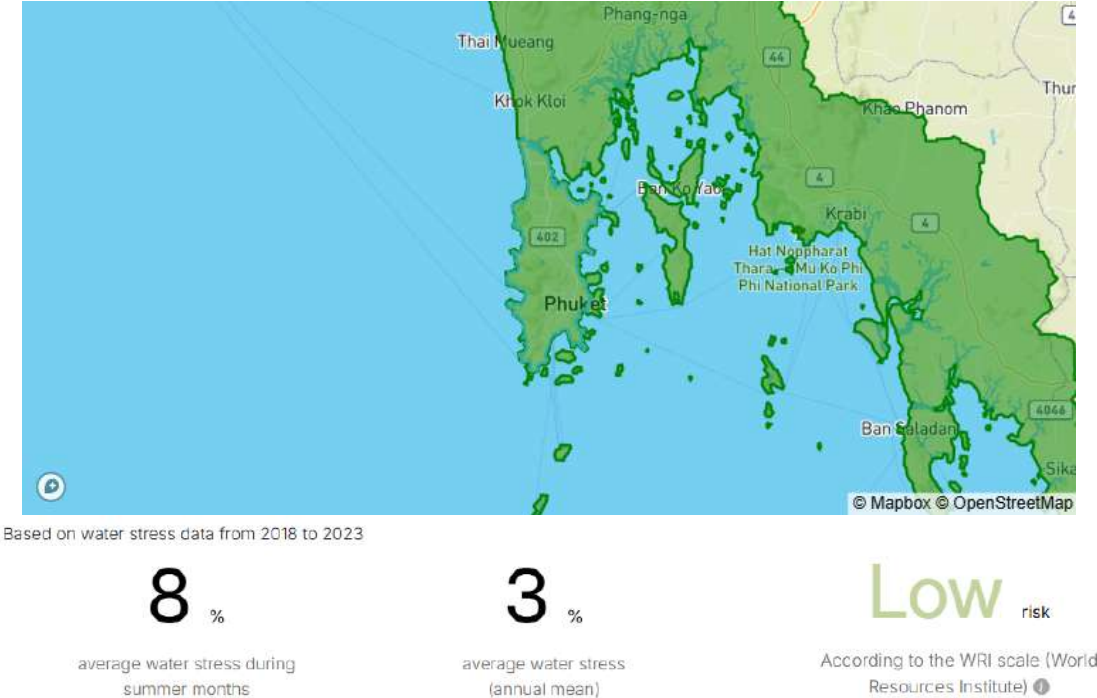
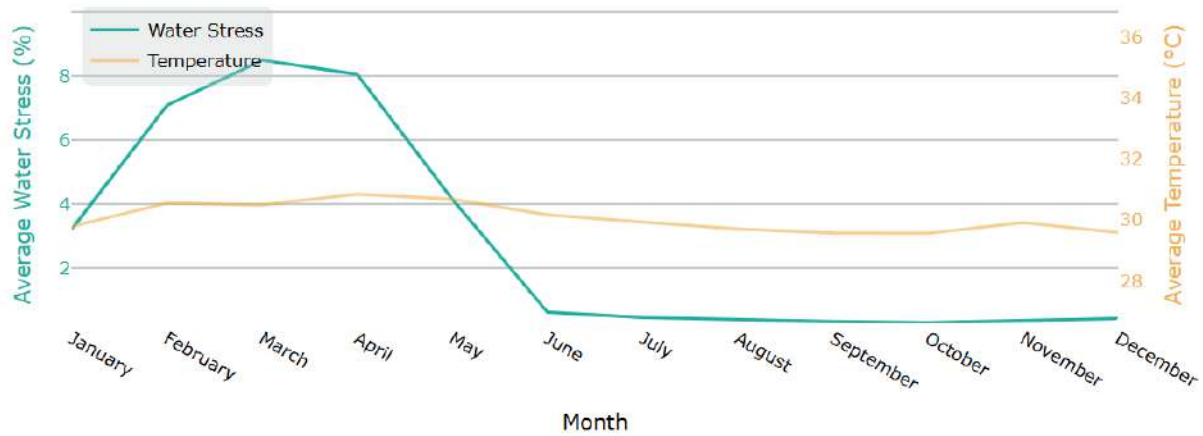


Figure 46 shows typical trends of water stress in Phuket, which peaks in March and April. The start of tourist season after the monsoon ends in November has raised the water stress in the summer months. The overall risk remains low (<10%), as the rain usually returns as early as May. However, the effects of climate change and prolonged drought in recent years have raised concerns about water shortages in some hotspots on the island.

Figure 52. Typical yearly trends in water stress in Phuket

Typical Yearly Trends in Water Stress



Phuket has three water reservoirs with a combined capacity of over 20 million m³. Although this quantity was normally sufficient to meet the annual demand for fresh water, the reserve in 2025 runs low and might be depleted by the end of May. Therefore, the governor has appointed a task force to monitor drought and water shortage, and the Phuket City Municipality has set up a special operations center to serve communities.⁴² Water management aims to limit the effects on the thriving tourism industries. Unlike an information campaign directed to local populations, shown in Figure 46, the authorities do not communicate this risk directly with tourists.

The information on water conservation is provided to visitors at their accommodations. It is a common practice for hotels and resorts to ask guests to refrain from changing linens and towels every night. The adoption of sustainability standards and certification programs has encouraged the uptake of these measures. The Shore at Katathani, for example, has harvested rainwater to lessen the strain on the island's water supply⁴³ and Katathani Phuket Beach Resort has supported community water recycling and treatment.⁴⁴ Some hotels have installed atmospheric water generators, and several reuse treated water for gardening.

⁴² <https://mgronline.com/south/detail/9670000031030>

⁴³ <https://theshorephuket.com/the-green-hotel/index.php?hl=th-TH>

⁴⁴ <https://www.katathani.com/green-hotel/?hl=th-TH>

Figure 53. Water conservation campaign



Source: Phuket City Municipality

Table 42. D6 Water stewardship assessment results

D6 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Provision of guidance and support for monitoring and reduction of water usage by enterprises.	1	1.25
b	Program to regularly assess water risk.	3	
c	Setting, publication and enforcement of water stewardship goals, where water risk has been assessed as high.	n/a	
d	Monitoring and control of sources and volume of water used for tourism purposes and its effect on local communities and ecosystems. Promotion and checking of adherence to goals by tourism enterprises.	0	
e	Visitor information on water risk and minimising water use.	1	

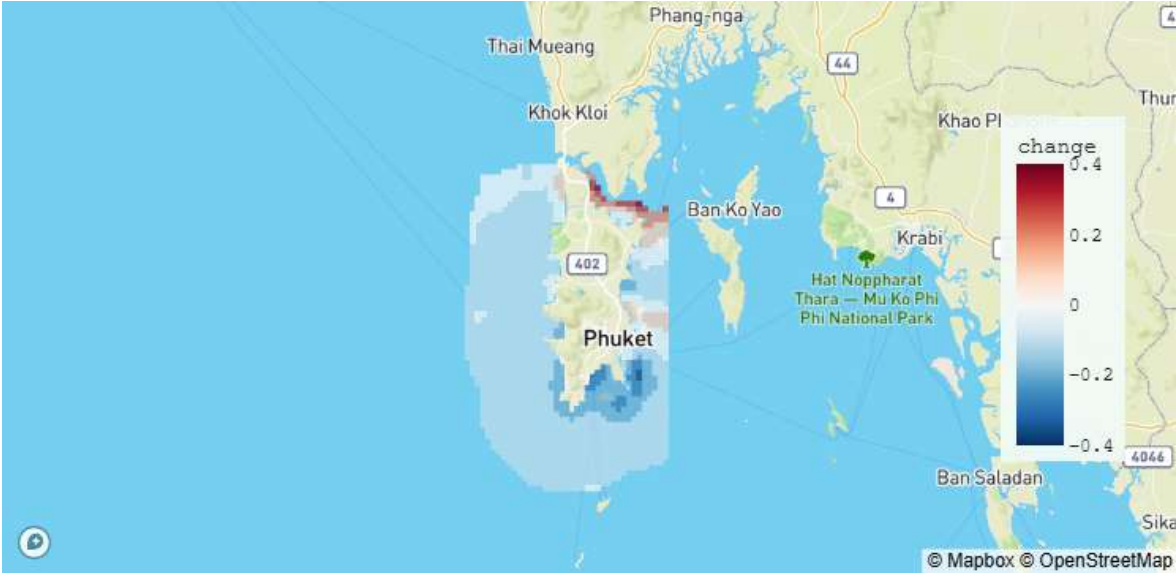
D7. Water Quality

The destination monitors water quality for drinking, recreational and ecological purposes using quality standards. The monitoring results are publicly available, and the destination has a system to respond in a timely manner to water quality issues.

Water quality in Thailand is regulated under the Enhancement and Conservation of the National Environmental Quality Act, B.E. 2535. The National Environmental Board has announced comprehensive standards on water quality for conservation and other uses.⁴⁵ The actual monitoring of water quality is a complex undertaking, and related agencies, including PCD, DMCR, and local authorities, do not have the capacity to periodically update and report the data. For example, the marine water quality in Phuket was only available on DMCR's website for the year 2017.⁴⁶

Figure 47 shows that the overall trend in suspended matter is improving based on global monitoring data from 2020 to 2024. 82% of the water bodies in and around Phuket saw improvements, and only 6% had an increase in suspended matter. However, the concentration of worsen areas in the north and east may reflect an expansion of tourism activities to new parts of the island that were not equipped with wastewater treatment facilities.

Figure 54. Changes in suspended matter in water, Phuket



⁴⁵ <https://www.pcd.go.th/laws/>

⁴⁶ <https://dmcrth.dmcr.go.th/attachment/nw/download.php>

The Phuket Branch of the Provincial Waterworks Authority (PWA) is responsible for the quality of piped water. PWA monitors the quality of produced water according to WHO guidelines and publishes a consumer confidence report (CCR) for each branch every year.⁴⁷ The 2023 CCR for Phuket showed that the quality of produced water was good all year round, although the water supply during the dried season might have a high concentration of manganese that required special treatment.

Hotels are monitoring the quality of water in their swimming pools. Some hotels that adhere to sustainability standards are moving away from bottled water, but serving water in plastic bottles in guest rooms and other functions remains a norm in the industry.

Table 43. D7 Water quality assessment results

D7 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Programme of water quality monitoring.	1	1.80
b	Existence of data and reports on water quality.	2	
c	Monitoring bathing water, with certification and identification of sites reaching set standards.	3	
d	Evidence of actions to improve water quality.	2	
e	Information for visitors on quality of local drinking water, to encourage use as alternative to bottled water.	1	

⁴⁷ <https://reg4.pwa.co.th/pwa4/index.php?mod=about&name=ccr>

D8. Wastewater

The destination has clear and enforced guidelines in place for the siting, maintenance and testing of discharge from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems. The destination ensures that wastes are properly treated and reused or released safely without adverse impacts on the local population and the environment.

Similar to water quality, wastewater treatment, and effluent standards are regulated under the Enhancement and Conservation of the National Environmental Quality Act, B.E. 2535. According to the Ministerial Regulations issued under Article 80 of the Act in 2012, hotels with more than 200 rooms were classified as point sources of pollution and had to install wastewater treatment systems. The revised regulations in 2021 have extended the provisions to smaller hotels with 60 rooms or fewer. They must also submit a monthly report on the operating conditions of the systems and the volume of wastewater treated to the Province Office of Natural Resources and Environment.

Phuket developed wastewater treatment facilities over the year but could not keep up with rapid urban expansion and a high volume of tourists. For example, the plant in Patong was opened in 1989 with a capacity of 2,250 m³ and later expanded to 39,000 m³. However, an interview with the Patong City Municipality revealed that about 20% of wastewater generators are not connected to the system.

Figure 55. A wastewater facility near Patong Beach



According to an interview with Dr. Surasee Kittimonthon, Secretary-General of the Office of National Water Resources (ONWR), during his inspection visit to Phuket in 2023, nearly 55,000 m³ of untreated

wastewater was discharged in Phuket every day.⁴⁸ It was estimated that wastewater generated from different sources amounted to 149,917 m³ per day, while Phuket had a combined capacity of only 94,961 m³.

This overshoot of wastewater has become visible and affected the tourism industry. During the monsoon season, the Patong City Municipality reported that sometimes the rainwater overran the wastewater systems and caused spilled over. However, more serious problems could be found in the dried season when wastewater was thicker, and the concentration of pollutants was higher. In February 2019, local news media reported that black wastewater was discharged to a canal near Bang Tao Beach for an extended period.⁴⁹ In February 2025, the same issue returned in the nearby Kamala beach.⁵⁰ In addition, plankton blooming could be found at some local hotspots in December and January.

Phuket plans to expand its wastewater treatment systems further. Under the ONWR project to study an integrated master plan for flood and drought mitigation, the capacity will be increased by 4.96 million m³. In addition, in 2024, the Phuket Province invited China Water Environment Group Limited (CWEG), a Chinese state-owned enterprise, to conduct a feasibility study for an investment to resolve wastewater problems in Karon, Kamala, Cherng Talay, Sakhu, and Srisoonthorn.⁵¹

Table 44. D8 Wastewater assessment results

D8 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Written guidelines and regulations on wastewater treatment.	2	1.25
b	System of enforcing guidelines amongst enterprises.	1	
c	Monitoring/testing of released wastewater.	1	
d	Provision of sustainable municipal water treatment systems, for use by the tourism sector, where practical and appropriate.	1	

⁴⁸ <https://www.thephuketnews.com/phuket-inability-to-treat-wastewater-confirmed-89478.php>

⁴⁹ <https://thethaiger.com/news/phuket/wastewater-from-bang-tao-canal-flowing-into-sea>

⁵⁰ <https://thai.news/news/thailand/phukets-kamala-beach-crisis-pollution-control-efforts-to-combat-black-wastewater>

⁵¹ <https://www.thephuketnews.com/china-state-enterprise-to-resolve-phuket-beach-wastewater-woes-94110.php>

D9. Solid Waste

The destination measures and reports on its generation of waste and sets targets for its reduction. It ensures solid waste is properly treated and diverted from landfill, with provision of a multiple-stream collection and recycling system which effectively separates waste by type. The destination encourages enterprises to avoid, reduce, reuse, and recycle solid waste, including food waste. Action is taken to eliminate or reduce single-use items, especially plastics. Any residual solid waste that is not reused or recycled is disposed of safely and sustainably.

The management of solid waste in Thailand is regulated under the Public Health Act, B.E. 2535 (the 3rd Amendment in 2017) and the Act on the Maintenance of the Cleanliness and Orderliness of the Country, B.E. 2535 (the 2nd Amendment in 2017). Under these two laws, the 17 municipalities and sub-district administrative organizations are responsible for the collection and disposal of solid waste, and they have to submit monthly reports to the Ministry of Interior (MOI)'s MorPhor system. Since 2018, MOI has also published an annual Clean Province Action Plan prescribing waste reduction targets and other KPIs, including separating food waste and recyclables. The Phuket Provincial Administrative Organization is also assigned under the action plan to coordinate with other local governments on the safe disposal of household hazardous waste. However, despite the policy prescriptions on recycling and designated color codes for waste separation, the operations on the ground focus mainly on the collection of mixed waste for disposal.

There used to be a strong national campaign to move away from single-use plastics (SUPs) before COVID-19, led by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE). Despite being initially well-received in tourist destinations like Phuket in early 2020, the campaign eventually died down. Many measures, including the ban on SUPs under the Plastic Waste Roadmap, prove ineffective. And vendors in Phuket continue to hand out products in SUPs to tourists. Although some establishments have reported sound waste reduction and recycling programs, there was a lack of coordinated efforts to address the problem. To address this gap, the Sustainable Tourism Development Foundation (STDF) started its pilot project to run a small-scale waste-to-energy system with food waste from tourism industries and communities in Phuket Old Town in November 2024.⁵²

Anti-littering and smoke-free campaigns are visible in Phuket. Tourists actively sign up as volunteers for weekly beach cleanups led by Trash Hero Patong⁵³ and other organizations. Hotels and resorts

⁵² <https://mgroonline.com/south/detail/9670000113690>

⁵³ <https://www.facebook.com/TrashHeroPatong/>

often support these voluntary actions in addition to their own initiatives. Public facilities and shopping malls are well equipped with bins for waste separation. However, garbage bins are missing or not properly placed in some locations, like local markets and the beachfront.

Figure 56. A waste container for mixed waste placed a local fish market



Figure 57. A waste container for mixed waste placed a local fish market



Phuket relies on incineration to reduce the volume of waste that must be landfilled. The plant operated by the Phuket City Municipality has a capacity of 700 tonnes per day, but it has been operated beyond capacity since the return of tourists after the pandemic. In 2024, around 1000-1100 tonnes of solid

waste were sent for disposal.⁵⁴ This caused the landfill capacity and conditions to dwindle rapidly, as hundreds of tonnes of untreated waste were directly landfilled. The installation of a new incinerator with a capacity of 500 tonnes is planned to be completed by 2027. Phuket is also in discussion with a private operator about the feasibility of landfill mining to reclaim the land and extend the lifespan of the site.

Table 45. D9 Solid waste assessment results

D9 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Waste monitoring programme, with results and targets published.	1	1.13
b	Coordinated campaign/advice/support with tourism enterprises on waste management, including food waste.	1	
c	Campaign to reduce/eliminate single use items, especially plastics.	1	
d	Waste management programme for public offices and facilities.	1	
e	Provision of a collection and recycling system, with at least four streams (i.e. organic, paper, metal, glass and plastic).	1	
f	Provision of sustainable system for disposal of residual waste.	1	
g	Campaign to eliminate dropping of litter, including by visitors, and to keep public spaces clean.	2	
h	Adequate bins for separated waste disposal.	1	

⁵⁴ <https://mgronline.com/south/detail/9670000083906>

D10. GHG Emissions and Climate Change Mitigation

The destination has targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and implements and reports on mitigation policies and actions. Enterprises are encouraged to measure, monitor, reduce or minimise, publicly report and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from all aspects of their operation (including from suppliers and service providers). Offsetting of any remaining emissions is encouraged.

Phuket has started working with DCCE and TGO on climate mitigation. Under the Phuket Old Town Carbon Neutrality 2030 initiative, the Big Data Institute sets up a system to monitor the traffic volume to establish a baseline for GHG emissions. There are several initiatives in Phuket's tourism sector aimed at climate mitigation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions:

- The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), in collaboration with other organizations, promotes carbon-neutral tourism in Phuket, including the "Zero Carbon" application for carbon footprint assessments and offsetting through carbon credits.
- The promotion of nature-friendly activities like kayaking and mangrove planting to offset carbon emissions.
- Many hotels and resorts are implementing measures to reduce GHG emissions through energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Table 46. D10 GHG emissions and climate change mitigation assessment results

D10 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Published target for percentage of emissions reduction by specified date.	3	1.20
b	Annual climate report, including monitoring and mitigation actions.	0	
c	Supported campaign or other engagement with tourism enterprises on reduction and mitigation of emissions.	1	
d	Action to reduce emissions from public sector operations.	1	
e	Information for enterprises and visitors on offsetting schemes that meet recognised standards.	1	

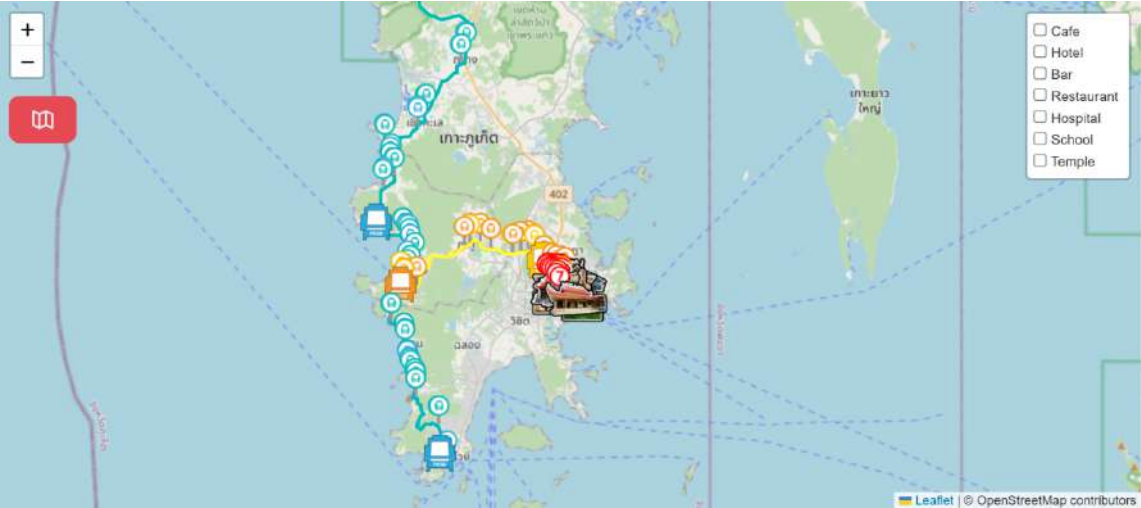
D11. Low-impact Transportation

The destination has targets to reduce transport emissions from travel to and within the destination. An increase in the use of sustainable, low-emissions vehicles and public transport and active travel (e.g., walking and cycling) is sought in order to reduce the contribution of tourism to air pollution, congestion and climate change.

Visitors can travel to Phuket by various means. The Phuket International Airport can accommodate 322 flights per day or 550,00 passengers. The Sarasin Bridge connects the island to Phang Nga Province on mainland Thailand. Around 20,000 vehicles cross the toll-free highway each day. Alternatively, they can travel by boat to one of the five marinas around Phuket. Although there is no direct train to Phuket, travelers can take a train to Surat Thani and change to other transportation.

Congestion on the island is a critical challenge, as the road infrastructure cannot keep up with the rising population of 200,000 cars and trucks and 350,000 motorcycles. Investment in public transportation is needed to lessen the problem. The Phuket City Development Co., Ltd. has obtained a license to operate smart electric buses along the west coast between the airport and Rawai Beach.⁵⁵ The ride costs 100 THB, and passengers can track the buses in real time. There is also a route between Patong and the downtown Phuket Bus Terminal.

Figure 58. A real-time tracking system for electric airport shuttles



Source: <https://phuketsmartbus.com/>

⁵⁵ <https://phuketsmartbus.com/>

In addition, Phuket has promoted new markets within walking distance of tourist attractions. The Sunday “Lard Yai Walking Street” has been expanded to cover more streets in the old town. E-bikes are also available in the neighborhoods. The Phuket City Municipality and the local community have been working with the Big Data Institute to quantify visitor and vehicle volumes and reduce transportation-related impacts as part of the Phuket Old Town Carbon Neutrality 2030 initiative.

Table 47. D11 Low-impact transportation assessment results

D11 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Investment in more sustainable transport infrastructure, including public transport and low emissions vehicles.	2	1.50
b	Information promoted to visitors on alternative transport options to and within the destination.	1	
c	Data on visitor use of alternative transport modes.	1	
d	Improvement and promotion of cycling and walking opportunities.	2	
e	Prioritization of visitor markets accessible by short and more sustainable transport options.	1	
f	Public sector and tourism enterprises prioritise low-impact transportation in their own operations.	2	

D12. Light and Noise Pollution

The destination has guidelines and regulations to minimize light and noise pollution. The destination encourages enterprises to follow these guidelines and regulations.

Light and noise pollution control is evident in Mai Khao, Northwest of Phuket. Mai Khao Beach is a known nesting site for sea turtles. Between nesting seasons (November-February), the authorities and conservation groups have been working with tourist establishments and local communities in lower beach activities at night, controlling noise pollution and changing from white spotlights to less intrusive red ones.⁵⁶ Organizations like the Mai Khao Marine Turtle Foundation, which is part of the Minor Hotel Group, are instrumental in awareness campaigns and communicating with tourists.

Light and noise pollution are controlled as a nuisance in other areas under the Public Health Act, B.E. 2535 (the 3rd Amendment in 2017). Local residents can report a case to local authorities, although the penalties are relatively small, with the maximum fine of 2000 THB. It is also worth noting that in December 2023, the Ministry of Interior issued ministerial regulations to extend the opening hours of the establishments under the Entertainment Place Act, B.E. 2509 (1966, with the 4th Amendments in 2003) in Phuket and four other tourist destinations from 2 AM to 4 PM to promote tourism and nightlife activities.⁵⁷

Table 48. D12 Light and noise pollution assessment results

D12 Indicators		Score / Average	
a	Guidelines on light and noise pollution – produced and promoted to tourism enterprises.	2	1.67
b	Identification and monitoring of potential sources of noise and light pollution related to tourism.	2	
c	Mechanisms to enable residents to report noise and light pollution, with follow-up action.	1	

⁵⁶ <https://themomentum.co/feature-maikhao-marineturtle-foundation/>

⁵⁷ <http://prachachat.net/general/news-1460869>

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview of Results

Phuket, recognized as a premier tourism destination in Thailand, has been working diligently towards sustainability through collaboration between the public and private sectors. Numerous effective practices have been implemented, including promoting and participating in sustainable hotel certification programs, managing solid waste, treating wastewater, and protecting wildlife such as gibbons, sea turtles, seagrasses, and dugongs. These initiatives have been adopted by both private and public entities.

However, many areas are identified as having risk or moderate risk across all pillars of sustainable management: socio-economic sustainability, cultural sustainability, and environmental sustainability. These areas require urgent and special attention and action to improve.

Phuket has many good tourism development and management plans, and the assessment results must be reflected in their implementation. To achieve this, the results of the GSTC Destination Assessment are anticipated to serve as a strategic foundation for fostering positive tourism impacts while proactively preventing any negative consequences. Encouraging better communication among stakeholders is essential to supporting tourism's sustainable development and management and ensuring alignment in implementing existing plans.

Recommended Priorities

A. Sustainable Management

Phuket has an excellent collaborative relationship among various stakeholders, and the private sector has initiated sustainability movements. However, urgent action is needed to enhance sustainability in the following areas.

- Monitoring system development
 - Identify specific indicators for assessing Phuket's social, economic, cultural, and environmental sustainability

- Establish a regular monitoring methodology and analysis of the changes over time, determining whether the trends are positive or negative
- Visitor Management
 - Conduct scientific research on visitor flow each season to manage crowding and ensure safe movement effectively
 - Understand and analyze visitor attitudes and behaviors through regular surveys, which will collect basic information about visitors to Phuket, including their demographic and socio-economic characteristics, motivations for visiting, satisfaction levels, activities undertaken, preferences, and concerns to determine corrective actions.
- Climate Action
 - Develop climate adaptation strategies for tourism facilities, operations, and tour products that reflect the risk and impact of climate change
- Resident Engagement
 - Establish and conduct regular collection and analysis of residents' attitudes, concerns, and expectations regarding tourism in Phuket, primarily focusing on the volume, activities, and types and levels of tourism development in Phuket.
- Planning regulations and development control
 - Review the legal system to legalize all tourism businesses, including short-term rental properties
 - Regulate unregistered accommodations so that Phuket can offer visitors safe and secure tourism facilities and attractions

B. Socio-Economic Sustainability

The socio-economic sustainability of Phuket can be evaluated more scientifically through economic impact assessments. Furthermore, additional support is necessary for local communities and entrepreneurs.

- Measurement of the economic contribution of tourism
 - Regularly collect and analyze monitoring information about economic benefits, including return on investment, direct and indirect employment effects, taxes generated from tourism businesses, and any increases in asset value (land and

infrastructure prices), using data collected directly and/or data from other public agencies

- In addition, evaluate indirect economic benefits through the development of support services and increased opportunities in other industries, ranging from food and agriculture to crafts and construction
- Securing a decent working environment and protecting human rights
 - Engage with tourism enterprises to create decent work and career opportunities for local communities. Regularly assess employment conditions to ensure a safe and secure working environment.
 - Enforce human rights laws by communicating these regulations to stakeholders and conducting regular monitoring. This will help establish an equal and non-discriminatory environment for both workers and visitors.
- Enhancement of accessibility
 - Identify accessible facilities and activities and share the information on the official website of either the Province or TAT
 - Improve accessibility for different groups in addition to wheelchair users

C. Cultural Sustainability

Phuket's cultural sustainability can be enhanced by better management of the factors below.

- Systematic protection of cultural assets by managing a list of all assets along with their vulnerability assessments and establishing a mechanism to reinvest tourism revenue for their protection
- Informing tourism enterprises and visitors about laws on cultural artefacts for awareness and compliance.
- Create and distribute distinct codes of conduct for visitors, residents, guides, and tourism businesses at cultural sites
- Offering experiences related to intangible heritage by involving local community members and providing information about them
- Restoration of traditional access to natural and cultural sites for disadvantaged community groups

D. Environmental Sustainability

Phuket's environmental sustainability faces significant risks, and most resources need better management to reduce their negative impacts.

- Managing tourist overshoot
 - Invest and upgrade key infrastructure, especially water supply, wastewater treatment, and waste disposal, to accommodate the rising demand in the tourism sector
 - Set the correct prices for environmental services as part of demand-side management and recover the full costs of such investment from the tourism sector
 - In addition, implement effective measures to control the number of tourists and their activities within the carrying capacity of the island
- Building momentum from sustainability initiatives
 - Recognize good environmental initiatives and best practices by hotels, tour operators, and attraction management and make them into norms through awards, sharing forums, and workshops
 - Work with authorities and environmental organizations to set industry standards on resource management and pollution control
 - In addition, support province-wide reporting initiatives to monitor and report on environmental sustainability transparently
- Financial mechanisms for natural conservation
 - Develop a scheme for visitors to support conservation efforts in Phuket
 - Support conservation projects to join certified carbon offset programs

ANNEX

A. Completed Assessment Matrix

Criteria	Indicators		Indicator score	Criterion score
A1 Destination management responsibility	a	Documentary evidence showing relevant make-up and responsibilities of the group.	2	1.80
	b	A financial plan and budget showing current and future funding sources	1	
	c	Evidence of links and engagement with other bodies	3	
	d	Records of permanent staff and contracted personnel, indicating relevant experience.	1	
	e	Management guidelines and processes, which demonstrate awareness and adherence to sustainability principles and transparency in operations and letting of contracts.	2	
A2 Destination management strategy and action plan	a	A published document setting out the current destination strategy and action.	3	3.00
	b	The strategy/plan clearly visible and available on- line.	3	
	c	Evidence of stakeholder consultation, meetings etc. in developing the plan.	3	
	d	Reference to sustainability principles and an assessment of assets, issues and risks, contained in the strategy and action plan.	3	
	e	Specific references in the strategy/action plan to wider sustainable development policy (including pursuit of the SDGs), and vice versa	3	
A3 Monitoring and reporting	a	Specific quantifiable socio-economic, cultural and environmental indicators and targets identified.	0	0.50
	b	Measurement against these indicators, with results recorded and publicised at least annually.	1	
	c	Written evidence of monitoring and reporting of actions and outcomes.	1	
	d	Previous reviews of monitoring system and schedule for future reviews.	0	
A4 Enterprise engagement and sustainability standards	a	Evidence of regular communication of sustainability issues to tourism-related businesses (Media, meetings, direct contact etc.).	2	2.00
	b	Sustainability support and advice to tourism- related business – available and promoted.	2	
	c	Number and percentage of businesses certified against tourism sustainability standards (and whether GSTC recognised/accredited), with targets for wider outreach.	2	
	d	Evidence of promotion of certification schemes.	2	
	e	List of tourism-related certified enterprises, kept up to date.	2	
A5 Resident engagement and feedback	a	Evidence of the promotion and facilitation of public participation in destination planning/management.	2	1.40
	b	Information on the type and level of such participation.	1	

	c	Surveys of residents and other systematic feedback mechanisms, covering tourism issues.	1	
	d	Evidence of action taken in response to residents' feedback.	1	
	e	Programme of information, education and training on tourism provided for residents.	2	
A6 Visitor engagement and feedback	a	Visitor surveys (and other feedback mechanisms) – carried out and reported.	1	0.50
	b	Surveys and feedback includes visitor reaction to sustainability issues.	1	
	c	Evidence of actions taken in response to visitor survey/feedback findings.	0	
	d	Examples of visitor information that covers sustainability issues and how to respond to them.	0	
A7 Promotion and information	a	Current information and promotional material with appropriate content.	3	2.00
	b	A process exists for checking the accuracy and appropriateness of destination promotion and information.	2	
	c	Evidence of consultation with local communities and environmental and cultural bodies on communications content and delivery.	1	
A8 Managing visitor volumes and activities	a	The destination management strategy and action plan addresses seasonality and spread of visitation.	2	1.40
	b	Variation in visitor volumes throughout the year is monitored, including in the most visited locations.	1	
	c	Impacts of visitor volumes and activities are identified through observation and community and stakeholder feedback	2	
	d	Actions taken to manage visitor flows and impacts.	0	
	e	Marketing strategy and selection of target markets takes account of visit patterns, the impact of activities and destination needs.	2	
A9 Planning regulations and development control	a	Specific policies/regulations/ guidelines which control development – documented and identified by title and date.	2	1.33
	b	Impact assessment requirements are set out, covering environmental, economic, and socio- cultural impacts, at sufficient scale to address long term issues for the destination.	1	
	c	Specific regulations on property rental and operation for tourism, with evidence of their application and enforcement.	1	
	d	Evidence of public participation in the development of policies/regulations/guidelines.	1	
	e	Evidence of consultation with, and consent from indigenous people or minority ethnic groups when tourism development has been proposed or has occurred in their territories.	2	
	f	Evidence of communication and enforcement of the policies/regulations/guidance, at planning, development and implementation stages	1	
	a	The destination management strategy and action plan identifies and addresses climate issues.	3	2.00

A10 Climate change adaptation	b	Regulations, guidelines and zoning for tourism development and activities accommodate the consequences of climate change.	2	2.75
	c	A climate risk assessment, covering current and future risks – undertaken and made publicly available.	3	
	d	Evidence of consideration of impact on, and contribution of, local ecosystems to climate change adaptation.	3	
	e	Information on climate change that has been made publicly available.	1	
A11 Risk and crisis management	a	A documented risk reduction, crisis management and emergency response plan for tourism in the destination.	3	2.75
	b	The plan recognises a wide range of risks, including natural disasters, terrorism, health, resource depletion, and others appropriate to the location.	2	
	c	Communication procedures identified for use during and after an emergency.	3	
	d	Programme for local delivery of information and training on risk and crisis management.	3	
B1 Measuring the economic contribution of tourism	a	Programme of economic data gathering.	2	1.33
	b	Annual reports on the direct and indirect economic contribution of tourism in the destination.	1	
	c	Data covering a range of measures of economic impact (e.g. volume, expenditure, employment, investment and spread of economic benefit in the destination).	1	
B2 Decent work and career opportunities	a	Provision of relevant skills training programmes/courses, available locally.	2	1.50
	b	Statements of commitment by tourism enterprises to the provision of decent work/ career opportunities.	1	
	c	Training and employment opportunities promoted to and taken up by local people, including women, young people, minorities and people with disabilities.	2	
	d	Channels for checking working conditions and receiving/handling grievances (e.g. involvement of labour unions).	1	
B3 Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade	a	Advice, finance or other support – available in the destination for tourism-related SMEs.	2	2.00
	b	Assistance with market access for local tourism- related SMEs.	2	
	c	Action to encourage and assist local tourism enterprises to purchase goods and services locally.	2	
	d	Initiatives to help local farmers, artisans and food producers to engage in the tourism value chain.	2	
	e	Local produce and crafts identified, promoted and available for sale to visitors in the destination.	2	
B4 Support for community	a	Support for local community and sustainability initiatives by local tourism enterprises is encouraged and facilitated.	3	2.00
	b	Schemes exist, and are promoted, for visitors to support local community and sustainability initiatives.	2	
	c	Volunteering and engagement with the community does not involve intrusion or exploitation.	1	

B5 Preventing exploitation and discrimination	a	Reference (title, date) to specific laws that pertain in the destination regarding human rights, exploitation, discrimination and harassment.	3	1.50
	b	Evidence of communication and enforcement of above laws and related good practice (including to tourism enterprises and visitors).	1	
	c	Risk and impact analysis regarding human rights, including human trafficking, modern slavery and child labour – conducted regularly.	1	
	d	Destination and key tourism players are signatories to the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism.	1	
B6 Property and user rights	a	Reference (title, date) to specific laws that pertain in the destination regarding property rights and acquisitions and user and access rights to resources.	3	2.00
	b	Reference in the above laws to communal and indigenous rights, public consultation and resettlement.	3	
	c	Evidence of enforcement of the above laws in the context of tourism development and activity.	1	
	d	Evidence of community consultation, consent and compensation.	1	
B7 Safety and security	a	Security and health services are well established and active in the destination.	3	2.00
	b	The needs of visitors are identified and addressed in the delivery of security and health services.	2	
	c	Tourism facilities are inspected for compliance with safety and hygiene standards.	1	
B8 Access for all	a	The existence of any regulations and standards regarding the accessibility of visitor sites, facilities and services.	3	1.00
	b	Consistent application of accessibility standards in public facilities.	2	
	c	Data on the extent/proportion of visitor sites and facilities that are accessible.	0	
	d	Evidence of programmes to improve access for people with a range of access needs.	1	
	e	Information on accessibility included in communications about the destination as a whole.	0	
	f	Details of accessibility included in visitor information about key sites.	0	
C1 Protection of cultural assets	a	Lists of cultural assets, including evaluation and indication of vulnerability.	1	1.00
	b	Programme of rehabilitation and conservation of assets.	1	
	c	Mechanisms for using income from tourism to support conservation of cultural assets.	1	
C2 Cultural artifacts	a	Reference to relevant laws relating to historical artefacts pertaining in the destination (title, date)	3	2.00
	b	Evidence of communication of relevant laws to tourism enterprises and visitors.	0	
	c	Evidence of enforcement of relevant laws.	3	
	a	Identification and listing of intangible cultural heritage	3	2.50

C3 Intangible heritage	b	Examples of celebration and visitor experiences of intangible cultural heritage (events, distinctive products etc.).	3	
	c	Evidence of involvement of local and indigenous communities in developing and delivering visitor experiences based on intangible cultural heritage.	3	
	d	Feedback from visitors and local communities on delivery of intangible heritage experiences.	1	
C4 Traditional access	a	Monitoring of accessibility to natural and cultural sites for the local community.	1	1.00
	b	Evidence of engagement with the local community regarding traditional access.	1	
	c	Specific action to protect and/or rehabilitate local community access.	1	
C5 Intellectual property	a	Reference to laws on intellectual property pertaining in the destination (title, date).	3	3.00
	b	Communication of intellectual property rights to tourism stakeholders.	3	
	c	Evidence that intellectual property rights are protected in the development of cultural experiences for visitors.	3	
C6 Visitor management at cultural sites	a	Monitoring of visitor flows and impact on cultural sites, with results shared across the destination.	0	0.20
	b	Evidence of action to manage tourism-related impacts in or around cultural sites.	0	
	c	Existence and distribution of published guidelines on visitor behaviour at sensitive sites and cultural events and periodic monitoring of compliance.	0	
	d	A code of practice for tour operators and tour guides and/or other engagement with them on visitor management at cultural sites.	0	
	e	Provision of training for guides.	1	
C7 Site interpretation	a	Provision of informative interpretative material on site and in formats that are accessible pre-arrival.	2	1.80
	b	Evidence that interpretative material has been well researched and is accurate.	3	
	c	Interpretation material that identifies the significance and sensitivity/fragility of sites.	1	
	d	Evidence of host community collaboration in preparation of relevant interpretative material.	1	
	e	Interpretative material available in relevant languages.	2	
D1 Protection of sensitive environments	a	List of natural heritage sites and assets, indicating type, conservation status and vulnerability.	3	1.17
	b	Programmes to conserve biodiversity and natural heritage.	2	
	c	Programmes to eradicate and control invasive species.	1	
	d	Action to identify, monitor and mitigate tourism impacts on biodiversity and natural heritage.	1	
	e	Mechanisms for using income from tourism to support conservation of natural assets.	0	
	f	Communications with visitors and enterprises on reducing spread of alien species.	0	
D2 Visitor management	a	Monitoring of visitor flows and impact on natural sites, with results shared across the destination.	1	1.33

at natural sites	b	Evidence of action to manage and mitigate tourism-related impacts in or around natural sites.	1	
	c	Existence and distribution of published guidelines on visitor behaviour at sensitive sites, and periodic monitoring of compliance.	2	
	d	A code of practice for tour operators and tour guides and/or other engagement with them on visitor management at natural sites.	1	
	e	Cooperation with local conservation bodies to identify environmental risks associated with tourism and measures to reduce them.	2	
	f	Provision of training for guides.	1	
D3 Wildlife interaction	a	Reference (title, date) to international, national and local laws that apply in the destination regarding interaction with wildlife.	3	1.67
	b	Endorsement of international standards for wildlife viewing for both marine and terrestrial species.	1	
	c	Distribution of a code of practice for wildlife interaction, including viewing, which reflects international standards.	1	
	d	System for checking compliance with regulations, and code of practice amongst tourism operations.	2	
	e	Actions to monitor wildlife wellbeing and minimize disturbance, in locations where interactions occur.	1	
	f	Provision of information to visitors on harmful wildlife interaction, such as touching and feeding.	2	
D4 Species exploitation and animal welfare	a	Reference (title, date) to specific international, national and local laws, standards and guidelines that apply in the destination regarding animal welfare and conservation of species.	3	1.71
	b	Notification of laws, standards and guidelines to tourism enterprises and guides.	2	
	c	A system for inspection of the conditions of captive wildlife and domestic animals, including their housing and handling.	1	
	d	Licensing and checking of qualifications of personnel responsible for captive wildlife.	1	
	e	Action to promote the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in the tourism sector and to ensure compliance with it.	3	
	f	Provision of information to visitors on avoiding trade in endangered species, e.g. in purchase of souvenirs derived from threatened species of wildlife notified by IUCN or CITES.	1	
	g	Enforcement of legislation to ensure that any hunting activity is part of a scientifically based, properly managed and strictly enforced approach to conservation.	1	
D5 Energy conservation	a	Energy consumption targets are publicised and promoted.	0	1.50
	b	Programme to increase energy efficiency – e.g. promoting and supporting insulation.	2	
	c	Investment in renewable energy and percent of total provision/consumption.	2	
	d	Support and incentives for energy monitoring and reduction by enterprises.	2	

D6 Water stewardship	a	Provision of guidance and support for monitoring and reduction of water usage by enterprises.	1	1.25
	b	Program to regularly assess water risk.	3	
	c	Setting, publication and enforcement of water stewardship goals, where water risk has been assessed as high.	NA	
	d	Monitoring and control of sources and volume of water used for tourism purposes and its effect on local communities and ecosystems. Promotion and checking of adherence to goals by tourism enterprises.	0	
	e	Visitor information on water risk and minimising water use.	1	
D7 Water quality	a	Programme of water quality monitoring.	1	1.80
	b	Existence of data and reports on water quality.	2	
	c	Monitoring bathing water, with certification and identification of sites reaching set standards.	3	
	d	Evidence of actions to improve water quality.	2	
	e	Information for visitors on quality of local drinking water, to encourage use as alternative to bottled water.	1	
D8 Wastewater	a	Written guidelines and regulations on wastewater treatment.	2	1.25
	b	System of enforcing guidelines amongst enterprises.	1	
	c	Monitoring/testing of released wastewater.	1	
	d	Provision of sustainable municipal water treatment systems, for use by the tourism sector, where practical and appropriate.	1	
D9 Solid waste	a	Waste monitoring programme, with results and targets published.	1	1.13
	b	Coordinated campaign/advice/support with tourism enterprises on waste management, including food waste.	1	
	c	Campaign to reduce/eliminate single use items, especially plastics.	1	
	d	Waste management programme for public offices and facilities.	1	
	e	Provision of a collection and recycling system, with at least four streams (i.e. organic, paper, metal, glass and plastic).	1	
	f	Provision of sustainable system for disposal of residual waste.	1	
	g	Campaign to eliminate dropping of litter, including by visitors, and to keep public spaces clean.	2	
	h	Adequate bins for separated waste disposal.	1	
D10 GHG emissions and climate change mitigation	a	Published target for percentage of emissions reduction by specified date.	3	1.20
	b	Annual climate report, including monitoring and mitigation actions.	0	
	c	Supported campaign or other engagement with tourism enterprises on reduction and mitigation of emissions.	1	
	d	Action to reduce emissions from public sector operations.	1	

	e	Information for enterprises and visitors on offsetting schemes that meet recognised standards.	1	
D11 Low-impact transportation	a	Investment in more sustainable transport infrastructure, including public transport and low emissions vehicles.	2	1.50
	b	Information promoted to visitors on alternative transport options to and within the destination	1	
	c	Data on visitor use of alternative transport modes.	1	
	d	Improvement and promotion of cycling and walking opportunities.	2	
	e	Prioritization of visitor markets accessible by short and more sustainable transport options.	1	
	f	Public sector and tourism enterprises prioritise low-impact transportation in their own operations.	2	
D12 Light and noise pollution	a	Guidelines on light and noise pollution – produced and promoted to tourism enterprises.	2	1.67
	b	Identification and monitoring of potential sources of noise and light pollution related to tourism.	2	
	c	Mechanisms to enable residents to report noise and light pollution, with follow-up action.	1	