

**COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM IN ARMENIA:
PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Research Report

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research paper for the degree of Masters of International Cooperation Policy at Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Ritsumeikan Asia-Pacific University submitted hereby, has not been submitted by me or anyone else for a degree at this or any other university. It is my own work and materials consulted have been properly acknowledged.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CBT	Community Based Tourism
PPP	Public and private sectors partnership
RA	Republic of Armenia
RA ME	Ministry of Economy of RA
RA NSS	National Statistical Service of RA
RA MTA	Ministry of Territorial Administration of RA
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization

ABSTRACT

Community Based Tourism (CBT) is a relatively new concept in the world tourism industry and quite a new one in Armenia. Local communities in the RA have very rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage and are endowed with natural resources which present great opportunities for CBT development. Still tourism is not developed in local communities of RA and the tourism businesses in local communities are owned mainly by outsiders, whereas local population in general stays deprived from benefits. The recommendations on raising of awareness, ensuring local participation, CBT planning, choosing best models of ownership and equitable benefit distribution suggested may set a basis for CBT framework development in RA, for the benefit of local communities.

Keywords – Tourism, Communities of RA, Community Based Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Armenia, my homeland, is a small, landlocked mountainous country with millennia old civilization, rich cultural heritage and warm hearted and hardworking people, who really deserve to fully benefit their hard work. Centuries through the history of humankind have sometimes been too harsh to the Armenian nation, one of the most ancient nations in the region, which has a state. Still, the creative nature of the Armenian people help the newly independent state, the 23 years old independent Republic of Armenia to fight its way to prosperity through partial blockade by two of its four neighbors and through the economic shortcomings caused by the latter.

It seems but natural, that for a country, which has absolutely no energy resources, nearly completely devastated industrial infrastructure left from the Soviet era, but rich cultural heritage, beautiful nature and welcoming people, tourism could be a major industry, earning people a deserved living.

It should have been due to the Armenian Government's acknowledgement of tourism as one of the most effective tools to stimulate national economic growth, that the Government put this industry under focus since the first decade of the formation of the newly independent republic.

In 1997 the Republic of Armenia became full member of UNWTO (in 1997 WTO), an effort to keep pace with the rapid developments in the global tourism market. In 2003 the National Assembly (Parliament) of Armenia adopted the Law of RA *On Tourism and Tourist Activities*, making the first steps in founding a legal framework to regulate tourism industry. Apart from providing industry specific definitions, allocating various responsibilities and functions of tourism administration and policymaking to respective governmental bodies and generally regulating relations in tourist activities the law declares tourism a priority industry.

During the following years the efforts of the Armenian Government to develop tourism were made in forms of elaboration and implementation of various projects as *Tsakhkadzor as a Tourism Center Corresponding to International Standards*, *Strategy of Development of Jermuk Spa Resort for 2008-2012*, *Tatev Tourism Center* and the annual tourism development action plans, just to name some examples.

All these efforts seem to have given desired results in terms of the sustained annual growth in incoming visits to the country and in tourism expenditure respectively, and in terms of development of tourism infrastructure, making tourism one of the most dynamically developing industries in the country.

Still, notwithstanding the two-digit annual growth rates in incoming visits and the rather rapid development of accommodation infrastructures and services, the local communities through the whole territory of the Republic seem to lag from the developments, simply because despite the effort of the Armenian Government to promote socio-economic development nationwide through tourism, the linkages between tourism and the social life in the local communities remain rather vague and too weak.

The present research aims at analyzing of the weak links and the gaps between tourism industry and the local communities and to suggest ways of making the best and most appropriate, most sustainable use of tourism for the benefit of local communities in Armenia.

Objectives of the research

The main objective of the research is to find the most appropriate scheme for establishment of a best suited CBT framework in the Republic of Armenia. The outcome of the research shall be comprehensive guidelines for organizing CBT in Armenia, including recommendations for legislative amendments and institutional and administrative rearrangements, which would deem necessary in order to foster the CBT development. The research is an attempt to find answers to the questions “What are the main problems (legislative, institutional) hindering establishment of an effective CBT framework in the Republic of Armenia and what the main solutions to these problems are?”

Significance of the research

The present research may be of valuable significance for the local communities in Armenia, which are interested in tourism development. The research can help solving key problems such as socio-economic development in rural areas, effective protection of cultural and natural heritage sites and tourism development in general.

As a result of the research, recommendations for establishing a sustainable CBT framework are made in Chapter 6.

Research methods

The methodology applied by the research has been chosen in order to:

- study theories in tourism policy and administration by reviewing respective literature,
- study relative legislation, policy, practices in economies successful in establishment of a well-planned and well working CBT by reviewing respective literature,
- study the main factors (legislation, institutional framework) that hinder development of CBT in Armenia,
- find the most appropriate and the best recommendations for establishing an effective CBT framework in Armenia.

The analysis of economic and social opportunities for local communities in Armenia is followed by thorough description of each issue that hinders local participation and /or social and economic benefit from tourism.

Primary and secondary data have been made wide use of for the purposes of the mentioned above analyses in the present research. Primary data were collected from relative public organizations and municipalities through online questionnaire sent via e-mail.

To assess the perception of tourism as a tool for socio-economic development among local communities, as well as to evaluate the capacities and willingness of the local communities to establish and run a community based tourism framework, a questionnaire (see Appendix) has been designed and through the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia has been disseminated to local communities throughout Armenia. The targeted respondents of the questionnaire were the local self-government bodies (municipalities) and NGOs present in the communities.

A thorough analysis of the answers collected provides the ground on which the best suitable models of CBT framework are built.

Secondary data were collected at the statistical yearbooks and bulletins at www.armstat.am, www.unwto.org, and other relevant websites and online databases, all cited and referred to appropriately.

CHAPTER 1: COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM

1.1 Definition of CBT

During my years-long employment at Tourism Department, Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia, where I had the pleasure and chance to meet world-class international tourism experts and professionals, as well as when consulting the reference literature for the present research I have come across with various definitions and perceptions of CBT.

Very often CBT is identified as a market segment, a theme of tourism. I have met many tourism professionals identifying CBT as rural tourism, or sometimes even as agrotourism. Asker notes, that internationally there are a number of different terms used for very similar activities; for example, in Latin America the term Rural Tourism is often used, alongside CBT. In parts of Asia, eco-tourism is often delivered via CBT. (Asker, Boronyak, Carrard & Paddon, 2010).

Similarly, Häusler and Strasdas categorize CBT as ecotourism, agrotourism, rural tourism, village-based tourism, ethnic or indigenous tourism, and cultural tourism in their manual (Häusler & Strasdas, 2003).

It is noteworthy, though, that CBT is not a segment in the diversified global tourism market (at least from the viewpoint and within the scope of the present research). Apparently, local communities can engage practically in any theme of tourism like ecotourism, agro-tourism, wine tourism, gourmet tourism, cultural tourism, heritage tourism, adventure tourism, health and wellness tourism, etc., depending on the resources they and their area can offer for tourism product development. Hence, this research does not focus on specific tourism theme or products, but rather the organizational framework of CBT. The definitions of CBT brought forth by different authors I referred to for the purposes of the research vary slightly, still the main idea remains the same – CBT is an organizational and regulatory framework rather than a theme of tourism or segment of tourism market. Below come definitions by these authors.

“CBT is a form of tourism in which a significant number of local people has substantial control over, and involvement in its development and management, The major proportion of the benefits remains within the local economy.” (Häusler & Strasdas, 2003).

Häusler and Strasdas thus put the main emphasis on participatory role of the local community in tourism development, management and also in distribution of the economic benefits from tourism, when defining CBT.

Asker in her definition of CBT broadens the idea of local participation to “ownership” as well as extends the value and significance of CBT beyond the economic aspect.

“The term Community Based Tourism emerged in the mid 1990s. CBT is generally small scale and involves interaction between visitor and host community, particularly suited to rural and regional areas. CBT is commonly understood to be managed and owned by the community, for the community. It is a form of ‘local’ tourism, favoring local service providers and suppliers and focused on interpreting and communicating the local culture and environment. It has been pursued and supported by communities, local government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). There are a range of actual legal forms of the ownership and management in which communities participate.” (Asker, Boronyak, Carrard & Paddon, 2010).

The above definitions brought about by different authors show clearly the main features of CBT – *Tourism in, for and by the local communities*.

In this respect a very short, simple, though interesting definition of CBT is found at www.communitybasedtourism.info by Instituto Oikos, an independent association promoting environmental conservation as tool of socio-economic development in local communities in Europe and in developing countries. According to the definition “*Community based tourism is tourism in which local residents (often rural, poor and economically marginalized) invite tourists to visit their communities with the provision of overnight accommodation.*” (<http://www.communitybasedtourism.info/en/community-based-tourism/community-based-tourism.asp>).

Summing up the ideas which have been used by different authors to define what CBT is, and also my own set of perceptions of what CBT is, how it should be planned, organized, managed and regulated in general, for the purposes of and within the scope of this research **CBT is the form of tourism which is organized, planned, developed and marketed with high level of direct participation of the local community(ies) of the area(s), where the main tourism products are developed and consumed and where the tourism services are provided, whereas significant part of the income generated from sales of such products and services remain in the given community(ies) in form of direct income and contributions to the community budget and/or community tourism fund.**

1.2 Why CBT

The increasing number of destinations in the whole world have opened up to, and invested in tourism, making tourism one of the key drivers of socio-economic development through revenues from exports (1.4 trillion USD or 6% of the world’s exports, (UNWTO, 2014), job creation (1 among 11 engaged in tourism, (UNWTO, 2014) and enterprises

and infrastructure development. At present tourism industry contributes 9% of the world GDP, including direct, indirect and induced impact (UNWTO, 2014). Even with occasional crises and shocks, international tourist arrivals show practically continuous growth (25 mln in 1950 to 278 mln in 1980, 528 mln in 1995, and 1087 mln. in 2013.) (UNWTO, 2014).

Even though during late 1970s there was some critique on tourism development because of the negative impacts tourism could cause to destinations (Scheyvens, 2002), it is obvious that continued diversification and expansion have turned tourism into one of the fastest-growing and largest economic sectors in the world.

Still, effective translation of these developments and growths into socio-economic benefits of local populations in and around tourism destinations mostly remain as an issue in national and global agendas. From the other hand during the recent decades new approaches to development emerged, which preferred bottom-up development to top-down development. From the viewpoint of these approaches development is rather about empowerment of communities through development of knowledge and skills and through development of resources. These neopopulist approaches pinpoint the importance of increased role of local communities in tourism development, rather than the tourism industry being market led, or controlled by centralized Governments (Scheyvens, 2002).

In this regard CBT might be a most effective framework not only to fairly share economic benefits of tourism with local communities, but also to contribute to social wellbeing of the latter in many ways. CBT has the potential to enhance social sustainability in local communities by empowering them to manage the resources they are endowed with, to create reasonable employment, and to contribute to capacity building and preservation of culture and nature. Benefits include also generations of income which the communities may engage, for example, in protecting their land from degradation and also in increasing their efforts in nature conservation, which would mean a more attractive destination for tourists, especially with regard to eco-tourism initiatives (Asker, Boronyak, Carrard & Paddon, 2010).

Thus, if well planned and managed, CBT can serve as a very effective tool for socio-economic development, creation of jobs and income, contribution to community funds for wellbeing and preservation of cultural and natural heritage in the local communities.

1.3 Defining a Best Practice in CBT

Here we need to define somehow what we could mean by “well planned and managed” when speaking about CBT. It should be generally understood that the same organizational and legislative patterns may not be equally effective for various countries with different forms of governments, with different legislation, different social conditions and norms, different culture and ethics.

Still, there should be several general criteria which could outline a best practice of CBT framework in terms of the organization, level and model of participation and impact, independent of the geographical location where it is organized, the number of the participants engaged, the form of tourism or the type of the services or products provided. The following paragraphs try to extract basic criteria for defining a best practice in CBT from the literature reviewed, the cases studied and the experience in tourism administration in Armenia.

When reviewing relevant literature in search for definitions of success in CBT, it became apparent that quite naturally the evaluation and general perception of success in CBT differ greatly among different authors. Some authors reviewed (Chok, Macbeth, Warren, 2007) attach utmost importance to economic success in CBT, stressing that tourism, wherever and by whoever run, is after all not merely a tool of providing social services to the poor communities but a commercial sector which should first of all be driven by business opportunities. Thus, some writers suggest that enterprises engaged in CBT, regardless of their ownership and scale, should first of all run as any other business and in most cases in a climate of harsh competition (Planeta and Epler Wood, 2005, Dixey, 2008).

In present research we will conditionally refer to this approach as “strictly business approach” to CBT. The strictly business approach prioritizes business performance of CBT enterprises over such benefits as improvement of public services in local communities, increase of self-confidence of local people, conservation of local traditions and culture and preservation of natural and cultural heritage, etc.

Followers of this approach consider prioritizing all the above mentioned factors over financial success would mean “a cart before the horse” (Epler Wood International, 2004), an approach which wouldn’t take into account the market trends and the business reality. It is unquestionable that tourism, particularly when observed from the service providers’ viewpoint, is a type of economic activity, apart from its cultural, recreational and educational aspects. Thus equally unquestionable should be the importance of successful business performance of the enterprises engaged in tourism activities in a local community as a precondition for a successful CBT.

Still, this research seeks to identify such models of CBT planning and organization, which would make better linkages and better interaction between local socio-economic reality with national tourism sector rather, than to describe successful business models for CBT enterprises. The stress in this research is put on the framework of tourism planning, management and operation of CBT in a way, which would benefit the local communities the profit from local tourism fairly, regardless of the amount of profits generated by tourism activities and other financial indicators of business performance.

Some authors reviewed (Dixey, 2005, Brennan and Allen, 2001) even consider that success in CBT should not be measured only by financial indicators such as investment return, cash inflow into the local or entrepreneur budgets, etc., but by many other social criteria as well.

A very good example of non-financial benefit to local community is cited by Harrison and Schipani (2007) in their research on CBT in Lao. They describe an ecotourism initiative in one of the local communities in Lao (community of Nam Ha), where one of the main objectives had been reduction of consumption of narcotics by local population. According to the research, apart from financial profits, the local people in the community had attached great significance to communication with foreign visitors to their community. This, in fact means empowerment of local communities and increase in self-confidence and dignity, which, in their role in social wellbeing, can compare with financial satisfaction. Hence, it should be imperative for a successful CBT to ensure fair participating opportunities for everybody in the community, in all the phases of CBT operations, starting from vision making throughout distribution of benefits and monitoring.

Another, still not less important benefit of successful CBT is the raise of awareness of local population in the importance of preservation of natural environment and conservation of their cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, for their socio-economic development.

The cognizance of the fact that well preserved natural environment and unique and authentic culture attract more visitors to the destination as well as provide more opportunities for tourism product development, reshape the local attitude towards natural and cultural environment and revalue them as sources of living. Thus, in order to be successful, CBT should consider environmental sustainability and cultural conservation.

As mentioned before, this research does not underestimate the importance of business performance of CBT enterprises for a successful CBT framework. Even if a CBT project seeks objectives wider than financial profit, those objectives are always planned to be achieved through business activities (Paredo and Chrisman, 2006). So it should be of utmost importance that CBT operates in a financially viable way.

Summing up all the factors discussed in the previous paragraphs, we can draw an outline of basic criteria according to which a CBT framework might be considered successful, a “best practice”.

Thus, a best practice of CBT framework should:

- be operationally and financially viable,
- be environmentally sustainable and promote protection of natural environment,
- encourage conservation of authentic cultural tangible and intangible heritage,
- have a comprehensive management scheme (planning, ownerships, operations, monitoring, etc.), backed duly by national legislation,
- provide fairly equal opportunities of participation for everyone in the community (in all the stages of operation; planning, development, management, distribution of profits, monitoring, etc.),
- ensure social benefits for the whole community (e.g. contribution to improvement of public services and infrastructure, education, etc.),

In forthcoming pages of this research we will study successful cases of establishment and operation of CBT frameworks in different destinations in the world. This will first of all help us find patterns which could be adapted and implemented in Armenian communities and secondly, understand which factors may potentially hinder establishment and operation of effective CBT frameworks in Armenia.

Before going on with CBT, in order to make more accurate estimations and more worthwhile conclusions, it would be useful to have a look into tourism industry in Armenia as well as into the system of territorial self-administration, that is administration system in local communities in the Republic of Armenia.

CHAPTER 2: TOURISM IN ARMENIA

2.1 Overview of tourism industry in Armenia

Tourism is one of the most dynamically developing economies in Armenia. It is declared a priority economy by the law of the Republic of Armenia *On Tourism and Tourism Activities*. The rapid development of this sphere of economy is indicated not only by the growth in number of international visits to the country (an average of 20% annually since 2000), but also by the dynamic development of the accommodation infrastructure and facilities and entertainment establishments. (RA ME, 2014)

Thus, if in 2000 Armenia welcomed only some 45 thousand international tourists, then in 2006 the number grew over 381 thousand and in 2013 reached 957 240. As for the hospitality infrastructure, during the last decade the number of accommodation establishments grew about 15 times (including B&B type establishments) providing some 12 times more hotel beds than in 2000. The overall contribution of tourism in Armenia is estimated 6-7% (RA ME, 2014).

Thanks to the rich historical, cultural and religious heritage of the Armenian nation, historical-cultural tourism predominates over the other forms of tourism in number of sites, attraction, products as well as in number of visitors and expenditures. Tourist sites and attractions of cultural, historical, religious and natural character are mainly spread all over the rural communities of the Republic of Armenia, whereas tourism businesses (accommodations, tour operators, services) are mostly centralized in Yerevan, the capital city. 128 out of total 132 Armenian tour operators are registered and operate their businesses in Yerevan and 82% of total hotel bed-places are also in Yerevan. (RA ME, 2014).

2.2 Armenia visitor profile

Until last year it was somehow difficult to find comprehensive statistics on internal (i.e. inbound and domestic) tourist behaviors (nationality, purpose of visit, length of stay, accommodation type, expenditure, etc.). The lack of comprehensive data was most probably the result of weak and inefficient framework of cooperation on data exchange between respective government organizations. This in its turn was a result of lack of legal basis necessary for efficient data exchange between the RA ME, RA NSS, National Security Service of RA and the State Migration Service of the Ministry of Territorial Administration of RA. Starting from 2006 the Government of the RA is making efforts to implement the Tourism Satellite Account, a standard statistical data collection and

processing system elaborated by UNWTO and implemented in several UNWTO member states. Tourism Satellite Account will allow the Armenian Government not only to evaluate economic impact of tourism more accurately but also to get a clearer visitor profile.

One of the first significant efforts of the Government of RA in this regard was the Armenian International Visitor Survey, carried out during 2006-2007 in all the checkpoints on national borders of Armenia (including checkpoints in Yerevan International Airport). This pilot project was made in cooperation with and with co-financing of USAID CAPS (Competitive Armenian Private Sector) project.

As the pilot project proved successful, in 2013 the second similar survey was carried out. The processed data collected during the second survey already are reflected in official statistics, in *Socio-economic State in the Republic of Armenia in January-December 2013* a periodical publication issued by NSS of RA.

The collected data provide information about geographical distribution of countries of residence of visitors, purpose of visit, means of transportation, means of trip organization, expenditure as per purpose of visit and as per means of trip organization.

Thus, according to the survey, in 2013 the top 10 markets for Armenian inbound tourism were the Russian Federation with 18.5% share in total number of visits, the USA – 13.1%, France -8.6%, the UK-7.6%, the Islamic Republic of Iran – 6.8%, Italy – 6.6, Germany – 5.5%, Georgia – 2.8%, the Ukraine – 1.8 and Canada – 1.3%. (NSS of RA, 2014).

57.0% of the visitors arrived to Armenia by road, 40.4% by air and only 2.6% arrived by train. This is because, due to decades - long blockade by neighboring Turkey and Azerbaijan, Armenia has railway communication only with Georgia, which still ends in Georgia due to political conflicts between Georgia and the Russian Federation. (NSS of RA, 2014)

A very important characteristics in the profile of incoming visitors to Armenia, which didn't change during past decades is that a bit more than half (51.2%) of tourists come to Armenia to visit their relatives and friends. In fact Armenian Diaspora is much more numerous than the population of the country itself. Different sources suggest that there are more than 8 million Armenians leaving outside the Republic of Armenia, whereas the

population of Armenia in 2013 was 3 million 150 thousand (NSS of RA, 2014, Ministry of Diaspora of RA, 2014). The Armenian Diaspora has always been a huge market with constant preferences for the Armenian tourism industry. It is, in fact, the most “loyal” segment of the incoming market, which is likely to visit the country regardless of the destination promotion efforts or the competitiveness of products and services.

The other biggest segments of incoming tourism market of Armenia in 2013 were leisure and recreation tourists (14.3%) and those who travelled for business (12.3%).

8.5% of the visitors came to the country for medical treatment purposes. (NSS of RA, 2014)

Leisure tourists, who organize their trips through tour operators spend 1331 USD during an average stay of 7 days, while those, who arrange their trips individually stay longer – an average of 11 days, but spend 904 USD per trip. Tourists visiting their friends and relatives prefer to organize their trips by themselves, stay longer (22 days in average) and spend even less (775 USD) per trip. The trip costs this group of visitors low, because they usually stay with their friends and relatives. This is more obvious when we look into the breakdown of tourist expenditure. Thus, according to the same survey, leisure and recreation tourists spend 323 USD on accommodation during their trip, whereas tourists visiting friends and relatives spend 56 US on average (note also the average length of stay).

Leisure tourists are also the top spenders on daily tours (34 USD during the trip) and on domestic transportation (43.5 USD during the trip). Whereas they are the second in food and drink expenditure (an average of 143 USD during the trip), top spenders in food and drink being sports and cultural events visitors (an average of 174.5 USD per trip) (NSS of RA, 2014).

2.3 State regulation in the field of tourism

Tourism industry in Armenia is regulated mainly by the Law of RA *On Tourism and Tourism Activities*, adopted in 2003. Before that, the Government of the newly independent Republic of Armenia had passed just one legal act related to tourism – the Concept Paper of Tourism Development (adopted by RA Government in 2000), which reflected the vision of the government on tourism development in the country rather than tried to regulate relations in the tourism industry.

The mentioned law, apart from defining the basic terms and notions used in tourism industry, stipulates the main rules of relations between the industry stakeholders, as well as their rights and responsibilities. It also specifies which authority is responsible for which actions in the process of elaboration and implementation of the state policy in the sphere of tourism.

Other legislation related to tourism industry include but are not limited to the *Tourism Development Concept* passed by the RA Government on 13 February 2008 with a Protocol Decree, the RA Government Decree No. 946-N *On Approving the Rules and Regulations for Providing Accommodation Services*, the RA Government Decree No. 945-N *On Approving the Rules and Regulations for Licensing of Tour Guides and Tour Escorts* and other decrees passed by the Government of the RA and other related legislation. We will have the opportunity for a profounder insight into the mentioned law and other related legislation on forthcoming pages, when analyzing the legal framework.

The Government of the RA also has been implementing various tourism development projects, Tsakhkadzor – a Tourism Center Responding to International Standards, Strategy of Development of Jermuk SPA Town for 2009-2012, Tatev Tourism Center, Project of Tourism Development in Goris Town, just to mention several major project.

Apart from the development projects for some specific area or resort, the Government also elaborates and implements the annual tourism development programs, which cover tourism initiatives (marketing and promotion, infrastructure development, product and services development) for tourism industry nationwide. These are annual, routine programs, the responsibility of elaboration and implementation of which is stipulated by the law *On Tourism and Tourism Activities*.

At present, the state authority in tourism industry is the Ministry of Economy of RA, which elaborates and implements the state policy in the sphere of tourism through its Department of Tourism. The major partners of the RA Government in implementing tourism related projects are the National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia, the Small and Medium Entrepreneurship Development National Center and several associations engaged in tourism industry.

CHAPTER 3. LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN ARMENIA

3.1 Demographics

There are around 1000 settlements in Armenia, which are unified in 926 communities (administrative units.) 48 of the communities are urban communities, that is separate towns or cities and 12 are the districts of Yerevan, the capital city. The capital city itself is not a community, but has a status of Marz (prefecture). The remaining 865 are rural communities. Total rural population of Armenia in 2011 was 1 mln 178 thousand, or 36% of the total population of the country. Around 324 thousand or 27.5% of the total rural population is within the age group of 20-34. The gender ratio is almost equal - 998 female/1000 male.

The 865 rural communities differ strongly in size and population, varying from small villages with less than 100 people of population to larger settlements with over 5000 population. (NSS of RA, 2013)

3.2 Industry and Agriculture

45.2% of overall national industry output comes from Yerevan, the capital city. No data is available on industry output structure from rural areas, still the other 54.8% of the industry output include also that from other urban areas in the country as well, but not only that from rural areas.

Gross agricultural output in 2012 was 795 billion Armenian drams (around 1.9 billion USD), 770.3 billion of which (97%) come from households, not commercial organizations. Thus agricultural output in 2012 as per capita in rural areas was around 1,500 USD. (NSS of RA, 2013)

3.3 Local Self-Government System in the Republic of Armenia

Government of the local communities in the Republic of Armenia is exercised in accordance with the Articles 104-110 of the Constitution of the RA, the law of the RA *On Local Self-government* and several related articles in various laws and legal acts. The system of local self-government itself was established in the RA right after the adoption of the Constitution of the RA in 5 June, 1995.

According to the Constitution of the RA and the law of RA *On Administrative-Territorial Division of the RA* Armenia is divided into 10 marzes (prefectures) and the capital city of Yerevan, which is accorded prefectural status. Marzes are divided into urban and rural

communities and Yerevan, the capital city, is divided into 12 administrative districts. Marzes differ significantly in their territories, number of communities, size of population, and level of socio-economic development.

Local self-government in Armenia is exercised only within community level. It is in fact a separate thread of the national government. The Constitution of the RA and the RA law *On Local Self-Government* declare, that the local self-government is the right and power of the local communities to resolve on their own responsibility issues of local significance aimed at the welfare of the local population.

Local self-government bodies consist of a Community Council and a Head of the Community, who are elected for 4 years by the local population on the basis of universal, equal, direct suffrage, in accordance with the procedures defined by the mentioned law. The number of members of the Community Council varies between 5 and 15 depending on the number of the local population. The powers of the local self-government bodies consist of community owned responsibilities and commitments which are generally funded by the local budget. The powers also include responsibilities which may be delegated to the community by the centralized Government of the RA. In the latter case these powers are funded by the state budget.

Since the establishment of the local self-government system in territorial administration in the RA the national government has been making continuous efforts to improve and optimize the system, at the same time trying to bring it to meet requirements in European legislation. In this respect relative legislation is revised in regular basis in order to reveal needs for reforms.

Thus, for example, the financial issues in local self-government system have been improved by respective amendments in the law of RA *On Budgetary System*. The mentioned law stipulates necessary procedures of budget formation, budget performance and supervision of community budget, the relation of responsibilities and budget, as well as types of revenues and expenditures in budget at different administrative levels.

Major reforms in the system were made on 27 November, 2005 with amendments in the constitution of the RA, and namely the aforementioned provision of funding of powers delegated to communities from state budget, as well as the right to definite the payments by communities for local taxes and duties, as well as delivered services (Article 106) and provision of right of local communities to merge with each other, split into separate communities or to establish intercommunity unions, as deemed by the interests of the local population (Article 110).

The described above changes made in the Constitution, were aimed at improvement of local self-government system and the correspondence of the relevant legislation to the

principles of *European Charter of Local Self-Government*. The adoption of some 18 legal acts (amendments and addenda) to edit the RA law *On Local Self-Government* during the 19-year-long experience in the system of local self-government in Armenia could stand for an evidence of the fact, that the system is sustainable, though its continuous development requires regular improvements and reforms in the related legislation, through amendments in laws and other legal acts.

Apart from ensuring continuous development and optimization of the legal framework of the self-government system, the national government of RA seems to attach also significance to capacity building among the bodies of self-government.

In this respect the Government of RA has taken several measures during the last decade. One of the key measures has been the establishment of a permanently operating training system for municipal servants, the administrative-clerical employees of municipalities (self-government bodies). Besides, at present there are 3 major public organizations operating in Armenia, which effectively implement the training projects for the staff of local self-governments. These organizations are the Communities Association of Armenia, Association of Community Finance Officers of Armenia and Association of Councilors of Armenia.

CHAPTER 4. CBT: MAIN ISSUES IN ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION

4.1 Local participation in CBT

One of the main issues in all phases of CBT framework is probably community participation. Local involvement in tourism has been attached importance ever since the concept of sustainable development emerged into tourism industry alongside other aspects of our life. Murphy (1985) highlighted the importance of local participation in tourism development, indicating that, as local population in destinations are making part of tourism products, their cooperation and willingness are key to success in tourism industry. The industries' potential can be destroyed if tourism development and planning are not backed by local capabilities and aspirations (Murphy, 1985).

However, quite naturally there is a wide variety of ways in which communities can involve in tourism activities. Even if there seems to be no argument on whether local population should or should not engage in tourism activities in their communities, there are wide discussions about how and to what extent they should be involved (Mowfort &

Munt, 1998). The literature reviewed and the cases studied show that the type and the level of participation of local population in CBT projects naturally differ significantly from project to project and from place to place.

Pretty (1995) notes that, the provision of local participation is nowadays incorporated in policies and strategies of many governments and NGOs, as it is commonly and generally regarded as a contributing factor for successful development projects.

In fact, all the organizations in democratic systems speak about the necessity of local participation in their strategies and this makes their projects look sound. In the reality, though, there are far more than just one type and one way of participation, and, hence, Mowfort and Munt (1998) find that the term “local participation” sometimes may be misinterpreted and misused. They suggest that it is just the way in which participation is conceptualized and exercised that draws extensive attention (Mowfort & Munt, 1998).

The different ways and levels in which local communities can involve in tourism activities are discussed by many authors. Häusler & Strasdas (2003), define the following levels of community or local population involvement in and participation to CBT projects:

1. Local population selling goods, food and handicrafts directly to visitors or through businesses. The authors find this type of participation one of the most beneficial for the local population, as it ensures a direct way of revenue distribution.
2. Privately owned tourism businesses, usually, as defined by the authors, owned by outsiders, which make use of community owned land, infrastructure and resources on concession, and pay concession fees or revenue shares to community budget. Here it would be useful to notice, though, that the ownership of enterprises, weather a local or an outsider, is not relevant and not important from the point of view of opportunities for social and economic benefits, unless it is owned not privately by an individual but by the community.
3. Individual players, who run their own small or medium sized tourism businesses informally in the sector. Here the authors suggest that success may vary and the main weakness has been the lack of necessary skills and lack of good understanding of nature of tourism industry.
4. Enterprises which are community owned and are run by the community. The authors find, that these kind of enterprises usually lack of good organization and

interesting incentives, but at the same time, they suggest, that the problem can be solved in course of time.

5. Joint ventures between private businesses and the community, including shared ownership. The authors include here also contractual relations between tour operators and guesthouses.

In fact, though, contractual cooperation between accommodation establishments and tour operators can hardly be classified as joint ventures and should be viewed and studied as another form of community participation. Besides, community involvement in CBT through contractual cooperation with tourism businesses is not limited just to cooperation of tour operators with accommodation establishments, but also with businesses, unions and households, which have the potential and willingness to provide services (catering, tours, performances, etc.) and offer products.

Another very important point in Häusler's and Strasdas' research (2003) is that when talking about local participation in CBT they focus on participation to and involvement in tourism business activities only, disregarding issues of local participation in policymaking and monitoring.

Other authors, Timothy (1999) for example, differentiate simply between participation in the process of decision making and participation in distribution of benefits from tourism. A more distinguished definition of local participation in development projects is offered by Pretty (1995) who in his research focused on agricultural sector. Later, though, France (1998) adapted Pretty's classification to describe types and forms of local participation in tourism projects. The first described type of local participation in the works of both authors is the extremely passive form of participation in which the local population has almost no voice in planning of projects, implementation of thereof and are also deprived of benefits.

Self-mobilization is the highest level of local community participation described in the works of the two authors. It is the level of participation where the communities have completely full control over processes of decision making, project implementation, monitoring and benefit distribution. Communities exercising this type of participation are highly independent on outer factors, at least in the phase of policymaking and policy implementation.

Whereas both authors tend to believe that this type of participation ensures sustainable development (Pretty, 1995, France, 1998) it should be obvious though that sustainability requires far more conditions and factors than merely high-level of local participation. In other words, high level of community participation is a key condition for sustainable CBT, but it is not enough in order to safeguard sustainability.

Tosun (2006) used these described typologies in order to develop a classification of levels of local participation in tourism projects. According to the typology developed by the author in a research about expected nature of community participation in tourism development there are three types of community participation – spontaneous, coercive and induced. Tosun refers to the type of participation where the ideas come and decisions are made locally, in a spontaneous way as to spontaneous participation. It is a bottom-up way of participation. The other two types described by the author in his work are top-down, as are not originated in the community but come from outside, coercive being the level where the local community has no control over development processes and induced type of participation being the level where the community has rather limited options of participation (Tosun, 2006)

Summing up the above described we can state that, even if there is some discord in the ways different authors classify and describe the types and levels of community participation, there seems to be no disagreement among them on the importance of community participation for sustainable CBT development. Local participation at any phase of a CBT project in a community, in fact, not only ensures reflection of local vision and community expectations in the project, not only brings direct and indirect benefits of the project to the community, but also contributes greatly to capacity building and self-content of local population, which is never less important for a successful and sustained CBT development.

4.2 Constraints to community participation in CBT

Though authors attach great importance to community participation, at the same time many of them (Timothy, 1999; Tosun, 2000; Blackstock, 2005; Koch, 1997; Scheyvens, 2002) highlight also the constraints to local participation.

Scheyvens (2002) highlights two reasons why often community participation and involvement in local CBT meet difficulties. The first reason, also quoted by Blackstock (2005), is the heterogeneity of local communities. As any other form of society, a

community is comprised of members of many different views of life, perceptions, beliefs, social conditions and aspirations. This generally results in different levels of willingness as well as in uneven opportunities for the members of the communities to get engaged in tourism activities in their community. The authors believe, that those members who are better endowed with resources seem more likely to engage in tourism activities and tourism development in their communities and may sometimes act not in the best interests of other members of the same community. Tosun (2006) in this regard raises the question about who, how many members of the community and to what extent should ideally get involved in CBT development. Asker *et. al.* (2010) suggest, that for a successful, effective and sustainable CBT all the members of a local community should have the opportunity to participate in making the decision on the level their community should involve in CBT, such a level at which they would feel comfortable and contented. This at present seems to be one of the most acceptable ways of eliminating the described constraint to local participation, through commonly reached consensus within the community.

The second constraint to local participation in CBT highlighted by Scheyvens is the lack of necessary information, power and resources which communities often face. This lack especially makes it difficult for the communities to effectively reach tourism markets. This shortage makes local communities dependent on other role players and stakeholders in tourism industry, thus making them and their participation vulnerable.

Koch (1997) describes the same constraint in his research on tourism ventures in communities of South Africa, where communities were often found not to have access to necessary resources and land because of ownership rights. The locals and their actions are described in this context to be limited by outer factors and by outsiders. It is noteworthy, that even if Koch identifies the main problem in the constraint as ownership by outsiders, very often though the resources may be not owned by outsiders, still the local community may have no access or limited access to them. This is especially the more or less common case with land and resources publicly owned by the national governments. Thus, within the scope of this current research it would be better to identify the constraint more generally, as limited or no access to land and resources in the community.

Tosun (2000) in his research on community participation limitations in developing countries applies a deeper analysis of constraints to participation, categorizing them into three groups. The limitations in the first category apply to operations. Here belong

centralization of tourism administration and also poor coordination due to fragmented tourism industry. In the case of centralized system of tourism administration the community faces very real difficulties in getting involved in tourism planning and operations in their community. In the second case theoretically there may be no limitations for community involvement, still the lack of necessary coordination involvement is practically impossible or ineffective.

The second category of limitations of community involvement to CBT development projects as defined by the author are the structural limitations. Here belong the attitude of those policymakers towards the locals, who most commonly prefer to neglect local participation in policy discussions and also the structural gap which hinders local involvement in policymaking discussions. The other structural constraints identified by Tosun (2000) are the legal frameworks which do not protect duly the rights of local population and lack of human, financial and material resources.

The third group of limitations as defined by Tosun in the same research are cultural limitations. These type of constraints relate to the low level of local awareness in the socio-cultural, socio-economic and environmental benefits CBT development. Under such conditions the rate of self-initiative of locals for involvement into tourism activities in their community is relatively low. The same phenomena is described by many authors reviewed. Timothy (1999), for example, in his research regarding community participation in Indonesia refers to the results of the survey, where a significant part of the local population found it unnecessary to participate in tourism activities in their communities.

Though different authors suggest different classifications of various types of constraints to community participation, most of them agree, that high level of local participation in tourism projects in local communities in all levels and phases of such is a must for a sustainable CBT development. Scheyvens (2002) thinks that in successful CBT ventures the local communities *“have a high level of control over the activities taking place in the community, and a significant share of the economic benefits accrue to them”*. Pretty (1995) and France (1998), too, regarded self-mobilization level as the most appropriate participation type for a sustained success.

Some authors (Goodwin, 2011) take a critical approach to this view, suggesting, that highest level of independence from outer factors is not a must for a successful CBT

projects, as many of the projects in local communities may be dependent on external funding and at the same time prove to be successful. Here, though, we may note that as we defined in Chapter 1 of this report, successful CBT should be financially and operationally viable and independent of external funding at least in the long-term perspectives. Financial dependence on donor agencies, even if with long lasting and guaranteed financing schemes, would never ensure a self-reliant, sustainable CBT operation. Mitchell and Muckosy (2008) in their research on CBT enterprises in Latin America show that a lot of projects fail in projected goals because of high costs and low revenues. This may be a typical case for any project which is not planned and implemented carefully, with due regard to financial and economic feasibility of the project. Covering high costs with donor funding and distributing low benefits in the community would not mean a sustainable and successful CBT framework. For a sustained success in CBT it should be imperative, that CBT projects, initially funded by external sources break-even in a certain mid-term period and start operating independently, with the highest level of local participation.

4.3 Regulatory and institutional framework

Another very important issue in organizing CBT is the necessary regulatory and institutional framework. There is no disagreement found among the cited authors (Ashley & Jones, 2001; Murphy, 2002; Murphy & Halstead, 2003; Epler Wood International, 2004; Trench, Murphy & Thaniseb, 2003) that success in CBT or failure in thereof highly depends on local and national business, economic and administrative regulations and the institutional framework around them.

It should be naturally understood, that even most promising projects and business models elaborated very carefully with regard to business feasibility and project sustainability are likely to fail unless the processes within the project, project funding, ownership and tenure relations, business activities, other interrelations between the stakeholders, including the described in above paragraphs issues in community participation and at last, but not least, revenue distribution are regulated effectively in harmony with community and national legal framework.

Authors reviewed find that the CBT success depends also on the degree to which these regulatory frameworks are supportive and encouraging for CBT projects and the enterprises acting within them (Dixey, 2005; Swarbrooke, 1999). The authors agree that

when regulating the CBT sector, the CBT cannot be regarded as isolated from other spheres and sectors but must be integrated into the mainstream of supportive policy in national, local and business levels, including appropriate assistance and grant funding (Ashley, Roe & Goodwin, 2001; Murphy & Halstead, 2003). It should be unquestionable, that CBT enterprises would be more successful in their projects in a favorable and attractive business regulatory climate.

Apart from legislative regulatory framework successful CBT and the businesses and structures acting in the CBT framework should be backed by a strong institutional structure both in the community level and the national level (Rozemeijer, 2001; Roe, Grieg-Gran & Schalken, 2001; Dixey, 2008) integrated with the community and the businesses active in the community. The strong institutional support is believed, first of all, to help the communities to better cope with business realities and market challenges as well as to build their business relations in a fairly competitive atmosphere.

A strong institutional framework here would mean effective public-private partnership mechanisms and absence of unnecessary bureaucracy on the national level as well as well-established organizational structures within and between communities with mutual interests in cooperation.

4.4 Community skills and capacity

Apart from factors described in the preceding paragraphs, success of CBT projects highly depends on existing skills and experiences in the local communities in project management, hospitality, business management, product development, marketing, etc.

Establishment of CBT may be quite a new experience in tourism for many communities and in such cases the community members would naturally need external support, such as capacity building for the community in general and destination and business managers in particular, raising of awareness among community members, development of skills through various trainings and mentoring (Moscardo, 2008; Stronza & Gordillo, 2008; Butler & Hinch, 2007). Such support will provide the communities setting up CBT frameworks with skills and knowledge to define and follow their own opportunities in CBT establishment and development and to enter into competition with the mainstream tourism industry (Dixey, 2008).

Some of the authors (Collins & Snel, 2008; Spenceley, 2002; Schipani, 2008) find that the type and the extent of expertise support is relevant to further success. They also suggest that the support must be tailored to every targeted audience separately; trainings in business management, financial management, service industry, marketing for businesses, raising of awareness, hospitality and language courses for community members, tourism administration for local governments, etc. Schipani (2008) suggests that ideally these kind of trainings should include real-life experiences and should take place in common, daily settings, through simulated tours, excursions, business negotiations and the like. Many of the authors (Swarbrooke, 1999; Moscardo, 2008; Dixey, 2005) find it essential also to raise awareness on tourism impacts, both positive and negative, among all community members. This is especially a very important knowledge the community members need in order to make most beneficial decisions when planning for a CBT framework in their community.

Whereas raising of awareness, capacity building and skills development is crucial for local communities in their CBT initiatives, Dixey (2005) finds that dependence on just one single mentor should be avoided. Naturally it is very important that expertise and advice come from different sources and from different angles of view, thus, ensuring exchange of diversified know-how, from which the community and separate interest groups would have the opportunity to choose the options fitting the reality in their community and their businesses best. In this regard, it is important also that the expertise and advice should not be imposed on the audience, but should be suggested as options and alternatives.

4.5 Ownership and control over resources

The reviewed literature show that there may exist many models of ownership and tenure within CBT frameworks, joint ventures, leasing of lands, strategic alliances, etc., and even if different authors give preference to different models for a successful CBT initiative, almost all of them reviewed (Novelli & Gebhardt, 2007; Goodwin & Santilli, 2009; Murphy, 2002; Halstead, 2003; Dixey, 2005, Rocharungsat, 2008; Roe, Grieg-Gran & Schalken, 2001) agree at least on one point that on the community level there should be clarity as to ownership, resources access, responsibilities, roles in management and the beneficiaries. This is of utmost importance for the community members, as it enables them to better understand and evaluate their own role, responsibilities, liabilities, inputs

and finally benefits in the CBT projects they initiate or join. Some of the authors (Dixey, 2009; Murphy & Halstead, 2003) suggest also that ownership models within CBT should be transparent and should promote entrepreneurship at their best, something which is also apparently essential for sustained success in any initiative.

As for the different ownership and control models, as we noted in previous paragraph, the preferences differ among authors. Halstead (2003), for example, suggests that the best model is where from the very initial phases of CBT projects the ownership rights and management tools pertain to the community just with some very little external intervention. This approach is most possibly based on the assumption that local empowerment within the community plays an essential role in further success of CBT projects. It would be hard to argue on this, still local empowerment is far not the only precondition for successful and sustainable CBT.

Recognizing the importance of local empowerment in project success, other authors (Li, 2006; Rozemeijer, 2001) advise against making community ownership and exclusive participation a must. Simpson (2008) and Telfer (2000) even suggest, that models of shared control and joint ownership may encourage and attract partners from public and private sectors, who otherwise might be unwilling to cooperate with a community. This cooperation and partnership undoubtedly would open new markets for the community with a lot of new opportunities. Parker & Khare (2005) even think that communities are more likely to succeed more in partnership with external partners than when taking up everything under their control. Mowforth & Munt (2009) agree with this approach, still they suggest that for sustainable results after all everything should remain under the final control of the community.

Diverse as models of ownership and control might be in CBT frameworks, the choice of a best suitable enterprise and resource ownership model for a community, as Simpson (2008), Roe, Grieg-Gran and Schalken (2001) precisely note, depends much on the local context and the priorities set by the community.

4.6 Benefit distribution

The distribution of benefits is another issue responsible for the success and sustained development of CBT initiatives. This is why the problem is discussed by all the authors researching the issues in CBT. Simpson (2008) finds that success in CBT depends to great

extent on the community's witnessing a long-term, sustainable increase in net benefits from the CBT initiative. Although different authors may suggest different ways to better distribute incomes and benefits from CBT through the community, there seems to be common agreement among the experts that these distribution should be as fair and as wide as possible. Rocharungsat (2008), Dixey (2009), Simpson (2008), Stronza and Gordillo (2008), just to mention some of the reviewed authors, suggest that the business plans of CBT enterprises must feature the planned flow of incomes and benefits and the equitable distribution of thereof through the community in a responsible way.

Here it is worth clarifying, that when speaking about benefits from CBT we don't mean only direct income from sales of products and services, but other economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits as well, in the wider meaning of the word. Authors reviewed differ in classifying benefits one would naturally expect from CBT projects, still all of them highlight also the importance of non-financial benefits. Thus, Brandon (1993), Goodwin (2006) and Kibicho (2008), for example, differentiate between collective and individual benefits from CBT, Townsend (2006) and Rocharungsat (2008) in economic, environmental and social benefits, Ashley, Roe, Goodwin (2001), Murphy and Halstead (2003) in cash and non-cash benefits and Rozemeijer (2001) refers to employment generation and direct income generation as to benefits from CBT in his research on CBT in Botswana. The difference of classification of benefit types most possibly depends on the approach and the angle from where the researcher views the research subject.

In fact, it is not so much essential how experts and authors prefer to classify expected benefits from CBT (and tourism in general), but how they find those benefits should be distributed. Experts suggest that the benefits, cash or non-cash, should be distributed through the whole community as wide as possible (Halstead, 2003; Zorn & Farthing, 2007; Townsend, 2006), should reach the beneficiaries as immediately as possible, regularly and in due amounts (Child, 1996; Murphy & Halstead, 2003). In addition to that, Hipwell (2007) highlights that the benefits should be tangible, i.e. every beneficiary should directly feel the experience from the benefit in his/her life. Another important point highlighted by authors is the clear demonstration to the community that the benefits are in fact distributed equitably. This may be reached through making contributions to a community fund (Dixey, 2008; Brandon, 1993) or just through various activities and direct and indirect employment (Schipani, 2008; Murphy, 2002; Trench, Murphy & Thaniseb, 2003).

When speaking about wide distribution of benefits from CBT through the community we here mean all of the community members, regardless of their participation to tourism activities or businesses. Hipwell (2007) thinks that the community should feel the improvement of life quality as universally as possible, otherwise those who feel themselves deprived of benefits may show unfriendliness and may bring forth conflicts in the overall CBT initiative context. Naturally this cannot suggest that every member of the community get the same share of the benefit, but rather that the benefit distribution, as discussed above, should be equitable, especially with regard to cash benefits. In other words, the community should ensure that everybody involved in CBT initiatives gets his/her fair share of benefit proportionate to his/her participation (financial means, liabilities, ownership, employment, etc.), whereas the whole community enjoys collective benefits from CBT.

Summing up this chapter, it would be useful to note, that the discussions in this chapter do not actually cover all the issues a community is expected to face when planning and operating CBT initiatives. In our discussions above we tried to cover in general all major issues which are specific to CBT frameworks, still there remain several other tourism industry specific issues which we will have the opportunity to discuss in the paragraphs coming, during our step-by-step analysis and recommendations for establishing a CBT framework in Armenia.

CHAPTER 5. SURVEY: EVALUATION OF TOURISM PLANNING CAPACITIES AND NEEDS ON COMMUNITY LEVEL IN RA

5.1 Survey overview

With the purpose of evaluating the capacities of local communities in tourism planning, the level of community awareness in economic and social benefits of tourism, in order to assess the preparedness and willingness of local communities to engage in or initiate a CBT project and to reveal the needs in capacity building and trainings as well as to find out institutional and regulatory constraints in initiating CBT projects in the communities of RA a survey has been carried out during this research. The survey was done through a questionnaire (see Appendix), which includes 2 fields for information about respondent, 10 questions and a field for remarks.

In late fall 2013 the questionnaire was sent via e-mail to RA MTA, for forwarding it to local communities through RA. The response rate, despite the follow-up efforts made including resending it for the second time in winter, remained at almost 0 level until the questionnaire was forwarded to local communities again in late March 2014, this time through RA ME. By the end of May 2014 39 responses have been collected, out of which only 27 responses are subject to consideration as 12 of the response sheets are incomplete and/or illegible.

The very low response rate, though not satisfying, was not unexpected either. Prioritization of “have to do” things over “can do” things is one of the widely used practices I have met among many employees (both public and private sectors) during my years’ long employment in the government of RA. Unfortunately, the responses, due to the low rate, may not be considered representative of the whole local self-government system of the RA, still they can contribute in making some generalized picture of local attitude towards and perception of tourism initiatives in local communities.

5.2 Methodology

As described above, the survey was made through a questionnaire which was fillable online. The link to the online questionnaire was sent to final responders through RA ME. For the convenience of the responders the questionnaires were composed of only 10 questions, which were deemed indispensable for the further research of the issues, i.e. the amount of questions were cut to the minimum possible. Apart from that, 4 of the questions have rating scales as their answer options, where the responders answer with a single tick. Other 4 questions also require ticks (1 of the questions with single option to choose and 3 questions with multiple choice options) for answering.

The remaining 2 questions had free text fields for answers, though for the purposes of easier processing of answers, the responders had been asked, instead of answering in textual description, to list words and word combinations separated by comas, as their answers.

The answers to the questions were made for the analysis of local authorities’ perceptions regarding tourism industry, their priorities, as well as their capacities rather, than for directly interpreting the result. Below we discuss each question separately, with the analysis of the answers collected.

5.3 Importance of tourism industry for the community

In the first question of the survey questionnaire responders were asked to evaluate the importance of tourism in their community in two ways: the importance actually attached to tourism and the importance they think should be attached to tourism. The responders had to choose the answer they thought right from a scale ranging from “Not important at all” value to “Tourism is a priority in our community” value. Of 27 responders 26 answered the first section of the question and 24 to the second section.

Table 1. Importance that a) is attached to tourism and b) should be attached to tourism in communities, as evaluated by responders

	Not important at all	Probably important	Important	Very important	Tourism is a priority in our community
The importance actually attached to tourism	1	10	11	4	0
The extend of importance which should be attached to tourism	0	4	9	10	1

As the table shows, where absolute numbers for responses are given, the majority of responders think, that tourism at present is very important (4), important (11) or probably important (10) for their communities. This is a very interesting observation, because 14 out of the 15 communities, who think that tourism is actually considered important or very important in their communities have no or in rare cases very vague, declarative mentions of the role of tourism industry in their community development projects. As for prefectural level development programs, in the 220-280 pages long mid-term programs of social-economic development of each Marz (prefecture) only 2-5 pages are dedicated to tourism industry (short analysis of tourism industry, programs, priorities, actions). Only 1 respondent found that tourism is not attached importance in their community, noting at the same time that tourism should be probably important.

Among the responders there was found a tendency to believe, though, that tourism in their respective communities should be paid more importance than is actually attached (15 responders). Still, 6 responders were contented with the importance tourism enjoyed in their communities, evaluating the importance they think should be attached to tourism on

the same level as they think at present is attached. Only one respondent thought, that tourism should be set as a priority in community projects.

Quite unexpectedly, there were 3 responders, who thought that tourism is attached more importance in their communities than should be attached (important vs. probably important). At least, this is the first occurring conclusion from rendering their answers to the question. Still, most probably the three responders either had not understood the question well enough to answer it appropriately or they didn't try to understand the question and answered it just because somebody asked to fill in and submit the questionnaire in due times.

Summing up the results of the analysis of answers to the question regarding importance attached to tourism industry in communities, we may state, that;

- to some extent, local authorities acknowledge that tourism should be important for their communities,
- there seems to be certain misinterpretation of what “prioritizing tourism industry (or any other industry)” or “attaching importance to tourism industry” would actually mean.
- prioritizing “have to do” things over “might be useful to do” things is widely practiced among local government officials and servants through RA.

5.4 Tourism benefits in local communities

In this section of the questionnaire the responders were provided a free text field and were asked to list all the benefits they think tourism generally can bring to their community. For easier data processing concerns, the responders were asked to list benefits in words and word combinations, but not describe in a text.

The responders were not provided a list of all possible benefits to choose from, because the question was designed in order to evaluate the awareness of local authorities about benefits of tourism rather, than to find out which benefits are regarded by local authorities.

Below come the benefits as listed by the responders, with indication of how many times they occur in responses. When translating the responses into English, best efforts have been made to keep them as close to the original as possible. Adjustments made during translation are shown in brackets. Nevertheless, a great number of notions, denoting the

same thing but expressed in other words have been shown under the same notion (“Jobs for the youth”, “New jobs”, “Jobs” – listed under “Job creation”, etc.).

Table 2. Benefits of tourism in local communities as listed by responders

Benefit	Occurrence in answers
Job creation	8
Development of infrastructure	8
Increase in incomes to community budget	6
Trade development	6
Cognitive (???)	5
Stimulation of community life	4
Intercultural relations	4
Improvement of social-economic conditions in the community	3
SME development	3
Promotion (of the community)	3
Economic (development)	2
Development of road infrastructure	2
Raise of attractiveness of the community for investors	2
Exploration and estimation of historical sites	2
Environmental development (conservation)	1
Preservation of (cultural) values	1
Restoration (of monuments)	1
Elimination of emigration	1
Hotel (business development)	1
Development of education	1
Development of ethics	1
(Development of) services	1
Stimulation of cultural life	1
Entertainment opportunities for youth	1

From the answers provided by the responders we obviously can observe, that in general tourism is perceived by local authorities as a driver for socio-economic development. No matter in what words the officials described their vision, they were saw tourism as a contributor to job creation, infrastructure development, community budget, trade, SME development and investment attraction.

Local authorities also are to some extent aware of socio-cultural impacts of tourism, finding that it contributes to stimulation of community life, intercultural relations, promotion of the community, exploration and estimation of historical sites, whereas environmental benefits are rather neglected.

In order to draw the complete image of local authorities' perception of tourism benefits, several expressions, listed by some responders as tourism benefits, but not included in the above table because of vague meaning and/or irrelevance, are worth mentioning here. They include "nightlife", "tourism attractions", "historical-cultural glimpse". Another unclear benefit indicated by responders was the "cognitive" benefit, which was listed in the above table because of popularity among the responders (occurred 5 times) and the possible relation to cultural education of the community.

Another interesting observation made during analysis of answers to this section of the questionnaire was that 4 responders skipped this section, leaving it blank, most possibly because they either couldn't list any tourism benefit or they just didn't feel like taking the time to.

To sum up analyzing the responses to this section of the questionnaire, we may state the following;

- Socio-economic benefits of tourism are the best acknowledged by the responders among other benefits
- Environmental protection, cultural preservation and raise of dignity among local population are not among the benefits responders would expect from tourism
- The responders in general guessed what benefits could tourism bring to their communities right when trying to answer the question, rather than had learnt or had heard about tourism benefits before (most responders made use of words of daily conversation use for describing the benefits)
- Some responders (5) couldn't state clearly (or couldn't state at all) what benefits tourism could bring to their communities.

5.5 Tourism activity in local communities

In this section the responders were asked to evaluate the tourism activity in their community by ticking on one of the values in a 5-level scale ranging from “No activity at all” (value 1) to “Highly active” (value 5).

Below are shown the results of the evaluation.

Table 3. Tourism activity in local communities as evaluated by responders

Value	1 (No activity at all)	2	3	4	5 (Highly active)
No. of ratings	15	5	4	2	0

The table shows that the majority of the responders find that there is no tourism activity (15) or very little (5) activity in their communities. Four responders evaluate tourism activity in their community as somehow active, and two responders believe that tourism is enough active in their communities. One responder skipped the evaluation, most possibly because of finding it difficult to evaluate tourism activity in their community.

The only observation that can be done with regard to this question is that most responders were found rather objective in their evaluation of tourism activity in their communities (as judged from the communities where the responses came). Only some responders who evaluated tourism as active (value 3) and one responder who evaluated it as enough active (value 4) seem to overestimate the activeness of tourism industry in their communities, as such ratings come from communities which are far not famous as tourism destinations in Armenia, even are not famous among Armenian tour operators.

5.6 Local involvement in tourism activities

In this section the responders were asked to evaluate the level of involvement of local population in tourism activities in their community on a 5-level scale ranging from “No involvement” (value 1) to “High level of involvement” (value 5).

The results of the evaluation are shown in the table below.

Table 4. Level of involvement of local communities in tourism activities as evaluated by responders

Value	1 (No involvement)	2	3	4	5 (High level of involvement)
No. of ratings	16	5	4	1	1

The vast majority of responders evaluated local involvement not to exist at all (16) or to exist on a very low level (5). Four responders think that local people are somehow involved in tourism activities in their communities, one responder thinks that the local population is well involved and another responder believes that the involvement is on highest possible level. It might be worth noting that the latter evaluation comes from the responder who indicated “nightlife”, “tourism attractions”, historical-cultural glimpse” as expected benefits from tourism.

When analyzing the results of involvement evaluation in line with the results of tourism activeness evaluation a noteworthy observation was made. Thus, 20 of the responders rated tourism activity and local involvement to the same level in the scale. This is quite natural in case of evaluating tourism activity and local participation to 0 level (value 1), meaning that there is no tourism activity at all in the community, hence there is no local involvement (13 cases). In 7 other cases the responders most apparently found relation of direct proportion between tourism activity and local participation.

Two of the responders rated local participation to a lower level than tourism activity in their communities, and three responders rated local involvement to higher level than tourism activeness in their communities. There is one case of rating local involvement as little involvement (value 2) in conditions of “No tourism activity at all” (value 1).

Summing up the results of local population involvement evaluation we may state that, even if responders generally showed objectiveness in evaluating the level of local participation, there were cases where possibly the level of local participation had been perceived as directly proportionate to the level of tourism activeness in the community.

5.7 Types of local participation in tourism businesses

In this section the responders were asked to choose from a provided list types of local participation in tourism businesses in their communities which they thought more realistic

for their community settings. Responders had the opportunity to choose multiple options. Four responders skipped the question, possibly because of finding no suitable answers.

Below table shows the types of local participation as found realistic by responders with indication of how many times they appear in the answers.

Table 5. Types of local participation in tourism businesses as found realistic by responders

Type of participation	Occurrence in answers
Companies jointly owned by tourism businesses and local people	10
Entrepreneurship by local people	7
Employment in local businesses owned by outsiders	6
Companies owned by groups of local people	2

As can be easily observed from the answers, joint ventures between local communities and tourism businesses are regarded as most expected, most realistic type of local participation in CBT. Other perspectives of local participation, as assessed by the responders are entrepreneurship by local people and employment in businesses owned by others.

Quite disappointingly, collective ownership of tourism initiatives by local people was found possible only by two responders. The sources of expressed distrust in collective ownership may mistakenly lie in associations of the latter with the practice of collective farms in not far past, the Soviet era, where collective ownership (more precisely – public ownership) was in fact the only encouraged type of local participation in agriculture (collective farms).

5.8 Local attitude towards tourists

In this section, the responders were asked to rate the attitude of local people towards tourists on a 5-value scale ranging from “Not friendly” (value 1) to “Highly friendly” (value 5). This was in fact one of the few sections to get answers from all the participants. Hospitality and warmth of the Armenian people (and several other nations in the Caucasus region) is well known not among locals but also beyond the boundaries of the region. Highlighting this trait of Armenian nation has for centuries been a means of showing national dignity for Armenian people. This is most probably the reason why none of the

responders skipped the section. This is also the reason, why 19 of the responders think that the local people are highly friendly to tourists (value 5), 6 responders find them somewhat very friendly (value 4) and the remaining 2 responders preferred to rate the friendliness of locals somewhat between “not friendly” and “highly friendly” (value 3).

An interesting observation made in this section is, high ratings of local friendliness were made also by responders who couldn't find tourism activities in their communities. In such cases evaluation was most possibly made on supposition.

5.9 Local self-government staff responsible for tourism

In this section the responders were asked to indicate how many people were responsible for tourism industry in their local self-government body. According to the responses collected among the staff of 25 out of 27 local self-government bodies who participated in the survey, there were no positions responsible for tourism industry. Only the staff of one of the local self-government bodies (a city municipality) had more than 1 positions responsible for tourism in the community and the remaining one rural community had 1 position responsible for tourism industry in the staff of community local self-government body.

The described situation, though not favorable for CBT development, is the actual picture in local self-government bodies of communities, which, even if acknowledging the importance of tourism for their communities, have no strategies or vision regarding to tourism industry in their community.

5.10 Programs of tourism development in local communities

In this section the responders were asked if there were any programs on tourism development in their local communities, including provisions in broader programs (with prefectural or national coverage) regarding their community. They were provided a complete list (see Table 6) of possible options to choose their answers from. Multiple choice was available.

Table 6. Types of local participation in tourism businesses as found realistic by responders

Program (provisions in program)	Occurrence in answers
No programs	23
Provisions on tourism development in the community in the social-economic development program of the Marz (prefecture)	3
Provisions on tourism development in the community in a broader program of tourism development covering areas beyond the community	2
Separate program on tourism development in the community	2

Thus, according to the answers provided by responders with regard to 23 communities among those who participated in the survey, there are neither tourism related programs nor provisions about tourism development in those communities in programs with a broader coverage.

From among the remaining four communities three have provisions on tourism development in their communities in the social-economic development program of the Marz, two have provisions on tourism development in the community in a broader program of tourism development covering areas beyond the community (national level, sectorial, etc.).

Two of the responders mentioned that there are separate programs of tourism development in their communities. As it was impossible to recall any tourism development programs for these two communities or find any information on such programs on the websites of the prefectural governments and of the MTA of RA, we may suppose that either the responders are mistaken in their responses or there are in fact tourism related programs which are still not published (drafts, minor programs on community level).

Apart from the described above observation, in the social-economic development program of Shirak Marz provisions were found (Table 5.2.3 and Table 5.2.4 of the Program of Social-economic Development of Shirak Marz of the RA for 2014-2017, approved by RA Government Decree No. 112-N, 6 February, 2014) regarding development of tourism in at least two of the communities, who during the survey indicated that there were no tourism development programs or provisions in other programs which could refer to their community.

This observation helps us understand, that generally there is some institutional gap in cooperation between centralized government bodies and local self-government bodies in the field of planning and policymaking, which hinders effective communication between them and results in unawareness. Another reason of the described unawareness is the generally practiced top-down scheme of tourism planning, where centralized government bodies plan tourism development in local communities very often without any involvement of the latter.

5.11 CBT planning

In this section the responders were asked to choose from the provided list (see Table 7) those who they think should participate in tourism planning for the communities. Multiple choice was available. All 27 responders answered this question.

Table 7. Participation to tourism planning for communities as deemed appropriate by responders.

Participant	Occurrence in answers
Staff of the local self-government body	18
Tourism businesses	18
RA Government (Ministry) staff	9
Local population	9
NGOs	6
Marz government staff	2

As we see from the results of collected responses local self-government bodies and tourism businesses are widely regarded as ones who should be responsible for tourism planning in local communities.

9 responders regard RA Government (respective Ministry) as main responsible for tourism planning in local communities and also 9 responders think that local people should be responsible for tourism planning in their communities. NGO's and Marz governments are less regarded as those who should be planning tourism in communities.

Currently, according to the legislation in action RA ME, as the state authorized governmental body, is responsible for tourism planning nationwide, as well as in local communities. Other responsible body is Marz governments, which are not bodies of local

self-government, but are representations of centralized government (RA Government) in prefectures.

The point that the 2/3 of the responders saw local self-government bodies as those who should be responsible for tourism planning on community level speaks about the desire of local self-government bodies to deeper engage in planning activities in their communities.

Regarding tourism businesses as ones who should be engaged in tourism planning in local communities can be explained by the widely practiced by the Government of RA recent trend of involving businesses representing this or that sector of industry in consultations on policymaking in different sectors of economy. Thus, the responders find that tourism businesses, as one of the main stakeholders of the industry should also be responsible for tourism planning.

Unfortunately only 1/3 of the responders could find local population's role important in tourism planning on community level. This, most probably, can be explained by the apparent misinterpretation of Article 2 of the Constitution of the RA, which states that *"The people exercise their power through free elections, referenda, as well as through state and local self-governing bodies and public officials as provided by the Constitution"* (Constitution of the RA, Article 2) and the generally practiced misbelief, that once elected, the local self-government body is the only medium of expressing local population's voice in policymaking.

5.12 Problems hindering tourism development in local communities

In this section the responders were provided a free text field to fill-in all the problems, they think, hindered tourism development in their communities. For easier data processing purposes the responders were asked to list the problems in words and word combinations, rather than describing situations in texts. The section was skipped by 6 responders.

The result collected with the number of occurrences in answers are shown in the table below. During translation the answers were kept as close to the original as possible and the adjustments made to answers are taken into brackets.

Table 8. Problems hindering tourism development in local communities as defined by responders.

Problems	Occurrence in answers
Poor condition of road infrastructure	10
Poor condition of tourism infrastructure and sites	7
Lack of tourism sites	7
Lack of high quality hotels and services	7
Lack of promotion	5
Limited community budget	4
Lack of skilled human resources	2
Lack of tourism experience	2
Visa requirements	2
Low awareness on destination among investors	1
Lack of awareness on tourism benefits among local population	1
Lack of travel agencies	1

The collected responses show that poor condition of road infrastructure, tourism infrastructure, tourism sites and lack of accommodation, tourism services and tourism sites rank highest among problems in tourism development as identified by the responders.

Other frequently discussed problems were lack of promotion and limited funds. Only two responders found that lack of skilled human resources and lack of tourism experience hinder tourism development in their communities and one responder found that low awareness of local population on tourism benefits is a problem for tourism development in their community.

5.13 Survey conclusions

Concluding the results of the survey we can state that, even though due to very low response rate the survey failed to provide a more or less complete picture nationwide, it helps us make several observations which are highly valuable for defining needs in capacity building in local self-government bodies, raising of tourism awareness among local population as well as in identifying regulatory and institutional constraints in tourism development in local communities of RA.

Thus, the following are the main observations made during analysis of survey result, which need highlighting for further suggestions:

- Even though local authorities acknowledge to certain extent that tourism should be important for their communities, there seems to be misinterpretation of what “prioritizing tourism industry” or “attaching importance to tourism industry” could actually mean,
- Collective ownership of tourism initiatives by local people is not regarded by local self-government bodies as an effective and prospective type of ownership and cooperation among the local population,
- Though the responders seemed to have guessed what benefits tourism could bring to their communities rather than had learnt or had heard about tourism benefits before, socio-economic benefits of tourism are the best acknowledged by the responders. Environmental protection, cultural preservation and raise of dignity among local population are not among the benefits responders would expect from tourism. For a significant part of the responders it was difficult to list any tourism benefit at all,
- Local self-government bodies find lack of infrastructures and tangible cultural assets to be the main problem hindering tourism development in their communities,
- Vast majority of local communities don’t have any tourism or related development projects. Many of those who in other development projects and programs have provisions regarding their community, are not aware of them,
- There is some institutional gap in cooperation between centralized government bodies and local self-government bodies in the field of planning and policymaking, which hinders effective communication between them and results in unawareness,
- Vast majority of local self-government bodies have no staff responsible for tourism development in the community,
- Prioritizing “have to do” things over “might be useful to do” things remains widely practiced among local government officials and servants in RA.

Another very important observation made throughout analysis of results of the survey was that, despite the expressed to certain degree distrust of some of the responders towards tourism in their communities, in general the responders from the local self-government bodies expressed hope or some even showed willingness to develop CBT in their communities. In the last section of the survey the responders had been provided a

free text field and were asked to make any remarks they would like to. The field was left blank by the majority of the responders and got only remarks by two of them. In this field one responder made suggestions on how to contribute to tourism development in their community which was basically about eliminating the constraints listed by him/her in the section about problems which hinder development of tourism. The other responder expressed the preparedness and the willingness of the local self-government body, the local population and “*the active youth club*” of the community to initiate tourism development in their community.

CHAPTER 6. CBT IN ARMENIA: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PLANNING, OPERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Assessment of tourism potential of the community

The first step in CBT planning should naturally be assessment of the potential of the community for tourism development. This is essential as all further processes and directions of planning depend highly on the potential and the resources the community has.

The tourism potential, subject to assessment in the initial level of CBT planning, includes a lot of factors and resources to take into consideration, and namely the capabilities of local population, their awareness on tourism impacts and benefits, prior experience in community development projects, existence of tourism and related projects related to the community, local people’s attitude towards potential tourism development in their community, the level of local population’s willingness and preparedness to engage in CBT initiative in their communities, financial resources, existing and potential sources of funding, tangible and intangible tourism resources (attractions, sites, interests, folk art, indigenous attractions, etc., including the conditions in which they are), human resources, access infrastructure, tourism infrastructure, public services, organizational resources (NGOs, unions, same interest groups) and capacities of local self-government bodies.

Here, as in all other phases of CBT planning and implementation, true participation of local population is of utmost importance. As we defined at the beginning of this research, CBT is tourism in, by and for local communities and as communities are different in their resources, social conditions, visions and aspirations, only direct participation of local people can ensure stipulation of the local vision in the CBT initiative and the local

aspirations on further involvement in such initiative, which in fact is the most essential prerequisite for sustainable CBT development on a long-term perspective.

Local participation may best be ensured, where possible, with facilitation by one or two independent experts, or at least by trained people, who, in this stage, would advise local people on industry specific, regulatory and other issues and also would help the local people to carry out assessments, tourism resources inventory, to draft organizational charts and to build a CBT development vision.

Participation of all other stakeholders from the initial phase of tourism assessment is also essential. In order to understand why participation of all stakeholders to tourism assessment is essential, it would be useful to understand who CBT stakeholders might be. Below chart includes all stakeholders as referred to by authors reviewed during this research.

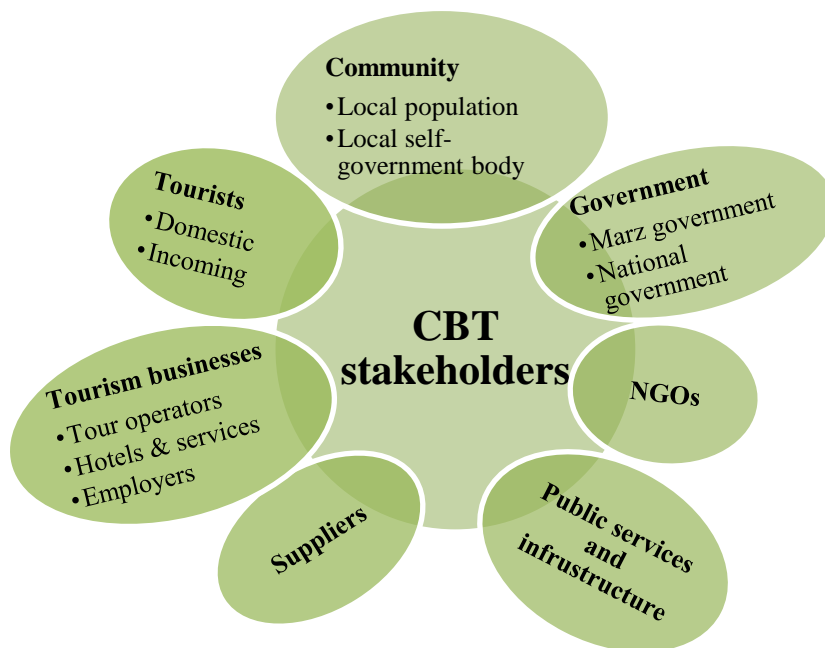
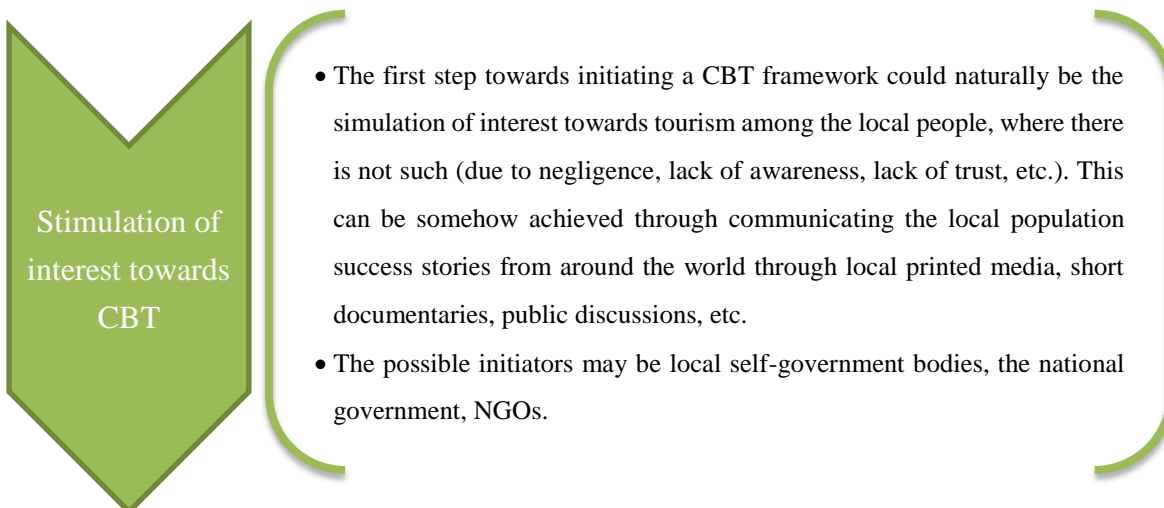



Figure 1. CBT stakeholders

Participation of all the stakeholders in tourism assessment will help the local community make more accurate assessment of the potential of CBT initiative (commitments of other stakeholders, funding opportunities, potentials for human resources development, etc.).

Consultations of other stakeholders can also help the local community in identifying their target markets, the products they can develop and other industry related expertise they need in order to clearly draw their vision in CBT initiative.

Communities are different in their structures, social and economic condition, tourism resources and opportunities, infrastructure development levels, ambitions of the local people and in much more things, hence nothing can be standard to the smallest details for all communities. Still there might be some recommendations for CBT initiatives (planning, organization, benefit distribution, monitoring, etc.) which can be common and useful for all communities of RA. Below is described a generalized model flow of processes of tourism assessment, which was generated during this research, after consulting the literature reviewed, the problems discussed as well as my experience in Armenian tourism industry.






Raising of awareness, initial training

- At this point, tourism experts or professionals, invited to the community by local self-government bodies, national government or NGOs, may prepare the local people for tourism assessment process, by delivering seminars on tourism impacts and benefits, issues in CBT organization, etc., in a very easily understandable way. Seminars should also provide development of skills and knowledge necessary for carrying out a tourism resources inventory. This is most probably the point where the local people (or part of it) make their decision on participation in CBT. The experts, at this stage, should also help people understand their possible roles and liabilities, apart from the expected benefits.
- The responsible here are the experts and inviting parties. The targeted audience is the local community (people and local self-government bodies)

Setting up necessary task groups and organizational framework

- After local people decide for themselves the type and level of their involvement into CBT initiative, small task groups may be set up, with the help of the invited experts and professionals. Each of these task groups may be responsible for some kind of activity in the process of tourism resources assessment (inventory of tourism resources, market analysis, research on funding opportunities, setting up of tailored organizational framework, etc.) Again, with the help of the experts these tasks groups may separately and collectively draw the plans of their further research and activities.
- The responsible here are the local population and experts.



Assessment of
tourism
potential

- At this stage, the set up groups, in accordance to the inventory and research plans designed by themselves, carry out tourism resources (tangible, intangible) inventory and research (existing nationwide or prefectural tourism development projects, tourism market, opportunities, constraints, sources of funding, regulatory and institutional frameworks, etc.), with regular consultations or where possible under supervision of the experts. Here the groups would need consultations of private sector, suppliers, public services and infrastructure stakeholders as well. This is the phase where all information necessary for making decisions on how and in what directions tourism may be developed in the community is gathered. All the information collected during assessment shall be used for CBT planning.
- The responsible here are the local population groups, experts and other stakeholders.

The result of the assessment may be a Tourism Potential Assessment Report or a CBT White Paper, featuring detailed inventory of all tourism resources (description, value, condition, ownership, opportunities and problems for commercialization, etc.), description of tourism and services infrastructure, description of human resources (availability, needs in trainings, etc.), analysis of the regulatory and institutional framework (effectiveness, constraints, etc.), funding opportunities, participation opportunities for locals, etc.

It is essential, that the local population get updated, on regular basis, of the flow of the whole assessment process and a common vision as to CBT initiative in the community is reached and featured in the Report/White Paper.

Figure 2. Model flow of tourism potential assessment for CBT

It would be useful to mention again, that as discussed in Chapter 4 (4.4) any expertise and any advice should not be imposed on community members, but should rather be suggested as options to choose.

6.2 Planning for CBT

When the tourism potential assessment is done and reported to the community and when a clear vision towards CBT in the community has been established, the community can proceed to the rather complicated process of CBT planning.

CBT planning naturally takes more time, more resources and requires more skills and knowledge, than tourism potential assessment. In RA outsourcing of tourism planning has been widely practiced, which ensures high level expertise throughout all the planning process, but to some certain extent lacks community participation in planning process. Still CBT, as tourism by and for the community, as discussed in Chapter 4 (4.1), should need greater community participation. In this regard, it is essential that the community members shall take real participation in tourism planning.

Planning can be carried out by the same groups, as in case of tourism potential assessment, under thorough supervision of tourism experts. Here, too, expertise should not be imposed, but rather should suggest the directions to consider, the ways of addressing different issues, etc. If well organized, the groups, already skilled during potentials assessment, with the help of tourism professionals may draw an operative, practicable, feasible CBT plan around the vision established by the community as the result of tourism potentials assessment and making wide use of all the information and know-how collected and gained during the assessment.

Naturally, CBT plans are different in their goals, objectives, strategies, action plans, coverage and time-frames, still there should be general criteria, which may be common for all CBT plans. Below are described all the criteria which, in the result of this research have been highlighted as essentials for a CBT plan in communities in RA.

A CBT plan should:

- be specific in vision, goals, objectives and strategies
- be based on community capacities, ambitions and commitments,
- clearly identify all the resources planned to engage in CBT and the way they are going to be engaged (commercialization, product development, etc.)
- feature a detailed marketing analysis, define markets
- identify main products and product development requirements standard for the community,

- address issues of ownership and land and resources use in compliance with legislation in action
- clearly identify relations between all stakeholders – public and private sector, identify organizational forms of destination management
- feature a monitoring scheme
- address the issues of benefit distribution
- feature a detailed action plan, identifying the sources of funding, responsible parties and timeframes for each action.

If designed by the community, CBT plans can be more operational, as they will be based on community capacities, perceptions, ambitions and commitments.

6.3 Sourcing funds

Sourcing necessary funds seems to be one of the main issues in CBT projects. Local communities, most often with limited financial resources naturally find difficulties in owning tourism initiatives and the latter are owned by those, most often outsiders, who are endowed with necessary resources. Limited community budgets are often identified by community members and local self-government bodies as the main constraint to any development initiative in local communities, still there may be found a great variety of other funding sources for CBT initiatives.

Identifying appropriate sources for CBT initiative funding, as described earlier in this chapter (6.1) should be carried out by local people as early as during community tourism potential assessment in the result of discussions and consultations with all possible stakeholders. This will help build a more feasible and economically more sustainable CBT initiative, best fitting community capacities.

Funding sources and types may be various – subsidies from the state budget, investment from community budget, venture capitals, local savings, loans, grants and public fundraising. Still choosing appropriate source and type of financing of the CBT project should remain solely the community's responsibility and commitment. In this regard, it might be quite useful for local communities to set up local committees, which would discuss, consider and approve funding sources for CBT projects in the community.

Subsidies from state budget, tax initiatives and grants (external and state) may be quite useful especially for start-up initiatives, still for a well composed sense of community

ownership it is essential to engage also community budget, community savings and loans into CBT initiatives. In this regard, soft loans especially are best suited for CBT projects in RA, as tourism is rather highly seasonal in Armenia and the communities would naturally need flexible terms suiting the rather changeable during the year financial situations of their CBT ventures.

Engagement of rather limited means of community budget into CBT projects may be done through really prioritizing tourism over other sectors on community level, with the general consent among local population. This, as discussed several times during this research, would greatly contribute to sense of ownership of the CBT venture among local people, which is crucial in terms of sustainability of CBT projects, as well as would raise significantly local dignity.

It should be essential also in the start-up phase to engage the financial returns from CBT initiative back into the initiative, as additional source of funding. This would mean low or no profit in short-term perspective, still on long-term perspective this is likely to provide financial independence for the community and economic sustainability for the CBT project.

To sum up this part of the chapter, we may state once more, that funding sources and types for CBT initiatives may vary greatly, still, financial planning of CBT projects, though carried out under supervision of tourism professionals, should remain solely the responsibility and commitment of the local community and never be imposed over them.

6.4 Product development and marketing

Product development may apparently be the most fun part in CBT planning and operations. The process is likely to engage a lot of information about tourism resources and potentials and a lot of creative thinking. Product development can be carried out by community members with the help of tourism experts and private sector stakeholders.

For a best fit between demand and supply in CBT initiatives, it should be of utmost importance for communities in RA to conduct a market analysis before proceeding to product development. At this point, official tourism statistics, results of surveys carried out by NGOs, surveying tourism businesses and visitor feedback might provide enormous useful information, necessary to tailor products which would be demanded by the visitors.

As incoming visitors of Armenian origin (from Armenian Diaspora) make a big share in incoming market, cultural and folklore products developed and marketed under the name, let's say, "Back to Your Roots" for example, might enjoy great demand.

The inventory of tourism resources carried out during tourism potential assessment might serve as the main stock from where the community may select the resources for designing attractive tourism products.

Essentials points to consider during product development are the condition and the potential for commercialization of the resources. It should be naturally expected that many resources would need improvements and modifications in order to suit commercialization as tourism products. This improvements and modifications should be carried out in compliance with legislation in action in RA and with thorough expertise in order to avoid damage to the tangible and intangible cultural resources and natural resources. Here national government and NGOs may assist local communities in their efforts to make tourism products meet at least the minimum required standards.

It is also essential, that with the help of tourism professionals and tourism business stakeholders the local people exercise creative thinking in development. Tourism expertise might help the local people consider such resources in the process of product development which normally are disregarded throughout communities of RA as tourism assets. Here belong folk art, local cuisine, traditional food, dairy products and drink processing, landscape, biodiversity, rural lifestyle, agriculture, and the like.

For successful marketing purposes it would be quite useful for the communities to define a brand product for their community and develop the products around the community brand. This is likely to help the communities to better position themselves in CBT frameworks through RA. National government, NGOs and tourism businesses may help local communities by sharing their marketing efforts.

6.5 Benefit distribution and monitoring

For success of CBT initiatives, as discussed in chapter 4 (4.6) of utmost importance is equitable distribution of benefits. If the equity of socio-economic benefits of CBT is not managed well, it is more likely to generate discontent and conflicts in a community.

Hence, it is of key importance to consider the issue while planning for a CBT initiative. In fact, a good CBT plan should feature a detailed description of benefit distribution, which should be equitable and should consider every member of the community proportionate to their involvement in CBT initiative.

Equity in benefiting opportunities should also be in focus of CBT plans, providing equal opportunities for same interest groups and members providing same products and services.

It is also essential, that members, which do not participate in business initiatives also benefit from the CBT initiatives in their community in forms of improved public services, infrastructure and community special funds. Special funds (education fund, social welfare fund, children's fund, etc.) are one of the best ways to share benefits among all community members, irrespective of their form and level of participation in CBT.

Opportunities equity and equitable benefit distribution should be backed by a well-established, transparent monitoring mechanism, duly described and regulated by the community CBT development plan, which would enable opportunities for participation in monitoring processes for every member of the community.

6.6 Sustainability of CBT initiatives

Sustainability of CBT initiatives is another very important issue which should be addressed properly in any CBT plan and later should be maintained through continuous monitoring and corrections where needed. Where tourism is under consideration, sustainability is multidimensional and the sustainability of each dimension is greatly dependent on the sustainability of other dimensions.

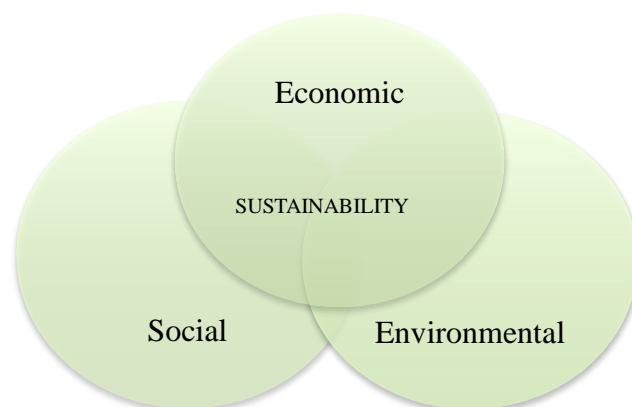


Figure 3. Three dimensions of sustainability

To explain it on an example, let's take just oil extracting industry, where the economic viability and sustainability will not be much affected by environmental degradation or failures in social sustainability.

Whereas CBT initiative is more likely to fail in economic sustainability, if environmental sustainability is disregarded and the natural resources are exhausted due to uncontrolled usage, or the cultural resources are modified and adjusted to the seemingly expected demand of the visitors, thus losing their authenticity and attractiveness.

Hence issues of sustainability of the CBT initiatives in all its dimensions should be addressed in every detail with regulations where applicable and were necessary, in correspondence with legislation in action in RA. Here belong standards for product development, carrying capacity norms for natural and cultural sites, social responsibility actions, etc. For sustained long-term results sustainability measures should be continuously monitored and corrections and preventive actions should be taken.

CONCLUSIONS

Summing up the research results we may conclude first of all, that local communities in RA have enormous potential of unused resources and opportunities for CBT development, whereas most community members, and especially the youth, prefer migrating in search for living.

Various factors have been discussed through the research, why this opportunities and resources are not made use of for the purposes of an improved community life and economic benefits.

One of the main factors, as discussed, is the unawareness of local communities, the unawareness of tourism benefits, the unawareness of tourism resources around them and of the opportunities they contain, the unawareness of the ways of commercializing of seemingly non-commercial resources and the nearly total distrust towards CBT caused by the described unawareness. Teach local communities what tourism is and they may become interested in it. Train them with necessary knowledge and skills and they will be able to develop and sell unique and authentic products and services.

- 1. Raising of awareness and capacity building on community level are the first issues which predetermine the further success of establishment of a CBT framework in RA and hence the first issues to be addressed by the Government of RA, local self-government bodies and NGOs.**

Another very important issue well discussed in the research was community participation. It was agreed, that as a community owned initiative CBT should engage high level of local participation in all phases of CBT planning and development. Local people should have the opportunity to and shall bear the responsibility of deciding and planning the CBT which they deem best fitting their perceptions, ambitions, capacities and vision, whereas in RA tourism planning is carried out by the Government of RA through the state authorized body (RA ME) and through Marz governments, with consultations with local authorities.

- 2. Local communities should get engaged in tourism planning in their communities on highest possible level and should have decision making role when it comes to CBT development in their community. Every member of the community should have the right to decide the level of his/her participation to CBT initiative.**

Ownership and resources control in CBT initiatives was another issue discussed in this research. Where different experts and authors consider various types of ownership, local communities in Armenia most often consider private entrepreneurship by locals and joint ventures between locals and outsiders as main possible types of ownership in CBT. Whereas, as CBT is a community owned initiative, collective ownership should also be considered as a suitable form of ownership in CBT initiatives.

- 3. Collective ownership in CBT initiatives should be encouraged, at the same time ensuring equal opportunities for any businesses in the CBT framework and also ensuring the rights of community members to decide the type and level of their engagement in businesses by themselves.**

Another issue often discussed in the research was the problem of equitable distribution of benefit. Though benefits are more often understood as financial benefits, we discussed that CBT has the potential to bring to the community many other benefits beyond financial income. Here belong improved public services, infrastructure, conservation of cultural heritage, preservation of nature, etc. We also discussed that for a sustained success in CBT

initiatives, the benefits should be distributed through the community as equitable and as widely as possible.

- 4. Equitable distribution of CBT benefits is crucial for further success and sustainability of any CBT initiative. The management system of CBT initiative should ensure equitable distribution of financial benefits among all participating members proportionate to their participation as well as of social, cultural and environmental benefits among all the members of the community.**

Effective regulatory and institutional frameworks were another issue discussed. We agreed that CBT initiatives should be backed by a supportive regulatory and institutional frameworks, which would facilitate relations between different stakeholders in CBT, both private sector and public sector.

- 5. Effective cooperation between all the stakeholders is essential for CBT success. Where this cooperation may already be based on good will and rules of ethics, nevertheless sound regulatory and institutional frameworks should clearly support effective cooperation and PPP.**

Sustainability of CBT initiatives would be the last, but never less important, issue to refer to once again in our conclusions. As discussed during research, sustainability in CBT is multidimensional and we also discussed that overall sustainability of any CBT initiative highly depends on the sustainability of each of the pillars - economic, social, cultural and environmental.

- 6. If there are certain recognized principles for sustainable development, there are not universal models of sustainable CBT planning. Each CBT initiative should be tailored and planned in a way which would ensure sustainable development in all dimensions of sustainability.**

Concluding our research, we may clearly state, that even if CBT is a relatively new concept in RA, establishment of sustainable, effective CBT framework is not so far from reality, provided there is a strong will, strong belief, hard work and fruitful cooperation among all tourism stakeholders.

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Evaluation of Tourism Planning Capacity and Needs on Community Level / Համայնքային մակարդակով զբոսաշրջության պլանավորման կարողությունների և կարիքների գնահատում

The present questionnaire aims at finding out the extend of importance local self-government bodies attach to tourism industry as a tool for socio-economic development in their communities, the preparedness of the community to establish and organize a Community Based Tourism framework, the capacities for tourism planning and management, as well as the needs in such. The questionnaire is intended for use for academic purposes only, for a Master's Program research at Ritsumeikan Asia-Pacific University, funded by the World Bank.

IMPORTANT: The answers collected will be published in a single table and only cumulative data will be made reference to throughout the research. No indications will be made to specific answers by specific respondees. Where possible, please, be as sincere in your answers as possible.

1. Marz, community / Մարզ, համայնք

2. Type of respondee organization / Պատասխանող կազմակերպություն

3. How would you evaluate importance of tourism to your community / Ինչպես կգնահատեիք զբոսաշրջության կարևորությունը Ձեր համայնքի համար

	Not important at all / Ընդհանրապես կարևոր չէ	Probably important / Հավանաբար կարևոր է	Important / Կարևոր է	Very important / Շատ կարևոր է	Tourism is a priority in our community / Զբոսաշրջությունը մեր համայնքում գերակայություն է
The importance actually attached to tourism / Կարևորությունը, որը ներկայումս տրվում է զբոսաշրջությանը	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The extend of importance which should be attached to tourism / Կարևորությունը, որը պետք է տրվեր զբոսաշրջությանը	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Please, list all benefits you think tourism can bring to your community / Խնդրում ենք թվարկել այն բոլոր օգուտները, որոնք Ձեր կարծիքով զբոսաշրջությունը կարող է բերել Ձեր համայնքին

(Please, express in words and expressions only, seperated by comas. No description / Խնդրում ենք պարզապես արտահայտել բառեր և բառակապակցություններ, առանձնացնելով ստորակետներով: Խնդրում ենք չներկայացնել տեքստային նկարագրություն)

5. How would you evaluate tourism activity in your community / Բնչպե՞ս կգնահատեի՞ք զբոսաշրջային ակտիվությունը Ձեր համայնքում

1 2 3 4 5

No activity at all / Ոչ մի ակտիվություն առկա չէ Highly active / Բարձր ակտիվություն

6. How would you evaluate involvement of local people in tourism activities in your community? / Բնչպե՞ս կգնահատեի՞ք Ձեր համայնքում զբոսաշրջային գործընթացներին տեղի բնակչության ներգրավվածությունը

(Direct and mediated sales of services and products, participation in tourist events, etc./ Ծառայությունների և արտադրանքի ուղղակի կամ միջնորդավորված վաճառք, մասնակցություն զբոսաշրջային միջոցառումներին, այլն)

1 2 3 4 5

No involvement / Ներգրավված չեն ընհանրապես High level of involvement / Բարձր մակարդակի ներգրավվածություն

7. What kind of local participation in tourism business do you think is realistic in your community / Զբոսաշրջային գործունեություններում համայնքի բնակչության մասնակցության ինչպիսի տեսակն էք համարում իդեալական/իրատեսական (notwithstanding the actual involvement of local people at present / առանց հաշվի առնելու համայնքի բնակչության ներկայիս ներգրավվածությունը

- Employment in local businesses owned by outsiders / Աջխատանք ոչ համայնքի ներկայացուցչի սեփականություն հանդիսացող զբոսաշրջային հաստատություններում
- Entrepreneurship by local people / Ձեռնարկատիրական գործունեություն համայնքի բնակիչների կողմից
- Companies owned by groups of local people / Համայնքի մի խումբ բնակիչների սեփականություն հանդիսացող ընկերություններ
- Companies jointly owned by tourism businesses and local people / Զբոսաշրջային ընկերությունների և տեղի բնակչության համատեղ սեփականություն հանդիսացող ընկերություններ

8. Please, evaluate local people's attitude to tourists in your community / Խնդրում ենք գնահատել Ձեր համայնքի բնակչության վերաբերմունքը զբոսաշրջիկներին

1 2 3 4 5

Not friendly / Ոչ հյուրընկալ Highly friendly / Շատ հյուրընկալ

9. How many positions are there in the staff of local self-government body of your community who is responsible for tourism? / Ձբոսաշրջության հարցերի

պատասխանատու քանի հաստիք կա Ձեր համայնքի տեղական ինքնակառավարման մարմնի աշխատակազմում

- 0
- 1
- more than 1 / 1-ից ավել

10. Are there any programs of tourism development in your community? / Կան արդյոք Ձեր համայնքում զբոսաշրջության զարգացմանը վերաբերող ծրագրեր

- Seperate program on tourism development in the community / Համայնքում զբոսաշրջության զարգացման առանձին ծրագիր
- Provisions on tourism development in the community in the social-economic development program of the Marz / Համայնքում զբոսաշրջության զարգացմանը վերաբերող դրույթներ մարզի սոցիալ-տնտեսական զարգացման ծրագրում
- Provisions on tourism development in the community in a broader program of tourism development covering areas beyond the community / Համայնքում զբոսաշրջության զարգացմանը վերաբերող դրույթներ զբոսաշրջության զարգացման առավել լայնամասշտաբ ծրագրում
- No programs / Ծրագրեր չկան

11. Who do you think shall participate generally in tourism planning in your community /

Ըստ Ձեզ, ով պետք է մասնակցի համայնքում զբոսաշրջության զարգացման պլանավորմանը

- Staff of the local self-government body / Տեղական ինքնակառավարման մարմնի աշխատակազմը
- RA Government (Ministry) staff / ՀՀ կառավարության (նախարարության) աշխատակազմը
- Marz government staff / Մարզպետարանի աշխատակազմը
- Tourism businesses / Ձբոսաշրջային ընկերությունները
- NGOs / հասարակական կազմակերպություններ
- Local population / Տեղի բնակչությունը

12. Please, list all the problems you think hinder tourism development in your community /

Խնդրում ենք թվարկել այն բոլոր խնդիրները, որոնք ընստ Ձեզ խոչընդոտում են համայնքում զբոսաշրջության զարգացմանը

(Please, express in words and expressions only, seperated by comas. No description / Խնդրում ենք պարզապես արտահայտել բառեր և բառակապակցություններ, առանձնացնելով ստորակետներով: Խնդրում ենք չներկայացնել տեքստային նկարագրություն)

13. Other notes / Այլ նշումներ

Submit