



TOURISM FOR A BETTER WORLD

The link between Community Involvement in Tourism (CIT) and Community Based Tourism (CBT)

As you have learnt in Lesson 4, there are plenty of opportunities to involve communities in the tourism sector.

We have given you examples. Can you remember at least 3 of them? Please write them down.

Community Involvement in Tourism (CIT) vs. Community-Based Tourism (CBT)

While often confused, **Community Involvement in Tourism (CIT)** and **Community-Based Tourism (CBT)** are distinct but related concepts.

CBT is a specific type of CIT, primarily focusing on tourism activities that are **owned, operated, managed, and coordinated directly by a local community** within its village. Services like lodging, meals, guiding, cultural performances, and handicraft sales are provided at the village level, with benefits directly supporting community well-being, sustainable livelihoods, and the protection of traditions and heritage (as defined by ASEAN).

Key characteristics of CBT:

- **Community-owned and operated.**
- **Managed, controlled, and coordinated by the community.**
- **Benefits remain within the community.**
- **Supports sustainable livelihoods.**
- **Protects socio-cultural traditions.**
- **Activities:** Includes community lodges, homestays, meals, guiding, cultural performances, handicraft sales, and agro-tourism.

At its core, CBT is about **empowering local people** to control their lives and manage their own tourism initiatives. This means communities can offer services, establish their own coordination teams, and actively participate in regional tourism planning with other stakeholders.

The Broader Scope of CIT

CIT has a similar objective but is a "lighter" approach. It focuses on **integrating neighboring communities into broader tourism and hospitality services** that may operate outside the immediate village. This can involve:

- **Procurement:** Communities supplying agricultural products, handicrafts, and decorations to hotels and restaurants.
- **Transport services.**
- **Creating employment opportunities** within the hospitality sector for community members.

Essentially, CIT offers business and employment opportunities for local communities within the wider tourism sector, while CBT means tourism services are provided *in the village* and fully managed and coordinated *by the villagers*.

For businesses, embracing CIT means adopting an **inclusive business model** where neighboring communities become integral to daily operations and supply chains.

What is the meaning of inclusive business?

An inclusive business is a sustainable business that benefits low-income communities.

The common principle of inclusive business is to go beyond making donations or charity only, and invest in doing business differently for mutual benefit.

It means that your business needs to keep its for-profit nature but contributes at the same time to poverty reduction through the inclusion of low income communities in the value chain. In simple words, inclusive business is all about including disadvantaged people in the business process, ideally as producers or consumers.

Example

An inclusive business company, investing into innovative filtration systems that clean dirty water, builds a water kiosk in a community and offers a joint venture business to one family to sell the water to the community.

It creates a **win-win** situation for all involved: **clean water** for the village, a **new income source** for at least one family and **revenues** for the inclusive business company. You can reinvest your profit into new innovative products and/or share this margin among your shareholders.

Benefits

Local recognition and social license to operate

Local residents will be the first to see how a business contributes to the economy. This, in turn, reduces local risk and crime, opens new opportunities for local product development, and translates into constructive relations with local municipalities.

Enhanced staff morale

When local staff see the company delivering for their community, it increases staff morale, resulting in improved customer service and guest satisfaction.

Greater customer satisfaction

Customers can see that you care.

Stronger branding

A competitive advantage is gained from a more distinctive product. Companies that invest locally stand out from others.

Top reasons to invest in CIT

When we show up to the present moment with all of our senses, we invite the world to fill us with joy. The pains of the past are behind us. The future has yet to unfold. But the now is full of beauty simply waiting for our attention.

Doing business differently — top reasons to invest in CIT

Doing business differently in tourism, or **Community Involvement in Tourism (CIT)**, means achieving your commercial goals while creating a greater positive impact on local communities. This approach can be integrated across your entire tourism supply chain.

Top Reasons to Invest in Community Involvement in Tourism

Investing in CIT offers significant benefits, fostering a win-win situation for your business, the local economy, and the environment. Here's why you should consider it:

- **Boost Local Economies through Procurement:** Many tourism businesses overlook the power of local sourcing. By shifting your procurement of goods and services to small, local businesses, you can significantly stimulate the local economy. This is particularly impactful for "survivalist" businesses, enabling them to secure new contracts, upgrade production, and expand, leading to job creation and further local growth.
- **Increase Community Cash Flow with Fair Wages:** Wages paid to local staff are often the largest direct financial contribution a tourism business makes to its community. By ensuring all employees receive a fair living wage, ideally above the minimum, you can substantially increase cash flow into the community.
- **Enhance Local Employment and Skills:** Beyond wages, you can extend employment benefits by reviewing recruitment practices to favor local applicants and investing in training semi-skilled local staff. This builds local capacity and creates sustainable job opportunities.

- **Create Business Opportunities at Community Sites:** Excursions organized by your business offer prime opportunities to engage local SMEs. Utilize their transportation, integrate visits to local cultural sites, and buy local products from farms (agrotourism). You can even offer unique experiences like allowing tourists to participate in local farming activities, which they'll enjoy and pay for.

Real-World Examples of CIT Success

Here's how other tourism businesses have successfully implemented CIT:

- **Sustainable Water Sourcing:** Instead of buying expensive, environmentally unfriendly bottled water, hotels can purchase water directly from local entrepreneurs. This creates a win-win for both the environment and local businesses.
- **Strengthening Agricultural Linkages:** A hotel committed to sourcing all its fruit and vegetables locally and contracting with over 80 local suppliers experienced improved staff morale and a high quality of service.
- **Improving Food Safety and Supporting Organic Farming:** One hotel encouraged local farmers to invest in organic rice production by guaranteeing purchases of the more expensive organic seeds and the resulting crop. This led to fewer pesticides in the region and provided healthy food for staff and clients.
- **Boosting Occupancy and Customer Satisfaction through Local Arts:** A hotel that encourages guests to visit local artists and showcases local culture saw a 25% increase in occupancy over three years. Owners and managers consistently cite customer satisfaction as a top benefit of strong local connections.
- **Creating Local Employment Opportunities:** During the construction of a new hotel, young and disadvantaged individuals from the neighborhood received training in various hospitality areas. An average of 80% were subsequently employed, creating qualified job opportunities and a highly committed workforce for the company.

Important Considerations for Successful CIT

While the benefits are clear, it's crucial to understand that not all communities will benefit in the same way. **Collaborative partnerships** and **active stakeholder involvement** are critical for the success and sustainability of any CIT initiative. These partnerships often evolve over time, requiring flexibility and adaptation. There's no one-size-fits-all solution; "Community Involvement in Tourism" will need to be adjusted to each specific case and evolve as circumstances change.