

Discover Potential of Community-based Tourism in Non Nuoc Cao Bang UNESCO Global Geo-park, Vietnam

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47175/rissj.v3i2.432>

| Cao Thi Thanh Phuong |

Thai Nguyen University of
Economics and Business
Administration, Tan Thinh,
Thai Nguyen City, Thai
Nguyen Province, Viet Nam.

caothanhphuong@tueba.edu.vn

ABSTRACT

The poetic landscape, majestic mountains and the system of waterfalls, interesting rivers and lakes,... create a picture of a "fairy landscape" of the Non Nuoc UNESCO Cao Bang region. The beautiful scenery here is also associated with the global geo-historical values, the values of biodiversity, the diversity of national identities and the richness of culture and history with many national-level cultural and historical relics. National, special country has created for the area of Non Nuoc Cao Bang Geopark a special attraction for domestic and foreign tourists. The article focuses on exploring the natural and human potential of the Non Nuoc Cao Bang Global Geopark area as well as the tourism results achieved in the past time to serve as a basis for proposing solutions to develop the area develop the type of community-based tourism for the study area.

KEYWORDS

Community-based tourism; Non Nuoc Cao Bang UNESCO Global Geo-park; tourism

INTRODUCTION

Tourism Potential Non Nuoc Cao Bang UNESCO Global Geopark

Non nuoc Cao Bang UNESCO Global Geopark was recognized by UNESCO on April 12th, 2018 as the second global geopark in Vietnam, after Dong Van Karst Plateau. This park covers an area of 3,390 km², including Quang Hoa, Trung Khanh, Ha Lang districts and part of the area of Hoa An, Ha Quang, Nguyen Binh and Thach An districts of border province of Cao Bang, 300 km from Hanoi to the North. This is where visitors can learn about the evolutionary history of over 500 million years of the Earth's crust through fossils, marine sediments, volcanic rocks, minerals, limestone landscapes, caves and so on. They are special geological heritages with unique global stature.

Here, there are 05 national-level scenic spots including Ban Gioc waterfall, Nguom Ngao cave, Thang Hen lake system, mountain Angel Eye and Bat cave. In which, Ban Gioc waterfall is one of the 10 most beautiful waterfalls in the world, the largest waterfall in Southeast Asia, one of the 10 most beautiful landscapes in Vietnam. This is the long-standing residence of the people of nine ethnic groups: Tay, Nung, Dao, Mong, Kinh Hoa, San Chi,... There are as many as 96 sites that have been recognized historical and cultural relics (03 national special relics, 55 national relics, 68 provincial relics) and 01 national treasure. The 03 national special relic areas include Pac Bo where in 1941, President Ho Chi Minh returned to the country to lead the revolutionary movement after more than thirty years of traveling abroad to find the way to rescue the country; Tran Hung Dao forest where in 1944, General Vo Nguyen Giap established the Vietnam Liberation Army Propaganda Army, the predecessor of the heroic Vietnamese People's Army; 1950 Border Victory Site where for the first time the Vietnam People's Army actively attacked the enemy at the campaign level.

Besides, "Then" rituals are recognized as intangible cultural heritage representing humanity; 03 other heritages are recognized as national intangible cultural heritages

including Traditional craft forging in Phuc Sen commune, Firework head rivalling festival in Quang Uyen town, Nang Hai festival in Tien Thanh commune, Quang Hoa district. In addition, there are many other traditional festivals in the region and there are long-standing traditional craft villages with a history of even a thousand years. This is also a region famous for biodiversity with many ecosystems, many endemic species of flora and fauna.

The majestic and beautiful natural landscape is associated with the global geo-historical values, along with the value of biodiversity, the value of diversity of ethnic identity and the richness of culture and history with many national special relics and national relics have created a special attraction for Non nuoc Cao Bang Geopark to domestic and foreign tourists and become unforgettable tourist area. On July 21st, 2020, the US travel magazine Insider voted Non nuoc Cao Bang Geopark in the list of Top 50 most attractive beautiful landscapes in the world

RESEARCH METHODS

The article uses secondary data from the Provincial People's Committee, the Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Cao Bang province, the Management Board of Non Nuoc Cao Bang Global Geopark and other sources of information in the newspapers. Journals and other publications incorporating information from field surveys. Analysis and synthesis, descriptive and comparative statistics are the main research methods applied. In which, descriptive statistics method is used to collect data, summarize, present, calculate and describe different characteristics of the research object. Comparative method to compare the fluctuations in tourist arrivals and revenue over the years.

Theory of community-based tourism

In the document “ASEAN Community Tourism Standards”, the ASEAN Secretariat clearly states: “CBT is a tourism activity owned and operated by the community, managed or coordinated at the community level in order to contribute to community well-being through supporting sustainable livelihoods and protecting valuable socio-cultural traditions and cultural and natural heritage resources”.

According to Dr. Vo Que (2006) “Community-based tourism is a form of tourism development in which the local community will organize and be responsible for providing tourism services”. At the same time, they will also participate in the conservation of natural resources, the environment and local culture. Moreover, it is the local community that will enjoy both material and spiritual benefits from tourism development and nature conservation. In other words, the economic benefits of tourism lie in their communities so that from those benefits will contribute to reducing poverty rates, improving incomes and improving quality of life (Bui Thi Hai Yen, 2012).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Some Tourism Results Achieved

By the end of 2021, there have been 07 CBT models in operation in the and surrounding areas: Pac Rang, Phja Thap, Ban Giuong (Quang Hoa); Khuoi Ky, Lung Neic (Trung Khanh); Hoai Khao (Nguyen Binh); Khuoi Khon (Bao Lac – vicinity). These models are built in villages with beautiful natural scenery and unique ethnic cultural resources. In addition, tourists can experience the beautiful scenery of the Park Region on 03 routes:

Route 1: “Explore Phja Oac – the mountains of changes”: the sightseeing route in the west direction, focusing on Nguyen Binh district with outstanding attractions such as Tran Hung Dao Forest Special National Monument , where the establishment of the Vietnam

Propaganda and Liberation Army Team - the precursor of the heroic Vietnamese People's Army, Phja Oac - Phja Den Eco-tourism Area with 1,931 m high Phja Oac peak - the western roof of Cao province Equal,...

Route 2: “Journey to the roots”: the sightseeing route in the north direction, focusing on 2 districts of Hoa An and Ha Quang with diverse rocky terrain, containing many geological heritages of international value and historical and cultural relics such as King Le Temple, National Treasure Beer Ma Nhai reigned over King Le Thai To, Kim Dong Historical Site, Pac Bo Special National Monument,...

Route 3: “Experience indigenous culture in wonderland”: tour route in the east direction, focusing on 3 districts of Quang Hoa, Trung Khanh and Ha Lang, with 05 national scenic spots (Ban waterfall) Gioc, Nguom Ngao Cave, Thang Hen Lake, Bat Cave and the legendary Mountain God's Eye), the ancient Khuoi Ky stone village from the Mac Dynasty, the thousand-year-old Pac Rang forging village.

From 2016 to 2021, on 3 tourist routes of Cao Bang Geopark has received quite a large number of visitors:

Table 1. Visitors and tourism revenue on 3 Routes in Cao Bang Geo-park
Start 2016 to 2021

Year	Route 1		Route 2		Route 3	
	Visitors (people)	Tourism revenue (million VND)	Visitors (people)	Tourism revenue (million VND)	Visitors (people)	Tourism revenue (million VND)
2016	16.000	700	229.500	9.100	362.000	112.500
2017	18.000	850	253.534	11.900	524.884	157.000
2018	23.000	960	275.500	11.520	750.000	289.470
2019	30.000	1.100	398.497	14.300	969.000	397.700
2020	17.000	640	166.838	5.760	312.000	57.850
2021	11.000	570	113.000	5.415	247.000	82.450

(Source: Cao Bang Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism)

In the period from 2016 to 2019, the number of tourists and revenue on 3 key tourist routes in the Geo-park have increased rapidly and reached the highest level in 2019: route 1, the number of visitors increased by 87.5% from 16,000 guests to 30.00 passengers, revenue increased from 700 million VND to 1.1 billion VND, route 2 increased the number of passengers by 73.64% from 229,500 to 398,497 passengers, revenue increased from 9.1 billion VND to 14.3 billion and especially on route 3: “Experience indigenous culture in wonderland” concentrated in 3 districts: Quang Hoa, Trung Khanh, Ha Lang with the highest growth rate of 167.68%, the number of visitors increased from 362,000 guests to 969,000 guests and revenue increased from 112.5 billion VND to 397.7 billion VND. However, by 2020 and 2021, due to the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, the number of visitors and revenue has decreased sharply, decreased by 60-80 % compared to 2019.

Among the three tourist routes of the region, the number of visitors to route 3 is the highest because it converges famous scenic spots of Cao Bang: Ban Gioc waterfall, Nguom Ngao cave, Thang Hen lake,.... with the largest natural waterfall in Southeast Asia and the 4th in the world.- Ban Gioc waterfall. Therefore, the CBT site at Khuoi Ky stone village, Lung Neic is always the first choice of the majority from 75-80 % of the total number of visitors on all 3 routes.

Solution Proposed

In the past time, the CBT in the development early stages, is still quite new, but it has also attracted a large number of domestic and international tourists, contributing to the development of tourism as well. such as socio-economic development of Cao Bang province. However, tourism products are still not diversified, tourism services are still sketchy and have not met the needs of tourists. Therefore, in the coming time, the province should focus on investing in the development of a more diversified tourism products that are also widely advertised to contribute to the further development of this potential model of CBT.

Development Community – Based on Tourism Products

In order to enrich and diversify the type of CBT, it is necessary to combine with tourism groups as follows:

- Group of festival cultural tourism products associated with cultural and historical relics culture, cultural characteristics of ethnic minorities: festivals of Ky Sam temple, King Le, Da District Pagoda, Ban Gioc Waterfall Tourism Festival, Pac Bo Source Festival, Nang Hai festival, Long Tong festival, grade level ceremony, firecracker head painting festival,...
- Ecotourism product group: Phja Thap national park ecotourism Phja Oac, Phia Den of Nguyen Binh District; garden tour (strawberry picking) in Hung Dao commune, Cao Bang city; eco-resort tourism combined with agricultural production experience services, traditional occupations in tourist destinations such as: Pac Rang community tourism village, Phuc Sen commune (Quang Hoa); Stone Village Khuoi Ky, Dam Thuy commune (Trung Khanh)
- Group of resort tourism products associated with mineral water sources: Kolia Resort in Phja Oac National Park - Phja Den; Resort Saigon - Ban Gioc at Ban Gioc Waterfall...
- Group of heritage tourism products associated with the Global Geopark: With there are over 200 caves in which about 30 beautiful caves and caves have potential for mining waterfall for tourism. The flora and fauna are diverse in both species and species rare, there are many species in the area listed in the Vietnam Red Book (2007); 34 kinds of famous genetic resources of livestock and specialty plants; 09 conservation areas or special-use forests, including 06 landscape protection zones, 02 habitat species conservation areas and 01 national park.

Regarding the Conservation and Promotion of Heritage Values:

For leaders at all levels of local authorities, it is necessary to raise awareness of the viewpoints and principles of preserving and promoting heritage in tourism; for the people, it is necessary to equip them to understand the value of the heritage, the principles of dealing with the heritage; With tourists, it is necessary to propagate to raise the sense of protection, respect for heritage and cooperate with indigenous communities.

Regarding tourism branding and tourism promotion:

- Develop a project to propagate and promote Cao Bang land and people, beautiful landscapes, products, festivals, folk songs and dances, ecological diversity... on the mass media. Implement tourism promotion program through brochures, handbooks, tourist maps, VCDs in English and Chinese languages.
- Actively participate in programs, fairs and events hosted and organized by the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, thereby introducing to domestic and

international tourists about natural images, scenic spots, tours, travel routes, the traditional beauty of Cao Bang people.

- Association and cooperation activities are always strengthened, creating opportunities for production and business organizations and individuals to find markets, promote trade and investment promotion activities, contribute to exploiting, expand domestic and international tourism market. Connecting regional tourism with Bac Kan and Lang Son provinces to implement a pilot tour program at some points to build tours, promote and attract visitors.

Environmental Protection

Basically, environmental issues at tourist sites and attractions in the province are seriously implemented by the management boards of the zones, tourist spots, and tourist service businesses. Most of the service establishments publicize the prices of services, ensure the quality of food safety and hygiene; well observe the regulations on protection of social order, ensure environmental sanitation, build a culture of civilized behavior. In some areas and tourist attractions, a system of signposts and standard toilets has been invested in... However, there are still shortcomings such as the lack of standard toilets in a certain homestay; the awareness of some tourists is still poor in littering indiscriminately, polluting the environment and tourist landscape; awareness of promoting tourism values and tourism services of the majority of people is still limited, so the tourism industry has not been promoted strongly. Therefore, it is necessary to educate the awareness and actions towards the environment, not to litter indiscriminately, to disrupt the landscape, to harm the ecological environment. At the same time, administrative management is needed to enhance the community's responsibility in protecting tourism resources, which are national assets.

CONCLUSION

Community-based tourism in Non Nuoc Cao Bang UNESCO Global Geopark have been built based on the exploitation and connection between ecotourism resources and humanistic tourism resources, between beautiful natural heritages and unique historical and cultural traditions in each village. However, to develop CBT in particular and tourism in general, Cao Bang province needs to develop a variety of community tourism products; promote and conserve tourism resources; strengthen the promotion of local tourism and raise awareness of environmental protection, contributing to the goal that Cao Bang province's tourism will become a spearhead economic sector, tourist center of northern mountainous provinces and affirm strong brand in domestic and international market.

REFERENCES

- Bucley R. (2004), *Environmental Impacts of Ecotourism*, CABI Publishing.
- Bui Thi Hai Yen. (2012). "Community tourism", Education Publishing House, Hanoi.
- David L. Edgel. (2006). *Managing Sustainable Tourism A Legacy for the Future*. Routledge.
- Sakarin Sriupayo. (2017). "Community Based Tourism in Sustainable Dimension, Case Study: Baan Muanggluang Community Kaper District Ranong Province", *Proceedings of Academics World 74th International Conference*, Oslo, Norway, 3rd-4th August 2017.
- Shafieisabet, N., & Haratifard, S. (2019). Community-Based Tourism: An Approach for Sustainable Rural Development (Case Study: Asara district, Chalous Road). *Journal of Sustainable Rural Development*, 3(1-2), 75-90. <https://doi.org/10.32598/JSRD.02.02.30>.
- Cao Bang Provincial Party Committee. (2020). Political Report of the Executive Committee of the Provincial Party Committee, term XVIII at the 19th Provincial Party Congress, No. 788-BC/TU October 12, 2020.

- Tran Thuy. (2021). Non Nuoc Cao Bang Geopark. Retrieved May 6, 2021, from <http://caobanggeopark.com/en/about/Thong-tin-ve-CVDC.html>.
- Ha Quang District People's Committee. (2021). On developing community-based tourism associated with eco-tourism, cultural-historical tourism, craft village tourism in Ha Quang district, Cao Bang province, Newspaper Presentation paper on the development of Community-based tourism in association with eco-tourism, cultural-historical tourism, craft village tourism in the area of Non Nuoc Cao Bang Geopark.
- Vietnam Institute for Research and Development of Rural Industries. (2002). Document guide to community tourism development.
- Vo Que. (2006), Community-based tourism-Theory and application, Volume 1, Hanoi Science and Technology Publishing House.