

Readiness Factors of Chiang Mai City to Support Sustainable and Livable City Long-Stay Tourism

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Abstract

In Thailand, both the public and private sectors have focused extensively on a policy of long-stay tourism as a channel for development. Such a policy aims to encourage capability of service and quality of physical factors that could support foreign long-stay tourists in Thailand. Chiang Mai is one of the cities in Thailand that pays particular attention to support long-stay tourism, as the city has the largest number of a long-stay tourists in Northern Thailand. This study examined readiness factors of Chiang Mai City that could support sustainable and livable long-stay tourism and proposed guidelines for improvement. The research tools were in-depth interviews and brainstorming discussions with key experts and stakeholders. The research identified 17 potential factors that could support Chiang Mai's effort to be a long-stay city, but only 4 factors were confirmed to be at a high level of readiness. These 4 factors consisted of 1) effective disaster management system, 2) basic and sufficient elements to serve long-stay tourists, 3) cultural heritage preservation that illustrates a history and understanding of the traditional way of life, and 4) reasonable and affordable cost of living. This study also proposed some concrete preparedness guidelines for Chiang Mai City to support the transition to a sustainable and livable long-stay city.

Keywords

Chiang Mai City; Long-Stay Tourism; Sustainable and Livable City

1. Introduction

Long-stay tourism is an increasing trend, especially for elderly tourists who want to move to other countries with a lower cost of living after retirement. Thailand is considered one of the popular destinations for long-stay tourism, for example Chiang Mai, Maehongsorn and Phuket (Center of Tourism Research and Development, 2018). Long-stay is a form of tourism in the 21st century that has evolved around the demand of tourists based on different lifestyles and needs, but with a common interest in recreation. Long-stay tourism also is a result of change in the structure of the world's population that is transitioning into an ageing society (Kotler, et al., 2006: 121). It is predicted that by 2025 the global population of elderly people will increase to 340 million people, with the current elderly population being about 28 percent. In particular, the group of retired "Baby Boomers" born between 1946-1964 have considerable financial capability to pursue leisure and travel interests which will result in an increasing number of tourists over age 60 coming to Thailand.

The Thai government has helped to promote long-stay tourism by forming the National Committee for Long-Term Tourism Promotion and Development and appointing the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to support long-term tourism for expatriates since June 26, 2001. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs may grant special O-A type visas for foreign applicants, aged 50 years or over, who wish to stay for recreation in Thailand for a period not exceeding 1 year. Moreover, the Thailand Longstay Company was established on December 11, 2001 with TAT holding 30% of the shares while 70% is held by the private sector. The company provides complete long-stay planning service through membership subscription. The services include finding accommodation, transportation, health services, tour guide service, tourism information services, and also tourist assistance services for the members. Despite the Covid-19 outbreak, the government has continued to emphasize the promotion and support for long-term stay tourism. In 2020, there was an approval of guidelines for special tourist visas (STV) that would allow those interested in long-stay tourism to travel to Thailand. It was one of the economic measures implemented by the Thai government to restore the local tourism industry that has been affected heavily by the Covid-19 pandemic. As part of the STV program, applicants must be willing to comply with the public health measures promulgated in Thailand. These measures included a 14 day Alternative Local State Quarantine (ALSQ), being able to show evidence for long-term residence within Thailand either as proof of payment for hotel accommodation or hospital accommodation (AHQ) (The Thai Real Estate Organization, 2020).

The Thai Immigration Office records show that there has been a continuous increase in the number of long-term tourists coming to Thailand and this trend is expected to continue in the future. Foreigners from all over the world are drawn to Thailand because of its year-round warm climate and diverse geographic features - mountains and archipelago - which serve visitors' diverse interests. Chiang Mai, during 2013-2018, had the highest number of long-term residents in the North of Thailand (Table1). Relevant agencies have been tasked to address the cities' expat-hosting capability with respect to both physical and service aspects, including housing, hospitals, etc. However, from a review of related studies, it was found that agencies and parties involved in long-stay tourism do not have information and knowledge about urban development to support appropriate long-stay planning. There is a knowledge gap that must be filled in order to plan for appropriate responses to promote long-stay tourism, with particular consideration being given to the identity of Chiang Mai City. Therefore, the overall objective of this study is to provide a framework or direction plan for Chiang Mai City to promote and develop long-stay tourism that emphasizes both sustainability and livability

considerations. The specific objectives of the study are threefold:

- 1) Study factors supporting a livable and sustainable city for long-stay tourism.
- 2) Study strengths, weaknesses, obstacles and challenges of Chiang Mai City for supporting long-stay tourism.
- 3) Determine Chiang Mai City's level of readiness for long-stay tourism based on factors supporting also promote a sustainable and livable city.

Table 1 Number of Long Stay Tourists in 2013-2018, separated by the Immigration Office in North.

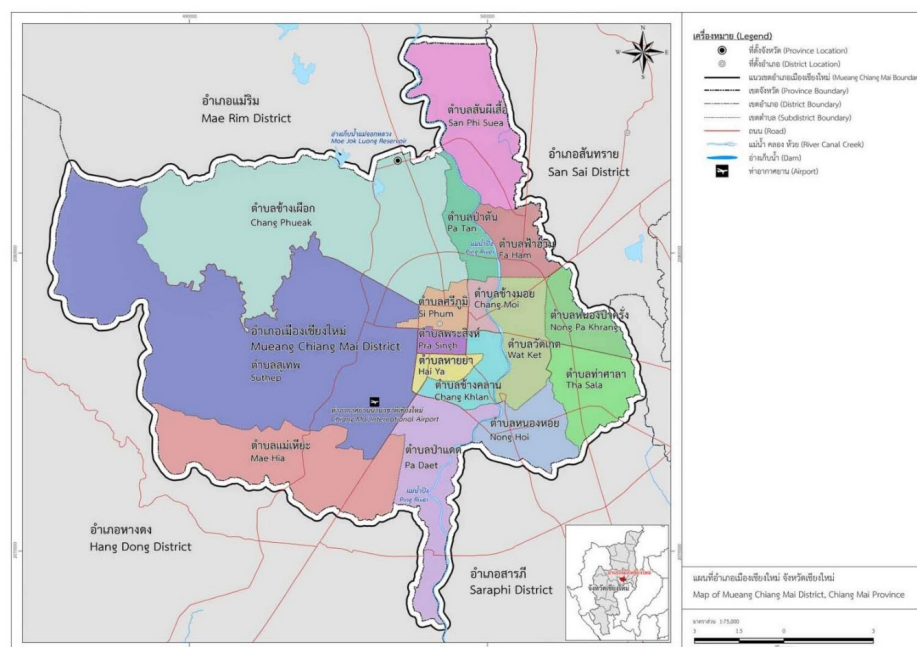
Unit: people								
Year	Chiang Rai	Chiang Saen	Chiang Mai	Tak	Nan	Mae Hong Sorn	Pitsanulok	Nakorn Sawarn
2013	3,455	-	22,431	1,773	813	524	1,424	1,141
2014	3656	11	33,250	1,884	955	785	3,893	3,684
2015	5,140	527	49,132	1,337	976	1,000	3,100	2,932
2016	6,978	775	47,789	4,251	1,679	976	4,247	5,202
2017	9,326	430	60,501	5,675	1,581	1,686	5,346	4,551
2018	8,210	321	50,283	2,524	1,297	1,763	4,004	2,723

Source: Chiang Mai Immigration office, 2018

2. Demarcation

1) Study area

This research study covers the area of Chiang Mai City (Muang District) because it is the main part of the city with the largest number of long-term residents, both in Chiang Mai and in the northern region. Furthermore, the tourism development strategy is promoting and endorsing Chiang Mai City as the center for long-stay in the North of Thailand.



Source: Chiang Mai Real Estate, 2020

Figure 1 Boundary of Mueang Chiang Mai District.

2) Scope of research

This study focuses on analyzing factors that may support a sustainable and livable city for long-stay tourism. The research was conducted by reviewing literature and academic papers on cities suitable for long-term residence and collecting data as part of a workshop with city development specialists that addressed long-stay tourism and the contributing factors that characterize a sustainable and livable city suitable for long-stay. The research also studies strengths, weaknesses, obstacles and challenges of Chiang Mai City for long-stay tourism to understand Chiang Mai City's level of readiness for accommodating long-stay residents. In so doing, "readiness factors" were identified and assessed that may contribute to the city's suitability for long-stay tourism. The study was carried out during normal tourism conditions, pre-Covid-19. Therefore, the study analyses the readiness of Chiang Mai at that time and suggests guidelines to develop factors that can support the goal of Chiang Mai City to remain suitable as a long-stay residence under normal circumstances.

3. Theoretical framework

This research applies various concepts and theories relevant to long-stay tourism, sustainable urban development and livable city development. The study also examines case studies of cities outside of Thailand that are recognizing for developing successful long-stay plans.

3.1 Long-stay tourism

Long-stay tourism has a long history of practice which was initiated in western, developed countries. This higher-income group of people seek happiness for themselves by traveling, both in their homeland and abroad. While some prefer travelling independently as individuals, many form a club and travel in groups for a long period of time. In this sense, long-stay travel has a specific purpose (Sangkakorn, 2013). Recently, the meaning of long-stay tourism has developed to have a broader meaning. Similar to the original meaning, long-stay tourism has a clear objective. Nowadays, long-stay tourism has evolved to include multiple specific purposes that set the activity apart from the typical form of tourism. The period of stay relies on the visiting purposes.

Based on this concept, foreign long-stay tourists can be classified into four main groups according to their objectives (Sangkakorn, 2017).

- Group 1* - People who seek to spend their late life traveling: retirees; elderly people without caregivers
- Group 2* - People who seek healthcare services: people who come for treatment and recuperation; people who want to escape harsh weather conditions, such as extreme heat and cold, in their countries.
- Group 3* - People who seek educational opportunities: people who come to study at different education levels, take short courses; exchange students
- Group 4* - People who come for sports practices: athletes in pre-competition camps, youth groups who come to learn and practice certain sports such as golf, Thai boxing, etc.

The person becoming a long-stay tourist typically follows four steps.

Step 1: Tourist – spend 7-10 day travelling in destination country

Step 2: Stay-longer – spend 2-3 weeks travelling in destination country

Step 3: Long Stay – may spend between 1-6 months residing in destination country

Step 4: Permanent Stay – spend more than a year residing in destination country. They may return to

their country of residence at times during their stay.

3.2 Sustainable city development

The concept of sustainable city development was first discussed in 1992, at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in Brazil where the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development was established. The summit was the first discussion about environmental sustainability on the global scale. (Srethasirote, 2013).

Moreover, the 20th United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development-UNCSD, held on June 20-22, 2012, noted that industrial, science and technology development have caused major impact and damage to global resources. Later in 2000, 189 countries from around the world gathered at the UN conference in New York City, USA, and agreed to set development goals to reduce the impact and damage to global resources both on national and international levels, targeting achievement between 2000-2015. With the eight main development goals set under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ending in 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were developed as a means of moving the sustainability agenda forward (National Science Technology and Innovation Policy Office, 2017).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) collectively frame and inform the global path towards sustainability for the period September 2015 to August 2030. There are 17 main development goals (Figure 2) as follows:



Source: National Science Technology and Innovation Policy Office, 2017

Figure 2 Sustainable Development Goals

The 17 development goals take into consideration the 3 pillars of sustainable development (environment, economy, society), with focuses on sustainable management, sustainable urban development, resource conservation, sustainable economic development, and promotion of peaceful society. These can be linked to

the concept of sustainable tourism cities (United Nations in Thailand, 2015).

Haughton and Hunter (1994) explain that the principle for sustainable urban development has to consider aspects of ecology, society, economy, and good governance. They emphasized that no country can function independently, neither in economic, social nor political aspects. Therefore, fair connectivity and equality at every level must be applied. Academic research on sustainable development suggests several topics on sustainability issues. For examples, immediate environmental problems, guidelines for natural resources and environmental management and guidelines for problems prevention. These issues were presented in international conferences. (The 20th United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development-UNCSD, held on June 20-22, 2012) These topics reflected the lens that developed countries apply in viewing and framing environmental issue in the UNCSD. However, developing countries called for further discussions on economic and social issues in order to build true sustainability that includes physical, social, cultural, spiritual and economical dimensions.

Munasinghe (1993) explains that sustainable development has three basic components: 1) economic 2) social and 3) environmental (or the so-called, triple bottom line, Rogers and Ryan, 2001). The three components are interrelated. The details are as follows.

1) Economic component

Economic growth must be sufficient to generate appropriate income, while maintaining the original man-made resources - human capital and natural capital. The three fundamental economic goals are

- 1) increasing production of goods and services, 2) providing basic needs or eradicating poverty, and
- 3) ensuring a fairer distribution of income.

2) Social component

There are 2 fundamental principles - justice and equality. Resource accessibility, equality among people in the society, and human rights must be considered with the inclusion of other aspects, such as accessibility to food sources, healthcare services, education, housing, opportunity for self-development and public participation.

3) Environmental component

Natural resources must be used sustainably. Natural capital - mountains, forests, rivers, minerals - should be conserved to maintain the ecological stability on the global scale with balance between efficient economic and social components.

Charoernmuang (2002) discussed a conceptual framework for sustainable development in Asia and noted that sustainable development requires economic development that concerns the poor, social development and transparent management. The 8 components for sustainable development noted as follows:

- 1) Poverty eradication
- 2) Quality of life
- 3) People's accessibility to all processes of development
- 4) Respect for humanity
- 5) Social consideration in the development process
- 6) Acceptance of all social roles and human rights
- 7) Systematic thinking in planning and designing sustainable development
- 8) Reduction of resources use to only that which is necessary

The indicators for sustainable development underscored the following goals:

- 1) Raise the quality of lives in Thai society.
- 2) Produce stable economic growth, both internally and externally.
- 3) Population has equal rights to live and access fundamental social services with fair development distribution.
- 4) Having good management administrative work with rights and opportunities for people in all sectors and access to and transparent information on the work.

3.3 Livable city development

The debate over the concept and characteristics of livable cities is ongoing (McGee, 2010; Tan et al., 2014; Paul and Sen, 2020). (Balsas (2004) maintains “Livable means many things to different people.... A livable place is safe, clean, beautiful, economically vital, affordable to a diverse population and efficiently administered with functional infrastructure, interesting cultural activities and institutions, ample parks, effective public transportation and broad opportunities for employment. It also connotes a sense of community.” The United Nation’s concept of Liveable City requires creation of a livable city through urban development in the right direction (Buranasiri, 2011). The relationship between urban ecology and built-environment must be created in harmony, in order to maintain the balance which leads to sustainability. Some examples are sustainable land use, providing facilities and utilities for the urban people, building housing with various price points, developing sustainable public transportation and conserving cultural heritages in the cities.

The rapid growth in population has created a number of challenges in large cities, namely, ecological deterioration, increased amount of waste, water and air pollution, slum problems, and traffic problems. These issues, being very common in large cities around the world, need urgent resolution. The World Health Organization (WHO) has realized the weight of these problems and established the Healthy Cities Project under the campaign Health for all by the year 2000 to apply to local areas. Currently, more than 1,000 cities from around the world are members of the projects and the number is increasing yearly.

The WHO defines Healthy Cities as cities that are constantly innovating and improving in physical environmental and social aspects. There must be expansion of resources to allow the communities’ members to participate and help each other reach the best quality of life (Kampanatsaenyakorn, 1995). In other words, livable cities and livable communities can be defined as residential communities, in both urban and rural areas, with good quality of life, caring societies, strong communities, convenience, safety in lives and properties, economic stabilities, and cultural identities that is based on communities’ spirits (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2012). Based on these various definitions , we argue that cities’ livability varies, depending on the basic conditions and needs of the people in each community and the level of cooperativeness of the people and city officials at all levels, especially the top executives. The World Health Organization has defined 11 characteristics of livable cities as follows:

- 1) Having good physical environment with clean and safe housing
- 2) Having ecological stability
- 3) Having strong communities
- 4) Having people in participatory processes
- 5) People receiving basic necessities
- 6) People having the right and opportunity to receive and access information

- 7) Having diverse economic systems
- 8) Each community has a unique identity and cultural heritage
- 9) Using available natural resources efficiently with maximum benefits.
- 10) Having universal and appropriate health care services.
- 11) People having good health

To sum up briefly, Livable Cities must have physical and social improvements. Urban development must consider ecosystem benefits and design with nature, as well as man-made environments, in addition to having a well-organized environment for the people live happily.

Thadaniti (2007) and Charoernmuang (2002) classify the livability factors of the city into 3 dimensions, namely:

1) Social dimension:

1.1) Social Factor, e.g., wellbeing of people of all ages; safety of life and property; receiving good public service that is necessary to sustain lives; having clean, stable and strong housing; having good public health programs; having recreation and cultural activities; receiving equal treatment that meets the fundamental needs of lives; having citizens involved in local administration and development; and having strong communities..

1.2) Urban management factors with a focus on good governance in urban management, e.g., providing opportunities for citizens to participate in city/local administrations and policymaking; monitoring the work of executive officers; and filing corruption complaints, etc.

1.3) Physical factors related to society, e.g., having sufficient basic infrastructure, facilities and utilities that are necessary for adequate basic living.

2) Economic dimension, e.g., people in cities and communities have economic opportunities; have a situation that is conducive to investment; have urban economic stability – employment, cash flow, city finance, income and taxes from various locations, transparency, and accountability.

3) Environmental factors, e.g., good water and air quality, manageable noise pollution, effective waste management, having places for recreation, having public spaces, urban atmosphere, cultural environment, and other physical factors promoting the livability of the city, such as urban design and landscape design that are conducive to urban and community development.

3.4 Case studies of foreign livable cities for long-stay

The selected case studies of the livable cities for long-stay in foreign countries focus on reviewing the cities that are market competitors of long-stay tourists of Thailand – Malaysia and Indonesia (Kamolrat Intaratat, 2006). The details are as followed.

● **Malaysia**

Kuala Lumpur has been welcoming retirees from around the world with the campaign “Malaysia My Second Home” (MM2H). The government has been supporting long-stay expats, who comply with some conditions, to stay in the country for as long as possible. The rights for long-stay residents are granted to citizens of all countries, without consideration of race, religion, sexual orientation or age. The long-stay residents are allowed to bring along a spouse and unmarried offspring under the age 21 (The Malaysia Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit, 2021).

Malaysia opens its cities with the focuses on accommodating long-stay tourists at a reasonable price, affordable cost of living and a wide range of free activities for long-stay tourists. Moreover, there are factors to draw the interests among people who are deciding on the destinations of their long-stay to come to Malaysia. For example, having sufficient health services and healthcare facilities which are up to standard is a clear draw, particularly for elderly tourists. In this, Malaysia has announced that long-stay residents in Malaysia would have world-class healthcare services with private clinics at very affordable prices, as well as a convenient lifestyle from having English as a widely used language among the local people in large cities. Malaysia is considered Thailand's biggest competition in the long-stay tourism market due to the readiness in Malaysian laws and regulations for immigrants and visa conditions which grant a longer period of entry compared to Thailand. (The Malaysia Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit, 2021)

● **Indonesia**

Indonesia is a very popular destination among the elderly groups who want to spend their retired years in a foreign country due to its cultural diversity, warm climate and affordable cost of living. Indonesia puts an emphasis on creating a convenient lifestyle in the country. The rights granted for long-stay residents in Indonesia are eligibility for opening Indonesian bank accounts, receiving local driving licenses, and holding a multiple exit/re-entry permit (MERP) which allows travelling in and out of the country as many times as desired. In addition, long-stay residents in Indonesia can use their own names to register in purchasing activities, with the same privileges and discounts as the local people. (Worldwide Travel Visa Guide, 2021) In comparison to Thai law and regulation, these create advantages for Indonesia.

From reviewing the related concepts, theories and case studies of foreign livable cities for long-stay, the authors synthesize the review to create a framework of study (Figure 3).

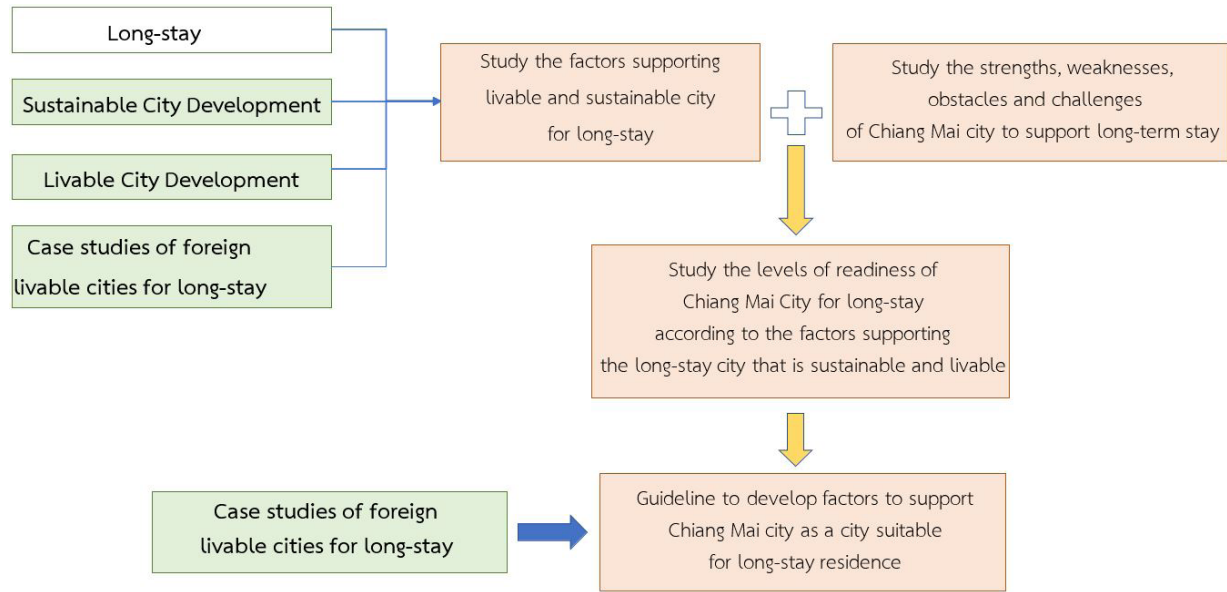


Figure 3 Integration of Concepts, Theories and Related Research into the Study.

4. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach. The samples in this research were randomly selected using a specific random sampling method, by selecting all relevant parties from 3 targeted groups: 1) experts/specialists in city development, 2) experts/specialists in long-stay tourism, and 3) stakeholders in long-stay tourism drawn from the public and private sectors. The tool used in this research primarily was a semi-structured in-depth interview. A focus group meeting was also organized as part of the study.

The researchers collected 2 levels of data, i.e., primary and secondary. 1) Primary data were collected from the in-depth interviews and a meeting with a focus group of stakeholders from all parties. After the discussions, the researchers reviewed the data to verify validity and completeness. 2) Secondary data were collected by reviewing various documents – theses, books, theories, concepts, reports from individual studies and relevant research. The researchers examined the validity of the data from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to decide whether the set of data fully covered the information needed to conclude the research. The data set was then analyzed by the process of Analytic Induction, interpreting the collected data and forming 1) conclusions about the factors supporting livable and sustainable city for long-stay tourism; 2) the strengths, weaknesses, obstacles and challenges of Chiang Mai City for supporting long-stay tourism; and 3) the readiness of Chiang Mai City for long-stay tourism according to the factors supporting livable and sustainable city for long-stay tourism.

The conceptual framework of this research is shown in Figure 4.

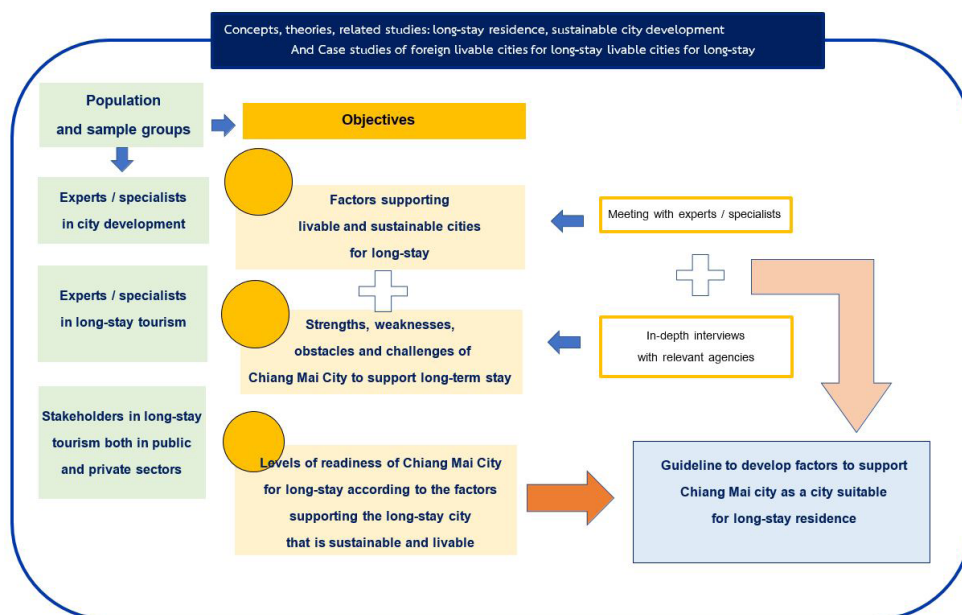


Figure 4 Conceptual Framwork of the Study.

5. Findings

This research set out to answer the following research questions. 1) What are the important driving factors for a city that aims to accommodate long-stay tourism to consider in its development plans? 2) What are the strengths, weaknesses, obstacles and challenges of Chiang Mai, as the city with the highest number of long-term residents in the North, for long-stay? These would lead to an assessment of Chiang Mai City's readiness in terms of the factors supporting a sustainable city for long-stay. The details of the study are as follows:

5.1 Factors supporting sustainable and livable city suitable for long-stay tourism

The authors reviewed literature, academic papers, theoretical frameworks, research related to cities suitable for long-stay, and a case study of a city suitable long-term stay in a foreign country. On July 24, 2020, at meeting room 2, Research and Graduate Studies Building. Social Research Institute of Chiang Mai University, the authors organized a meeting with experts/professionals in urban development and long-stay tourism to present the preliminary factors gathered from the literature review. The conference included a brainstorming and analysis session on factors and indicators to endorse Chiang Mai City as a sustainable and livable city suitable for long-stay (Figure 5).



Figure 5 Urban Development and Long-Stay Tourism Expert Meeting.

The results from the meeting concluded with a summary of factors and indicators supporting Chiang Mai City as a long-stay city and which would also lead to developing Chiang Mai City as a livable and sustainable city. The results are as follows:

1) Main factors

The main factors are factors that have direct relations. Developing a pleasant city to make local inhabitants happy and with an emphasis on wellbeing is the key that should be prioritized in developing Chiang Mai City to support long-stay. In building this, 12 key factors and indicators are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 Main Factors and Indicators Supporting Sustainable and Livable City for Long-Stay Tourism.

Main Factors	Indicators
1) Having a hygienic environment that is safe for life and property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having a hygienic environment with a functioning security-related infrastructure. - Having an integrated system in public security between different departments in preventive measures, risk assessment and protection plans. - Having a system to inform people about how to improve safety in their lives and for their properties.
2) Having city development patterns that are in harmony with physical characteristics, cultural identity and potential of the spatial capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having policies or directions of land use according to the context of the city and supportive to being a city for long-stay tourism. - Having a database of appropriate land use proportions for each types of use. - Having developed the city and communities in accordance with the principal city plan, specific plans or local ordinances. - Raising awareness among people to appreciate the areas, - Monitoring and participation in the process of evaluation in order for the direction of development towards the land use plan.

Table 2 Main Factors and Indicators Supporting Sustainable and Livable City for Long-Stay Tourism. (continuous)

Main Factors	Indicators
3) Having a stable ecosystem and sustainable future ecosystem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having a clear plan for maintenance and utilization of natural resources. - Having educational activities to raise awareness of the importance of natural resources and biodiversity to the general public. - Having groups or networks that look after natural resources and biodiversity in the area.
4) Having an effective management system for natural disasters that may occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having an effective alarm system for natural disaster. - Having clear provisions in disaster management. - Having groups or networks to monitor natural disasters in the area.
5) Local people having good wellbeing in all four aspects (physical, mental, social and spiritual). Having strong communities with good attitude towards their wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members of the communities are healthy and are active citizens whose awareness is raised through activities that promote good physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing. - Having plans to improve the quality of lives for people in the city with low income or who in some way are disadvantaged.
6) Citizens are involved in decision-making for issues related to long-stay activities in the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having public forums or a participatory process in decision-making on issues related to urban development, such as urban development to support sustainable long-stay tourism. - Having groups or committees from all sectors participating in the development of Chiang Mai City towards a city for long-stay.
7) Having sufficient basic elements of living for all local people with excess to accommodate long-stay residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having developed the basis for sufficient basic elements for living and facilities that meet international standards for both local residents and long-stay tourists.
8) Having well established necessary infrastructure that is convenient and accessible for everyone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having analyzed the demographics of the city to plan for quality and sufficient infrastructure in accordance to the analysis. - Having a participatory process in all stages of building the city infrastructure: planning, inspecting, evaluating and maintaining the infrastructure in a good condition to serve every group in various urban contexts.
9) Having efficient and well connected public transportation system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having multiple forms of public transportation which are efficient and well connected between city center and the suburb.
10) Having campaigns promoting economic development and having economic stability in the city, such jobs-security and wealth distribution to the local people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having policies with incentive to endorse and support investment in long-stay tourism. - Local entrepreneurs employ local workers and stimulate the economic flow in the area.
11) Having cultural heritage conservation to educate people in the city about the original way of life in the past.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local people are aware of and cherish their cultural heritage. - Having integrated collaboration between government agencies, civil society groups, communities, and the private sectors in cultural heritage management and conservation.
12) Having sufficient and qualified healthcare services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having sufficient and accessible health service facilities with qualified standard according to health service system standards by Department of Health Service Support. - Having network systems to prevent and control diseases and a developed emergency medical service system.

Source : Urban Development and Long-Stay Tourism Expert Meeting on 24 July 2020

2) Minor Factors

The pattern of long stay tourism is similar to other types of tourism. To accommodate the needs of this group of tourists, traveling in and out of the country must be convenient, in addition to the tourists' lives being comfortable during the long-stay. Long-stay tourists have diverse purposes in their stay and can be classified into several subgroups, such as retirees, students, workers, people who come to avoid extreme weather or people who are seeking health services. Thus, the minor factors for developing a sustainable city suitable for long-stay should take into account other dimensions. The minor factors are summarized under five factors presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Minor Factors and Indicators Supporting Sustainable and Livable City for Long-Stay Tourism.

Minor Factors	Indicators
1) Having various types of standard housing services and housing development which are secure and convenient for daily use to offer for long-stay residents.	- Having various housing types to support long-term tourism.
2) Having new experiences to offer long-stay residents, such as learning new cultures.	- Having a variety of tourism activities to offer long-stay residents. - Having special tourism campaigns to offer long-stay residents.
3) Cost of living is affordable and appropriate for long-stay residents.	- The level of living cost in comparison to other cities targeted for long-stay, both in Thailand and in foreign countries.
4) City policy supporting long-stay residents for their rights and ownerships.	- Having designated agencies responsible for long-stay residents, as well as having a policy and action plan that promotes long-stay to create an image of trust among long-stay tourists and the pertinent agencies.
5) Having availability of personnel, in both the public and private sectors, who understand and have potential to support long-stay tourism.	- Relevant agencies have set up activities or courses that are necessary to develop the potential of personnel to accommodate long-stay tourists

5.2 Strengths, Weaknesses, Obstacles and Challenges to Chiang Mai City for Long-Stay

On 22-25 February 2021, the authors conducted in-depth interviews with stakeholders and related agencies in the Chiang Mai area to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, obstacles and challenges of Chiang Mai City for supporting long-stay (Figure 6). The group consist of 10 people who are representatives from the Tourism Research and Development Center Chiang Mai University Representative from Chiang Mai Tourism Council, Chiang Mai Chamber of Commerce, Chiang Mai Tourism Business Association, Thai Spa Lanna Association, Thai Hotels Association (upper northern region), travel agency in Chiang Mai, Long stay tourism business, and Chiang Mai Immigration Office.



Figure 6 In-depth Interviews with Stakeholders and Relevant Agencies to gather opinions on Strengths, Weaknesses, Threads and Challenges of Chiang Mai for Long-Stay Tourism

The gathered opinions are synthesized in Table 4 and will be used as a tool to analyze the readiness of Chiang Mai City for long-stay.

Table 4 Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Challenges of Chiang Mai for Long-Stay Tourism.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chiang Mai is home to many tourist attractions which are well known both nationally and internationally. It is a tourism hub linked to the Mekong Sub-region. 2. Chiang Mai has unique and beautiful traditions, arts, culture and cultural wisdom of Lanna, which are conducive to economic development and value creation. 3. The cost of living is very affordable in comparison to the cost of living among competitors in the long-stay tourism market both domestically and internationally. 4. Chiang Mai has the highest number of long-stay tourists in the North of Thailand. 5. The main transportation network is well connected by cars, trains and planes. 6. Chiang Mai has readily available infrastructure and facilities to accommodate long-stay tourists. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of continuity and clarity of urban development policies. 2. The service and amenities standards are not up to expectations of long-term tourists. 3. The language proficiency of tourism personnel is still low. 4. Lack of tourist attraction development and long-stay tourism management to ensure quality of experience and delivery. 5. Lack of integration and collaboration between entrepreneurs and government agencies to support long-stay businesses in Chiang Mai. 6. Public transportation is not up to standard or well connected to all areas.
Threats	Challenges
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Problems from the pandemic and global political and economic stability has caused travelers to be cautious in planning and spending in their stays. 2. Legal factors hinder the development of Thailand's long-stay industry. 3. Competition from neighboring countries such as Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia with a similar level of potential and resources to Thailand. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The number of elderly tourists is increasing . This group of tourists is interested in health tourism, long-stay tourism and wants to travel to destinations that have good infrastructure. Elderly tourists are a large market segment with high purchasing power and are also the main long-stay group to travel abroad. This creates opportunities for Upper Northern Thailand which is ready to accommodate the elderly tourists, especially from China, India, Japan and Korea, and the Middle East.

Source : In-depth Interviews with Stakeholders and Relevant Agencies to gather opinions on Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Challenges of Chiang Mai for Long-Stay Tourism 22-25 February 2021

5.3 The readiness of Chiang Mai City to support long-stay tourism as evaluated according to factors supporting the livable and sustainable long-stay residence city

This research analyzes the readiness of Chiang Mai City to be a city for long-stay by studying (1) the factors supporting livable and sustainable long-stay city, along with studying (2) strengths, weaknesses, obstacles and challenges of Chiang Mai City for long-stay according to the factors supporting the long-stay city that is livable and sustainable. The research process took the findings from (1) and (2) and presented them to a group of 10 experts/specialists in city development for long-stay and 10 experts/specialists in long-stay tourism. The experts/specialists were then asked to assess the readiness of Chiang Mai City to be a city for long-stay through 17 factors and indicators (see Table 2 and Table 3). The assessment process involved asking the experts/specialists for their opinions and to vote on the levels of readiness of Chiang Mai City according to the main and minor factors by rating each on a scale of 1-5 (5 = very high level of readiness, 4 = high level of readiness, 3 = moderate level of readiness, 2 = low level of readiness and, 1 = very low level of readiness). Moreover, this research also suggests the preparations needed to make Chiang Mai City suitable for long-stay based on the factors that Chiang Mai City is lacking. The detailed results of the analysis with respect to the readiness of the city of Chiang Mai City to support long-stay are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5 Readiness Factors Level of Chiang Mai City Supporting Sustainable and Livable City Long-Stay Tourism.

Main factors for being livable and sustainable city for long-stay	Levels of readiness
1) Having an hygienic environment that is safe for lives and properties.	3
2) Having city development patterns that are in harmony with physical characteristics, cultural identity and potential of the spatial capacity.	3
3) Having a stable ecosystem and sustainable future ecosystem.	3
4) Having an effective management system for natural disasters that may occur.	5
5) Local people having good wellbeing in four aspects (physical, mental, social and spiritual). Having strong communities with good attitude towards their wellbeing.	3
6) Citizens are involved in decision-making in issues related to long-stay activities in the area.	2
7) Having sufficient basic elements of living for all local people with excess to accommodate long-stay residents.	5
8) Having well established necessary infrastructure that is convenient and accessible for everyone.	2
9) Having efficient and well-connected public transportation systems.	1
10) Having campaigns promoting economic development and having economic stability in the city, such jobs-security and wealth distribution to the local people.	2
11) Having cultural heritage conservation to educate people in the city about the original way of life in the past.	5
12) Having sufficient and qualified healthcare services.	3
Minor factors for being livable and sustainable city for long-stay	Level of readiness
1) Having various types of standard housing services and housing development which are secure and convenient for daily use to offer for long-stay residents.	4
2) Having new experiences to offer for long-stay residents, such as learning new cultures.	3
3) Cost of living is affordable and appropriate for long-stay residents.	5
4) City policy supporting long-stay residents for their rights and ownerships.	1
5) Having availability of personnel, from both the public and private sectors who understand and have potential to support long-stay tourism.	2

Source : Assessment results from the group of 20 experts/specialists in city development for long-stay tourism

6. Conclusions and suggestions

To restate the study above, 12 main factors and indicators were identified through in-depth interviews and focus group meetings with stakeholders from the private sector, government agencies, and tourism experts to make recommendations on a course of action that Chiang Mai City could implement towards its goal of remaining an important long-stay hub. The 12 main factors were: 1) having an hygienic environment that is safe for lives and properties; 2) having city development patterns that are in harmony with physical characteristics, cultural identity and potential of the spatial capacity; 3) having a stable ecosystem and sustainable future ecosystem; 4) having an effective management system for natural disasters that may occur; 5) local people having good wellbeing in four aspects (physical, mental, social and spiritual), having strong communities with good attitude towards their wellbeing; 6) having citizens involved in decision-making in issues related to long-stay activities in the area; 7) having sufficient basic elements of living for all local people with excess to accommodate long-stay residents; 8) having well established necessary infrastructure that is convenient and accessible for everyone; 9) having efficient and well-connected public transportation systems 10) having campaigns promoting economic development and having economic stability in the city, such jobs-security and

wealth distribution to the local people; 11) having cultural heritage conservation to educate people in the city about the original way of life in the past; and 12) having sufficient and qualified healthcare services. The 5 minor factors identified were: 1) having various types of standard housing services and housing development which are secure and convenient for daily use to offer for long-stay residents; 2) having new experiences to offer long-stay residents, such as learning new cultures; 3) having an affordable cost of living appropriate for long-stay residents; 4) having city policies supporting long-stay residents for their rights and ownerships; and 5) having availability of personnel, from both the public and private sectors who understand and have potential to support long-stay tourism.

When comparing the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, obstacles and challenges for Chiang Mai as a city for long-stay tourism, the study finds that Chiang Mai City has only 4 out of 17 factors ranked at a very high level of readiness: 1) having an effective management system for natural disasters that may occur; 2) having sufficient basic elements of living for all local people with excess to accommodate long-stay residents; 3) having cultural heritage conservation to educate people in the city about the original way of life in the past; and 4) cost of living is affordable and appropriate for long-stay residents. It is to be noted that the study was carried out under normal circumstances without anticipating the impact from the spread of Covid-19. The study finds that Chiang Mai City still lacks appropriate levels of readiness and/or potential in 13 other factors that would help to promote a successful long-stay tourism strategy. Therefore, the authors would like to suggest guidelines to prepare Chiang Mai City to support long-stay tourism, in order to help push for a solid plan to mobilize the city development to accommodate long-stay residents. (Table 6)

Table 6 Guidelines for the preparation of Chiang Mai City to be sustainable and livable city for long-stay.

Main factors for being livable and sustainable city for long-stay	Guidelines for the preparation to be sustainable and livable city for long-stay
1) Having hygienic environment that is safe for life and property.	- Integrate life and property security work between relevant agencies at the provincial, local and community levels to coordinate and command order of protection, watch out for warning both before and after the emergencies. The integration is in order to build confidence for long-term tourists and residents in the area.
2) Having city development patterns that are in harmony with physical characteristics, cultural identity and potential of the spatial capacity.	- Establish a database and map of on land use within the city. . - Control land use according to well established regulations that, particular, seek to conserve the city's cultural identity.
3) Having a stable ecosystem and a sustainable future in ecosystem.	- Develop plans and procedures to protect, restore and maintain ecosystems and natural resources.
4) Local people having good wellbeing in four aspects (physical, mental, social and spiritual).	- Organize activities to raise awareness about the four aspects of wellbeing, e.g., activities to promote good physical health – being strong and not frequently sick --, activities to promote good mental health – appearing in good spirits, being able to cope with stress and problems that occurs--, activities to create value in society -- giving happiness to others and participating in community and social activities --, and activities to build good relationships with surrounded people, etc.
5) Citizens are involved in decision making in issues related to long-stay activities in the area.	- Support the formation of a Chiang Mai Long-stay Tourism Committee to help develop and support concrete plans for long-stay management (details discussed below).
6) Having well established necessary infrastructure that is convenient and accessible for everyone.	- Integrate local work to develop and maintain infrastructure to cover all areas for all groups of people in all urban contexts. - Prepare a comprehensive infrastructure development and inspection project plan that takes into account all groups of people.
7) Having efficient and well-connected public transportation systems	- Integrate all types of transportation, especially public transportation to create a fast, safe, convenient and clean network that is well connected between the city center and the suburb, e.g., buses, Rod Daeng (local red transportation trucks) and intercity four-wheel transportation trucks.

Table 6 Guidelines for the preparation of Chiang Mai City to be sustainable and livable city for long-stay. (continuous)

Main factors for being livable and sustainable city for long-stay	Guidelines for the preparation to be sustainable and livable city for long-stay
8) Having campaigns promoting economic development and having economic stability in the city, such jobs-security and wealth distribution to the local people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop the capacity of local workers to raise their potential to support long-stay tourism that match the needs for Thai labor market in response to the Industry 4.0 policy. - Endorse and support investments in long-stay tourism. Support the private sector and Thai investors to join in developing long-stay tourism. The public sector needs to create incentives and provide suitable facilities.
9) Having sufficient and qualified healthcare services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise the level of standards for healthcare facilities and network systems for preventing and controlling diseases, and develop an improved emergency medical service system.
Minor factors for being livable and sustainable city for long-stay	Guidelines for the preparation to be sustainable and livable city for long-stay
1) Having various types of standard housing services and housing development which are secure and convenient for daily use to offer for long-stay residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop the standards for accommodation services and long-stay residences to create a framework to raise the quality of services and amenities to international standards under the authority of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports.
2) Having new experiences to offer for long-stay residents, such as learning new cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote tourism activities through public relations to create a new selling point for long-stay tourism, e.g., organizing tourism activities that support tourism throughout the year by publicizing through the tourism calendar, developing the activities that allow tourists to experience new tourism and the way of life of the local people, etc.
3) City policy supporting long-stay residents for their rights and ownerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote and support activities that motivate entrepreneurs in long-stay tourism to create qualified services with widely accepted standards and are trusted among tourists. For examples, accommodation for long-stay residents and hospitals that support long-stay, etc. Support the activities of service assessments and certifications in accordance with international guidelines by providing appropriate incentives.
4) Having availability of personnel, both in the public and private sectors who understand and have potential to support long-stay tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise the capabilities of personnel in the public sector, private sector and the general community to understand and have potential to support long-stay tourism in terms of language, healthcare, food safety, tourism activities organizations and coexistence with long-stay tourists - Create positive attitudes for all sectors related to long-stay tourism.

Source : the Authors, 2021

The suggestion that rises from the conclusion of this research is that the first step to mobilizing Chiang Mai City towards being a livable and sustainable city for long-stay should be pushing for the establishment of a Long-stay Tourism Board both at the provincial and provincial group levels. The formation of the board should be a concrete step towards efficiently managing, having a clear direction, and having a designated agency responsible for long-stay development and promotion plans. The board may consist of representatives from the public sector, private sector, members of the communities and local civil society, etc. Furthermore, the authors would like to point out that there are gaps in the city development policies related to long-stay tourism development that need to be discussed at the national level. The immediate work should focus on the area of laws and regulations relevant to long-stay tourism in both improvement and reinforcement. The laws and regulations that obstruct the development of long-term tourism should be revised and updated to suit the current situation. For example, procedures for entering and leaving the country, procedures for applying for a long-term residence visa, rights to personal/property/car insurance, land/residence/vehicle ownership, installment terms for land, and special tax rates for long-stay residents (conditions that allow paying in installments without the restriction to buy cash), should be reviewed. Moreover, the collaboration between government agencies with respect to law reinforcement should be supported. Relevant departments should be assigned clear roles

and responsibilities. Public relations should promote a better understanding of laws and regulations on long-stay tourism among the tourists, in order to build trust and create motivation to attract more long-stay tourists to the city. However, the limitation of this research is that it was carried out under normal conditions without anticipating the impact from the spread of Covid-19. Therefore, the study does not cover or consider the challenges of tourism in the new normal, for example, health insurance and vaccination.

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Author Contributions

Conceptualization, S.A. and N.P.; methodology, S.A. and P.N.; formal analysis, S.A.; investigation, S.A. and N.P.; writing—original draft preparation, S.A.; writing—review & editing, S.A. and N.P.; visualization, S.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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