

Article

Community-Based Tourism Entrepreneurial Ecosystems for the Sustainable Development Goals: Tackling Grand Societal Challenges in Emerging Economies

Leonard A. Jackson 

Michael A. Leven School of Management, Entrepreneurship and Hospitality, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA 30144, USA; ljack202@kennesaw.edu

Abstract

Community-based tourism (CBT) is widely promoted as a route to inclusive growth and conservation in emerging economies, yet outcomes vary because the communities' ability to create, scale, and sustain CBT enterprises depends on the surrounding entrepreneurial ecosystem. Building on entrepreneurial ecosystem theory and grand challenges scholarship, this article reframes CBT as a place-based entrepreneurial ecosystem that mobilizes local and external actors, resources, and institutions to advance the United Nations 2030 Agenda. The purpose of the study is to develop and illustrate an SDG-oriented CBT entrepreneurial ecosystem framework and identify the ecosystem mechanisms and boundary conditions associated with SDG contributions. Using a qualitative multiple-case design and structured document analysis of 42 public artifacts (peer-reviewed studies, program evaluations, organizational reports, and organizational webpages), three initiatives were examined: Namibia's communal conservancies, Chi Phat community-based ecotourism in Cambodia, and Bolivia's Chalalán Ecolodge. Cross-case synthesis showed that progress on SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)—with complementary contributions to SDGs 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, and 17—emerges when ecosystems combine: (i) enforceable community rights and benefit-sharing rules; (ii) bridging organizations that provide training, finance, market access, and quality assurance; (iii) accountable local governance for transparency and conflict resolution; and (iv) reinvestment mechanisms that fund conservation and community services. The analysis also identified boundary conditions (e.g., elite capture, value leakage, donor dependence, uneven tourism potential, and demand shocks) and specific policy levers (tenure security, adaptive concession policies, blended finance, and impact monitoring) to strengthen CBT ecosystems for SDG delivery.

Keywords: community-based tourism; entrepreneurial ecosystem; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); grand societal challenges; community-based enterprise; inclusive entrepreneurship; value capture; governance; sustainability; emerging economies



Academic Editor: Harry Coccossis

Received: 17 January 2026

Revised: 17 February 2026

Accepted: 24 February 2026

Published: 2 March 2026

Copyright: © 2026 by the author.

Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland.

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the [Creative Commons Attribution \(CC BY\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license.

1. Introduction

Tourism is a major source of foreign exchange, employment, and small business formation in many emerging economies, yet the distribution of benefits is often uneven and environmentally fragile. Value can leak to external firms through ownership structures and supply chains, while local residents bear a disproportionate share of social and ecological costs. These dynamics make it difficult for tourism to deliver durable development outcomes without deliberate governance and strategies for local value capture [1].

The United Nations 2030 Agenda frames development as an integrated set of economic, social, and environmental objectives that must be pursued simultaneously rather than sequentially [2]. Tourism is frequently positioned as a contributor to poverty reduction (SDG 1) and decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), but the distributional outcomes of tourism depend on who owns assets, who participates in decision-making, and how benefits are shared within communities and destinations. Notably, tourism is explicitly referenced in several SDG targets—including SDG 8.9 (sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products), SDG 12.b (tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism), and SDG 14.7 (economic benefits for small island and least developed states from sustainable use of marine resources, including tourism) [2]. These targets underline that tourism-led development is not automatic; it requires inclusive governance, capability building, and accountability to align enterprise growth with community priorities [3,4].

At the same time, the problems tourism is expected to address are grand societal challenges—complex, persistent, and interdependent issues such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, biodiversity loss, and climate change [5,6]. These challenges cannot be solved by single organizations; they require coordinated action across public, private, and civil-society actors, and they often involve trade-offs that complicate planning and evaluation.

Community-based tourism (CBT) has become a prominent development-oriented approach that seeks to place communities at the center of tourism ownership, decision-making, and benefit distribution [7,8]. In practice, CBT initiatives vary widely in performance. While some generate livelihoods and strengthen local institutions, many struggle with limited market access, weak management capacity, elite capture, and dependence on donors or intermediaries [9–11].

A key reason for heterogeneous CBT outcomes is that CBT is rarely a stand-alone venture; it is embedded in a broader configuration of enabling institutions, networks, intermediaries, and resource flows. This aligns with the entrepreneurial ecosystem perspective, which conceptualizes productive entrepreneurship as an outcome of place-based configurations of actors, institutions, and material and cultural resources [12,13]. When applied to CBT, an ecosystem lens shifts attention from “a project” to the conditions that allow multiple community entrepreneurs and organizations to coordinate, innovate, and sustain market participation over time.

Purpose of the Study and Contribution

Although CBT is frequently advocated as a tool for poverty reduction, inclusion, and conservation, the literature often evaluates CBT as a project or single enterprise and emphasizes outcomes without specifying the ecosystem mechanisms that explain why some initiatives mature and others stall [9–11]. Moreover, CBT scholarship and SDG-oriented tourism research are rarely integrated with entrepreneurial ecosystem theory in a way that captures the interdependent nature of grand societal challenges in emerging economies. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to develop and illustrate an SDG-oriented CBT entrepreneurial ecosystem framework and identify the ecosystem components, mechanisms, and boundary conditions associated with SDG contributions.

Building on entrepreneurial ecosystem theory [12–16] and grand challenges scholarship [5,6], the article conceptualizes CBT as a place-based ecosystem that mobilizes local and external actors, resources, and institutions to create, capture, and reinvest tourism value for SDG delivery. SDG impacts are treated as a bundle of reinforcing outcomes—centering SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and extending to

SDGs 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17—because livelihoods, stewardship, and governance are interdependent in many CBT settings [2,4,17].

Guided by this purpose, the study addresses three research questions: (RQ1) What ecosystem components and mechanisms enable CBT to contribute to the SDGs? (RQ2) How do CBT ecosystems respond to grand societal challenges in emerging economies? (RQ3) What policy and practice levers strengthen CBT entrepreneurial ecosystems?

The study makes three contributions. First, it develops an SDG-oriented CBT entrepreneurial ecosystem framework that links ecosystem functions to SDG pathways and boundary conditions. Second, it provides cross-case evidence from three established initiatives—Namibia’s communal conservancies, Chi Phat community-based ecotourism in Cambodia, and Bolivia’s Chalalán Ecolodge—to illustrate how ecosystem configurations shape SDG outcomes. Third, it identifies policy and practice levers for governments, destination organizations, and development partners to strengthen local value capture, inclusion, and resilience in CBT ecosystems.

Using a qualitative multiple-case study design and structured document analysis of 42 public artifacts, the study examined three established initiatives: Namibia’s communal conservancies, Chi Phat community-based ecotourism in Cambodia, and Bolivia’s Chalalán Ecolodge.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature on SDGs and grand challenges, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and CBT. Section 3 presents the multiple-case methodology and document-analysis protocol. Section 4 reports within-case findings and cross-case patterns. Section 5 discusses theoretical implications, SDG linkages, and policy recommendations for ecosystem building. Section 6 concludes with limitations and directions for future research.

2. Literature Review and Conceptual Background

This section strengthens the theoretical grounding for an SDG-oriented CBT entrepreneurial ecosystem perspective. It first discusses how ecosystem thinking is used in sustainable development and tourism to emphasize interdependencies among actors and socio-ecological systems. It then reviews grand societal challenges and the SDGs as a sustainability agenda for tourism entrepreneurship, before outlining entrepreneurial ecosystem theory and synthesizing CBT scholarship through an ecosystem lens.

2.1. Ecosystems for Sustainable Development in Tourism

Ecosystem perspectives are increasingly used in sustainable development because economic and social outcomes emerge from interdependent actors, institutions, and resource systems rather than from isolated projects [18,19]. In tourism destinations, enterprise performance and local well-being depend on interactions among community organizations, firms, government agencies, intermediaries, and the natural and cultural assets that attract visitors [20,21].

In CBT contexts, the relevant “ecosystem” is multi-layered: CBT enterprises are nested within destination tourism systems and within broader social–ecological systems. Integrated CBT research emphasizes that community-based tourism must be designed within adaptive governance arrangements that manage trade-offs among livelihoods, conservation, and cultural integrity [11,22,23]. Resilience-oriented studies similarly highlight feedback loops between stewardship incentives and livelihood outcomes, suggesting that sustainable development effects depend on governance quality and reinvestment mechanisms rather than on visitor numbers alone [24,25].

At the same time, ecosystem framings can mask distributional issues if they presume alignment among actors. Critical SDG-oriented tourism scholarship cautions that sus-

tainability narratives may obscure power relations, elite capture, and value leakage in tourism development [17]. These insights motivate combining ecosystem thinking with an entrepreneurial ecosystem lens that makes value creation, capture, and distribution explicit and links enterprise dynamics to SDG pathways.

2.2. Grand Societal Challenges, the SDGs, and Tourism Entrepreneurship

Grand challenges are persistent and large-scale problems that are socially important, involve complex interdependencies, and require coordinated action across multiple stakeholders [5,6]. They are characterized by uncertainty, contested problem definitions, and trade-offs between economic, social, and ecological objectives. In tourism destinations, these challenges are expressed as intertwined livelihood, equity, and conservation problems that are shaped by destination governance and market structures.

Entrepreneurship is increasingly examined as a mechanism for addressing grand challenges by mobilizing innovation, experimentation, and local action. Sustainable entrepreneurship emphasizes opportunities that generate economic value while simultaneously improving environmental or social conditions [14,15]. However, whether entrepreneurial activity advances societal goals depends on institutions, power relations, and who captures value, which makes distributional outcomes central to evaluation [16].

A pragmatic “robust action” perspective suggests that tackling grand challenges often involves creating flexible, collaborative arrangements that can adapt to uncertainty while maintaining forward progress [5]. In CBT settings, such robust action is reflected in partnerships among communities, state agencies, private operators, and intermediaries that experiment, learn, and adjust governance rules to balance conservation and development objectives.

The SDGs provide a globally recognized set of targets and indicators for addressing grand challenges, including poverty (SDG 1), decent work (SDG 8), reduced inequalities (SDG 10), sustainable communities (SDG 11), responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), climate action (SDG 13), life on land (SDG 15), and partnerships (SDG 17) [2]. Tourism intersects with many SDGs, but SDG contributions depend on governance arrangements and the degree to which communities participate and benefit [3,4].

Tourism scholarship has increasingly engaged with the SDGs as both a normative agenda and an evaluative framework while also warning that SDG language can obscure distributional trade-offs and power relations in tourism development. Critical SDG-oriented work emphasizes that sustainable tourism should be assessed through questions of who benefits, who bears costs, and how environmental externalities are managed, rather than through aggregate growth metrics alone [17]. For CBT specifically, SDG alignment requires moving beyond project rhetoric to operational mechanisms—such as transparent benefit-sharing, skills development, and stewardship incentives—that translate visitor spending into measurable improvements in livelihoods and ecosystems.

2.3. Entrepreneurial Ecosystems and Sustainable Development

Entrepreneurial ecosystems (EEs) refer to interdependent actors and factors that enable productive entrepreneurship within a territory. Ecosystem research highlights that entrepreneurship is shaped by networks, institutions, and resources rather than individual traits alone [12,18].

Stam [18] distinguishes between framework conditions (e.g., formal institutions, culture, infrastructure, and demand) and systemic conditions (e.g., networks, leadership, finance, knowledge, talent, and intermediaries) that jointly influence entrepreneurial outcomes. A growing body of work argues that ecosystem performance should be assessed

not only by the quantity of new ventures but also by value creation, resilience, and societal outcomes [13,19].

From a sustainable development perspective, ecosystem quality is reflected in whether entrepreneurship generates inclusive value and contributes to public goods. Sustainable entrepreneurship theory underscores that entrepreneurial action can create economic value while simultaneously improving environmental or social conditions [14,15], but distributional outcomes depend on institutions, power relations, and who captures value [16]. For SDG-oriented ecosystem assessment, this implies examining value capture and reinvestment mechanisms—not only venture counts—alongside resilience and stewardship outcomes [13,16,19].

In emerging economies and rural contexts, ecosystems often depend on intermediaries such as NGOs, donor programs, and state agencies to provide missing market functions (e.g., finance, training, certification, and market access). While such intermediaries can catalyze entrepreneurial activity, they can also create dependency or distort local incentives if local governance is weak [20,21].

Recent ecosystem research highlights that ecosystems are not static lists of elements but evolving systems shaped by path dependence, legitimacy, and coordination processes. Spigel and Harrison [22] advocate process-oriented explanations that trace how ecosystems emerge, accumulate resources, and reproduce advantages over time. For SDG-oriented CBT, this implies focusing on ecosystem-building functions—capability development, market access, rule setting, and reinvestment—rather than assuming that establishing a single tourism enterprise will automatically trigger sustained local development.

2.4. Community-Based Tourism as an SDG-Oriented Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Community-based tourism (CBT) is generally understood as tourism that is owned and/or managed by community members and designed to deliver collective benefits, including livelihoods, empowerment, and conservation. CBT commonly takes the form of a community-based enterprise whose objectives blend commercial viability with social and environmental goals [7,23].

The CBT literature identifies recurring implementation challenges: limited skills and business experience, weak market linkages, inconsistent product quality, low participation, and conflicts over benefit distribution. Structural barriers in destination governance can constrain community control, leading to tokenistic participation [8,9].

At the same time, successful CBT initiatives frequently feature strong local institutions and leadership, transparent benefit-sharing rules, partnerships for marketing and quality assurance, and alignment with conservation or cultural revitalization objectives [10,11,24]. Integrated approaches emphasize that CBT must be designed within broader social–ecological systems, with attention to resilience and adaptive governance [25].

Existing CBT scholarship highlights that positive outcomes are more likely when CBT initiatives integrate entrepreneurship capabilities, destination governance, and monitoring mechanisms that track social and environmental impacts over time [10,11]. Similarly, evidence from CBT homestays suggests that multi-SDG contributions are strengthened when communities have decision-making authority and when bridging partners support quality standards, product development, and market access [26]. Together with SDG-focused CBT evidence [4], these insights reinforce the conceptualization of CBT as an entrepreneurial ecosystem that can deliberately coordinate resources and governance to deliver SDG impacts.

These success factors correspond closely to entrepreneurial ecosystem constructs. Conceptualizing CBT as an ecosystem highlights how community entrepreneurs depend on enabling institutions, networks, capabilities, and resource flows to create and capture value.

Building on ecosystem theory and SDG-oriented CBT scholarship [4], this study proposes a CBT entrepreneurial ecosystem framework with four interacting dimensions: (1) enabling institutions (community rights, tourism regulation, accountability mechanisms); (2) actor networks and intermediaries (community organizations, NGOs, private operators, government agencies); (3) capabilities and resources (skills, finance, infrastructure, natural and cultural capital); and (4) value creation and reinvestment mechanisms (product development, market access, revenue sharing, and community funds). The framework anticipates that SDG contributions are mediated by benefit capture and reinvestment, and moderated by governance quality and exposure to shocks.

3. Materials and Methods

The study followed a transparent five-stage research process: (1) specify an SDG-oriented CBT ecosystem framework from entrepreneurial ecosystem, grand challenges, and CBT scholarship; (2) select information-rich CBT cases using theoretical sampling; (3) compile a triangulated documentary corpus for each case; (4) extract and code evidence on ecosystem components, mechanisms, SDG pathways, and risks using qualitative content analysis; and (5) conduct within-case narratives and cross-case synthesis to identify recurring mechanisms and boundary conditions [27–29].

3.1. Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative multiple-case study design suited for examining complex phenomena in context and generating analytical generalizations across cases [27]. The empirical strategy is a structured document review of publicly available secondary sources, an approach appropriate when initiatives are well-documented and when direct field access is constrained.

A multiple-case strategy was selected because CBT outcomes are shaped by configurations of institutions, actors, and place-based conditions; comparing cases supports analytical generalization by identifying mechanisms that recur across contexts as well as boundary conditions that explain variation. The unit of analysis in each case is the CBT entrepreneurial ecosystem—defined as the community and destination-level set of actors, institutions, resources, and linkages that collectively enable (or constrain) the creation and capture of tourism value for local development and conservation. In line with ecosystem scholarship, the analysis therefore attends to both “visible” components (e.g., organizations, policies, market channels) and “invisible” components (e.g., norms, trust, legitimacy) that shape entrepreneurial behavior and coordination [12,13].

Because the study focuses on established initiatives with extensive documentation, documentary evidence is appropriate for reconstructing ecosystem evolution, governance arrangements, and SDG-related outcomes. Document analysis is also well-suited for examining grand challenges where impacts unfold over time and where combining sources (academic studies, policy documents, and program reports) can help triangulate claims and reduce reliance on a single narrator. The approach aligns with qualitative content analysis procedures that enable systematic coding and a comparison of textual data across multiple sources and cases [28,29].

3.2. Case Selection

Cases were selected using theoretical sampling to capture variation in geography, institutional setting, and CBT organizational form while meeting three criteria: (i) location in emerging economies; (ii) explicit community ownership or community governance arrangements; and (iii) documented links to livelihood and conservation outcomes relevant to the SDGs. The selected cases were: Namibia’s communal conservancies (a national-

scale rights-based conservation and tourism model) [30–33], Chi Phat community-based ecotourism in Cambodia (a village-level CBT initiative supported by an NGO and tourism authorities) [34,35], and Chalalán Ecolodge in Bolivia (an indigenous community-owned ecolodge in a protected-area landscape) [36].

Selection was guided by four criteria: (i) the case represents a recognizable form of CBT with explicit community participation in ownership and/or governance; (ii) the initiative has been operating long enough to reveal governance and market dynamics beyond pilot stages; (iii) sufficient public documentation exists to support triangulation of ecosystem components and SDG-related outcomes; and (iv) the case illustrates linkages between tourism livelihoods and conservation or place stewardship—an important pathway for SDG co-benefits in many emerging-economy destinations. These criteria ensure that the cases are not simply “success stories” but analytically useful examples for understanding how ecosystem arrangements shape outcomes.

The three cases provide theoretical replication through variation in ecosystem architecture: Namibia reflects a policy-enabled, nationwide CBNRM system that aggregates many local conservancies; Chi Phat illustrates a community ecotourism destination that scaled through NGO facilitation and market creation; and Chalalán represents an Indigenous-owned lodge enterprise embedded in a protected-area partnership. This variation supports a comparison of how rights regimes, intermediaries, and market linkages interact to influence local value capture, inclusion, and conservation incentives.

3.3. Data Sources and Corpus

For each case, a corpus of artifacts was compiled including peer-reviewed journal articles, theses, policy and program reports, and authoritative organizational webpages. Sources were selected to provide verifiable descriptions of governance arrangements, benefit distribution, ecosystem partnerships, and socioeconomic and environmental outcomes. All online materials were accessed between December 2025 and January 2026. Table 1 summarizes the cases and representative sources.

Table 1. Overview of cases and representative sources.

Case	Context and CBT Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Form	Representative Artifacts (Examples)
Namibia: Communal Conservancies	Rights-based CBNRM model enabling community governance and contracting (joint ventures/concessions) for tourism and wildlife use.	NACSO [30]; Naidoo et al. [32]; Kalvelage et al. [1]; Wenborn et al. [33].
Cambodia: Chi Phat CBET	Community-based ecotourism with benefit-sharing rules, committee governance, and NGO intermediation to shift livelihoods from extractive activities.	UIAA [34]; Tieng [35].
Bolivia: Chalalán Ecolodge	Indigenous community-owned ecolodge supported by catalytic finance and technical assistance within a protected-area partnership.	Equator Initiative [36]; Jamal and Stronza [37]; Stronza and Gordillo [38].

Document identification followed an iterative protocol. First, keyword searches were conducted in Google Scholar and on publisher platforms using combinations of “community-based tourism”, “entrepreneurial ecosystem”, “CBNRM”, “conservancy tourism”, “Chi Phat”, and “Chalalán Ecolodge”, along with terms related to the SDGs (e.g., poverty, decent work, value capture, conservation). Second, case-specific gray literature from organizations and programs closely associated with each initiative

(e.g., NACSO/MEFT for Namibia; UIAA and implementing partners for Chi Phat; the Equator Initiative documentation for Chalalán) were gathered. Third, backward and forward citation searching was used to identify additional peer-reviewed sources referenced across the core documents.

Inclusion criteria were: (i) the document provided substantive evidence on ecosystem components (institutions, actors, networks, resources) and/or outcomes; (ii) the source was credible (peer reviewed, produced by a recognized organization, or corroborated across independent sources); and (iii) the content was sufficiently detailed to allow coding of mechanisms and SDG linkages. The final corpus comprised 42 artifacts (Namibia $n = 16$; Cambodia $n = 13$; Bolivia $n = 13$) spanning journal articles, theses, policy and program reports, and organizational web pages. Table 1 lists representative sources for each case; additional sources are cited throughout the text and references.

For each artifact, a structured extraction matrix captured: publication details, context and actors, described ecosystem mechanisms (e.g., rights, governance, finance, market access), reported or implied outcomes, and explicit or inferable SDG linkages. Representative statements were also recorded to support transparency and traceability between evidence and interpretations.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis, combining deductive codes derived from the CBT entrepreneurial ecosystem framework (institutions, actors and intermediaries, capabilities and resources, and value mechanisms) with inductive codes capturing SDG and grand-challenge outcomes [28]. Within-case coding produced case narratives and evidence tables; cross-case synthesis compared patterns, identified convergent mechanisms, and surfaced boundary conditions.

Coding proceeded in three phases. First, a deductive codebook was developed from the proposed CBT entrepreneurial ecosystem framework (e.g., enabling institutions and rights; intermediaries and support services; market linkages and value capture; governance and accountability; reinvestment and stewardship incentives). Second, inductive coding was used to capture emergent themes not fully anticipated by the framework (e.g., COVID-19 demand shocks, elite capture narratives, and the role of philanthropic awards). Third, within-case memos were synthesized into cross-case comparison matrices to identify recurring mechanisms, contingent conditions, and SDG-related outcome bundles.

Qualitative data analysis software (NVivo) was used to manage the corpus, attach codes to text segments, and retrieve evidence systematically across cases. Pattern matching and explanation building were used to relate coded mechanisms to observed outcomes and to assess whether similar mechanisms produced similar SDG pathways across the three cases. The cross-case analysis informed Table 2 (mechanisms and risks), Table 3 (representative statements from reviewed artifacts), and the SDG linkage synthesis presented in the Discussion and Conclusions.

3.5. Trustworthiness and Study Limitations

To enhance trustworthiness, we triangulated claims across multiple independent sources where possible and maintained an audit trail linking findings to the underlying documents. Given the reliance on secondary sources, the study does not claim causal attribution; instead, it identifies plausible mechanisms and ecosystem configurations associated with the reported outcomes [27].

Table 2. Cross-case comparison of CBT entrepreneurial ecosystem mechanisms and SDG pathways.

Case	Ecosystem Mechanisms	SDG Pathways/Grand Challenges	Key Risks/Boundary Conditions
Namibia: Communal Conservancies	Legal recognition; elected committees; reporting obligations; joint ventures/concessions; multi-stakeholder support network (NACSO).	SDGs 1 & 8: cash income, in-kind benefits, and employment through tourism and hunting; SDG 15: strengthened conservation incentives and wildlife recovery; SDG 10: improved local value capture and bargaining power where joint ventures are well governed; SDG 16: rights-based governance and accountability structures in conservancies; SDG 17: partnerships among communities, government, NGOs, and private operators.	Uneven tourism potential; leakage/value capture limits; governance capacity constraints; exposure to climate and demand shocks.
Cambodia: Chi Phat CBET	Community committee and service groups; NGO intermediation and training; formal benefit-sharing rule and community fund.	SDGs 1 & 8: diversified household income and decent-work opportunities (guiding, homestays, food, transport); SDG 12: visitor rules and waste management supporting responsible tourism; SDG 15: alternative livelihoods reducing pressure on forests and wildlife; SDG 11: community fund reinvestment in shared assets; SDG 16 & 17: local bylaws and multi-actor facilitation enabling collective action and market access.	Dependence on visitor demand; participation and equity risks; continued need for marketing/capacity support.
Bolivia: Chalalán Ecolodge	Catalytic finance and technical assistance; training; protected-area partnership; high community ownership and governance.	SDGs 1 & 8: Indigenous-owned enterprise generating employment and communal revenues; SDG 15: conservation incentives aligned with protected-area stewardship; SDG 11: reinvestment in community services and cultural assets; SDG 16: community governance and rule setting for benefit distribution; SDG 17: partnerships with conservation and development organizations.	Need to maintain land authority and service quality; market access constraints; potential social tensions if benefits are perceived as uneven.

Table 3. Representative statements from reviewed artifacts (illustrative evidence for ecosystem mechanisms).

Finding Category	Representative Statement	Source and Citation
Institutionalized community governance	Communal conservancies are described as self-governing entities with elected committees, defined boundaries, and obligations to hold annual meetings and prepare financial reports.	NACSO [30].
Scale and coverage of community conservation	NACSO reports 86 registered conservancies covering around 20.2% of Namibia and involving approximately 244,587 people.	NACSO [30].
Complementary tourism and hunting benefits	Across Namibian conservancies, tourism and hunting are reported as complementary sources of financial and in-kind benefits that can support livelihoods and conservation incentives.	Naidoo et al. [32].
Local value capture constraints	Tourism value chain analysis indicates that only a limited share of tourism value is retained locally in parts of Namibia, pointing to persistent leakage through ownership and supply chains.	Kalvelage et al. [1].
Benefit-sharing and community funds	The Chi Phat project report describes a benefit-sharing rule where most revenue is paid to service-providing families while a portion is allocated to a community fund for shared investments.	UIAA [34].
Catalytic start-up finance and capability building	The Chalalán case study reports that the ecolodge was founded with grants totaling almost USD 1.5 million and emphasizes training in business management, marketing, customer service, and guiding.	Equator Initiative [36].

Credibility was strengthened through the triangulation of key factual claims across independent sources where available (e.g., comparing peer-reviewed studies with program reports and organizational data). A transparent chain of evidence was maintained by linking interpretations to coded excerpts and by preserving representative quotations used in Table 3. To support dependability, the coding scheme was iteratively refined and applied consistently across cases, and analytic memos were used to document decisions about code definitions and case boundaries. These steps align with recommended practices for qualitative content analysis and case-based inquiry [27,28].

Several limitations should be noted. First, documentary evidence may reflect reporting incentives and may understate conflicts, failures, or informal benefit distribution. Second, the level of documentation was uneven across cases, which can bias comparisons toward more heavily studied initiatives. Third, the study could not estimate causal SDG impacts or net welfare effects; instead, it identified plausible mechanisms and conditions through which CBT ecosystems can contribute to SDGs. These limitations suggest that future research should combine ecosystem-oriented document analysis with primary data (e.g., household surveys, social network analysis, and ecological monitoring) to measure outcomes more directly.

4. Results

4.1. Namibia: Communal Conservancies as a Tourism–Conservation Ecosystem

Namibia's communal conservancies represent a widely cited community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) model linking community governance, wildlife conservation, and tourism and hunting revenues. The Namibian Association of CBNRM Supporting Organizations (NACSO) reports that there are 86 registered communal conservancies recognized by the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, covering around 20.2% of Namibia and involving approximately 244,587 people [30].

Conservancies are legally recognized, self-governing entities with elected committees, defined boundaries, and obligations to hold annual general meetings and prepare financial reports [30]. For conservancies with tourism potential, rights to establish tourism enterprises are realized through joint ventures and concession arrangements with private-sector operators, who bring capital, marketing capabilities, and operational experience [30].

The scale of the Namibian system is reflected in both enterprise activity and benefit flows. The State of Community Conservation in Namibia (2022) reports that by the end of 2022, there were 44 joint-venture tourism agreements employing 866 full-time and 22 part-time/seasonal employees, alongside conservation hunting concessions employing 127 full-time and 163 part-time/seasonal employees [31]. In 2022, conservancies generated a total cash income and in-kind benefits to rural communities of N\$ 140,254,009, with tourism as the dominant contributor (N\$ 92,399,594), followed by trophy hunting (N\$ 34,828,377) and other sources such as own-use meat and craft sales [31]. These livelihood outcomes directly support SDG 1 and SDG 8 while also strengthening local incentives for wildlife stewardship (SDG 15).

At the ecosystem level, the conservancy model also illustrates enabling SDG conditions. Community institutions are embedded in a national policy framework that recognizes collective rights to wildlife use and tourism concessions, while national and regional support organizations provide training, monitoring, and brokering functions that most individual communities could not provide alone [30,32]. These multi-actor arrangements are consistent with SDG 16 (institutions, transparency, and rule enforcement) and SDG 17 (partnerships). At the same time, the uneven distribution of tourism opportunities across remote and less scenic areas underscores SDG 10 challenges (spatial inequality) and highlights the need for policies that increase local value capture and diversify income streams.

From an entrepreneurial ecosystem perspective, the conservancy model combines enabling institutions (recognized community rights and governance requirements), bridging organizations (e.g., NACSO and its working groups), and private-sector partnerships that connect remote communities to tourism markets. Peer-reviewed evidence suggests that tourism and hunting can produce complementary benefit streams: Naidoo et al. [32] evaluated financial and in-kind benefits from tourism and hunting across 77 conservancies and found that both sources can support livelihoods and conservation incentives, though benefits vary across locations and enterprise arrangements.

However, value capture remains partial. Using tourism value chain analysis in the Zambezi region, Kalvelage et al. [1] reported that a limited share of tourism value is retained locally, highlighting leakage through external ownership and supply chains. These findings underscore that ecosystem performance depends not only on attracting visitors but also on governance capacity, bargaining power in partnerships, and strategies to deepen local linkages.

Overall, Namibia's conservancy ecosystem illustrates how a national institutional framework can enable locally governed tourism and conservation initiatives that contribute to SDG 1 and SDG 8 (livelihoods and employment) and SDG 15 (biodiversity conservation) while relying on multi-stakeholder partnerships consistent with SDG 17 [30,33].

4.2. Cambodia: Chi Phat Community-Based Ecotourism

Chi Phat is a remote mountain community in Cambodia's Cardamom Mountain Range where a community-based ecotourism (CBET) project was initiated in 2007 to create alternative livelihoods and reduce illegal logging and wildlife poaching. According to a project report published by the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA), the initiative has generated more than USD 800,000 in community revenue since 2007 and attracted more than 18,000 international visitors, with an 80/20 revenue split between service-providing families and a community fund used for equipment and infrastructure [34].

The ecosystem architecture includes a management committee and multiple functional groups (e.g., homestays, guiding, transport, cooking, and waste management), supported by bylaws and participatory decision-making processes [34]. Wildlife Alliance acted as an intermediary, providing participatory planning facilitation, training, and market development while coordinating with Cambodian government agencies [34].

The case illustrates a conservation–livelihood feedback loop central to SDG delivery. The UIAA report describes reductions in environmentally destructive practices (e.g., forest burning and hunting) alongside expanded income opportunities through hospitality services, guiding, and equipment rentals [34]. Education and waste-management initiatives (training for students and teachers, community waste collection and recycling efforts) indicate contributions beyond income generation, aligning with SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) and SDG 15 (life on land) in addition to SDGs 1 and 8.

From an SDG perspective, Chi Phat demonstrates how a community tourism ecosystem can deliver integrated outcomes. Household revenues and paid roles (guiding, homestays, cooking, and transport) contribute to SDG 1 and SDG 8, while the substitution of tourism income for environmentally harmful activities strengthens SDG 15 by reinforcing incentives to protect the surrounding forests and wildlife. Operational practices—such as organized waste management and visitor rules—illustrate SDG 12 linkages, and the community fund functions as a local public-good mechanism that can improve shared assets and basic infrastructure aligned with SDG 11. Finally, the formalized governance structure and bylaws supporting revenue distribution and rule enforcement foreground SDG 16 as an enabling condition for sustained SDG outcomes in CBT ecosystems [34,35].

At the same time, sustaining these outcomes depends on continued visitor demand, effective enforcement of community rules, and ongoing capacity building. Research on CBT in emerging contexts cautions that maintaining participation, transparency, and equitable benefit distribution is essential to long-term legitimacy and resilience [9,35].

4.3. Bolivia: Chalalán Indigenous Community Ecotourism

Chalalán Ecolodge is an indigenous community-owned ecolodge in Bolivia's Madiidi protected area, established through partnership with Conservation International and catalytic funding from the Inter-American Development Bank. The Equator Initiative case study series reports that the initiative was founded with grants totaling almost USD 1.5 million in 1994 and emphasizes Chalalán's long-term financial viability and high level of community ownership [36].

Tourism demand for Chalalán expanded gradually as the enterprise matured and built market legitimacy. The Equator Initiative documentation reports that Chalalán received 186 visitors in 1998, grew to 700 visitors in 1999, and by 2007, annual visitation had doubled to 1406 [36]. The case highlights how catalytic finance and early technical support can help Indigenous communities overcome initial barriers to entry (training, infrastructure, marketing), after which sustained community ownership and reinvestment can generate longer-term livelihood and stewardship benefits. These dynamics reinforce SDG 8 (local employment and enterprise), SDG 1 (income generation and community services), and SDG 15 (conservation incentives linked to the surrounding protected area).

From an ecosystem standpoint, external partners provided start-up finance, technical assistance, and access to broader conservation and tourism networks, while the community retained ownership and built capabilities through training in business management, accounting, marketing, customer service, and guiding [36]. The initiative illustrates how bridging organizations can accelerate ecosystem formation by reducing capital constraints and strengthening market access without displacing community control.

The case also aligns with collaboration scholarship in protected areas. Jamal and Stronza [37] used Chalalán to illustrate how partnerships can be structured to integrate conservation objectives with community economic development. At the same time, community perspectives research highlights that ecotourism can introduce both positive and negative social changes, reinforcing the need for transparent governance and conflict management to sustain legitimacy [38].

Chalalán's ecosystem contributes to SDG 1 and SDG 8 through livelihood opportunities, SDG 15 through conservation incentives and stewardship of community lands, and SDG 17 through cross-sector partnerships. The case study also underscores a key boundary condition: maintaining authority over community lands and conservation areas is critical for sustaining tourist interest and long-term viability [36].

4.4. Cross-Case Synthesis

Across the three cases, SDG-relevant outcomes were consistently associated with ecosystem-level mechanisms rather than isolated project activities. Four recurring mechanisms emerged: (1) institutionalized community rights and rules that reduce uncertainty and specify benefit sharing; (2) bridging organizations and intermediaries that provide training, finance, and market access; (3) accountable local governance capable of conflict resolution; and (4) reinvestment mechanisms (e.g., community funds) that convert tourism revenues into public goods such as conservation, infrastructure, and social services. Table 2 summarizes the cross-case evidence and highlights boundary conditions that shape performance.

5. Discussion

5.1. How CBT Entrepreneurial Ecosystems Enable SDG Pathways

The findings support the argument that CBT operates most effectively as an entrepreneurial ecosystem when it aligns institutions, actor networks, capabilities, and value mechanisms toward SDG delivery. In all three cases, a central enabling condition is the institutionalization of community rights and governance requirements. Namibia's conservancies demonstrate how legal recognition and reporting obligations can create a platform for community-led contracting and investment [30], while Chi Phat and Chalalán illustrate how bylaws, voting procedures, and negotiated rules structure participation and accountability [34,36].

A second mechanism is the role of bridging organizations. Ecosystem theory emphasizes intermediaries that connect local actors to knowledge, finance, and markets [12,18]. In the CBT cases, intermediaries (e.g., NACSO, Wildlife Alliance, Conservation International) provide training, technical assistance, and reputational legitimacy that help communities overcome structural disadvantages common in emerging economies. This mechanism is consistent with SDG 17, which highlights partnerships as a means of implementing sustainable development [2].

Third, effective CBT ecosystems depend on value capture and reinvestment. Jackson [4] emphasizes that CBT can catalyze SDG 1 and SDG 8 when income reaches households and is reinvested in community priorities. Our cross-case analysis refines this claim by showing that formal benefit-sharing rules and community funds are practical devices that link market participation to collective outcomes. However, evidence from Namibia indicates that local capture may remain limited without strategies to deepen local supply chains and improve bargaining power in joint ventures [1].

Finally, CBT ecosystems illustrate how entrepreneurship can contribute to grand challenge mitigation through conservation–livelihood feedback loops. In each case, tourism value is linked—directly or indirectly—to stewardship of natural and cultural assets. Such feedback loops can support biodiversity conservation (SDG 15) while creating income opportunities (SDGs 1 and 8), illustrating how entrepreneurial activity can be oriented toward multi-dimensional societal value creation [14,15].

5.2. Boundary Conditions, Trade-Offs, and Risks

Despite these strengths, CBT ecosystems face recurring risks and trade-offs. Elite capture and exclusion can undermine legitimacy when benefits concentrate among a subset of households or leaders [8,9]. Value leakage can persist through external ownership and imported inputs, limiting local development impact [1]. Dependence on NGOs or donors can create vulnerabilities if external support is withdrawn before local capabilities are consolidated [10]. In addition, tourism demand shocks—such as pandemics, political instability, or climate-related disruptions—can rapidly erode revenues, making diversification and contingency planning essential.

These risks imply that a CBT entrepreneurial ecosystem approach should be evaluated not only by visitor numbers but also by governance quality, distributional outcomes, and resilience—consistent with ecosystem critiques that caution against equating entrepreneurship with welfare automatically [13].

5.3. Policy and Practice Implications

Policy and practice implications follow directly from the ecosystem mechanisms identified. First, governments can strengthen enabling institutions by recognizing community rights, formalizing tourism concession frameworks, and requiring transparent financial reporting and inclusive decision-making processes. Second, development partners can

shift from short-term project funding toward ecosystem-building investments—training, mentoring, infrastructure, digital connectivity, and market access—while planning for the gradual transfer of responsibilities to community governance structures. Third, destination managers and private operators can support local value capture by increasing local procurement, investing in supplier development, and designing joint venture agreements that build managerial capacity and expand community equity over time. Finally, monitoring should explicitly track SDG-relevant indicators (e.g., household income distribution, decent work conditions, conservation outcomes, and reinvestment into community services) to ensure that CBT outcomes align with the grand challenge objectives that justify public and donor support.

First, governments can strengthen CBT entrepreneurial ecosystems by clarifying and enforcing community rights to land, wildlife, and tourism benefits—through tenure security, transparent concession rules, and accessible dispute-resolution mechanisms. Namibia’s conservancy system illustrates how formal recognition and reporting obligations can enable communities to negotiate joint-venture agreements and capture employment and income benefits while also providing a basis for accountability [30,32]. Such institutional design is directly aligned with SDG 16 and acts as a foundation for SDG 1 and SDG 8 outcomes.

Second, ecosystem-building investments are as important as individual enterprise grants. Bridging organizations (NGOs, destination management entities, conservancy associations, and universities) can provide entrepreneurial training, product development support, quality assurance, and market brokerage—functions that reduce transaction costs and information asymmetries in rural tourism markets [12,18]. Policy instruments that fund these ecosystem functions—such as competitive grants for destination intermediaries, technical assistance pools, and mentorship networks—can accelerate inclusive entrepreneurship without creating long-term dependency.

Third, policies should explicitly target local value capture and equitable distribution. Measures include local procurement requirements or incentives in concession contracts, support for complementary microenterprises (guiding, crafts, food supply), and community funds with transparent rules for reinvesting a share of tourism revenues in public goods (e.g., water systems, schools, health posts). These mechanisms increase the likelihood that tourism growth reduces poverty and inequality (SDGs 1 and 10) rather than exacerbating spatial and social divides. The cases also suggest that equity safeguards—such as rotation systems for work opportunities, public financial reporting, and inclusive representation—are necessary to reduce elite capture risks identified in CBT research [8,9].

Fourth, SDG-oriented CBT ecosystems require resilience planning. Overreliance on a single tourism market segment exposes communities to demand shocks, while climate variability and biodiversity pressures can undermine the resource base on which nature-based CBT depends. Diversifying products (domestic and regional markets, cultural tourism, conservation volunteering), investing in digital marketing capabilities, and establishing contingency funds or parametric insurance mechanisms can improve ecosystem resilience. Integrating climate adaptation and conservation finance (e.g., payments for ecosystem services) into CBT business models strengthens the SDG 13 and SDG 15 co-benefits and reduces vulnerability to external shocks.

5.4. Monitoring and Reporting SDG Outcomes in CBT Ecosystems

A practical challenge for SDG-oriented CBT is demonstrating impact beyond anecdotal success narratives. SDG 12.b calls for tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism, but local CBT initiatives often lack resources for consistent data collection. A feasible approach is to embed lightweight “SDG dashboards” into CBT

governance systems that track a small set of locally meaningful indicators aligned with both enterprise performance and SDG targets.

Across the cases, a parsimonious dashboard could track: (i) household income and the share of tourism revenues retained locally (SDG 1); (ii) number, quality, and inclusiveness of jobs (SDG 8), including gender and youth participation; (iii) benefit distribution and grievance-resolution metrics (SDG 10 and SDG 16); (iv) environmental indicators such as wildlife incidents, forest cover, or waste-management compliance (SDG 12 and SDG 15); and (v) partnership and reinvestment metrics, such as the functioning of community funds and collaborative agreements (SDG 17). Such monitoring supports adaptive management by enabling communities and partners to detect trade-offs early and adjust rules, pricing, or visitor management to maintain social license and ecological integrity.

6. Conclusions

6.1. *Conclusions and Contributions*

This article reframes community-based tourism as an SDG-oriented entrepreneurial ecosystem that can contribute to grand challenge mitigation in emerging economies. Across the three cases, SDG progress is associated with ecosystem configurations that combine: (i) enforceable community rights and benefit-sharing rules; (ii) bridging organizations that provide training, finance, market access, and quality assurance; (iii) accountable local governance for transparency and conflict resolution; and (iv) value capture and reinvestment mechanisms that fund conservation and community services. The analysis clarifies how these ecosystem functions translate tourism participation into livelihood, conservation, and community development outcomes while highlighting boundary conditions (e.g., elite capture, value leakage, donor dependence, and demand shocks) that can undermine SDG delivery.

The core theoretical contribution is shifting the unit of analysis from the CBT enterprise to the CBT entrepreneurial ecosystem, thereby explaining why similar CBT products can produce divergent outcomes. By integrating entrepreneurial ecosystem theory with SDG and grand challenges scholarship, the study reframes ecosystem performance in terms of inclusive value capture and reinvestment—not only venture creation—and treats governance (SDG 16) and partnerships (SDG 17) as enabling conditions for SDG 1 and SDG 8 outcomes.

More specifically, the study extends and complements existing theory by: (1) specifying four ecosystem mechanisms that connect CBT entrepreneurship to SDG pathways; (2) proposing a “bundle-of-SDGs” logic that captures complementarity and trade-offs across economic, social, and environmental goals; (3) identifying boundary conditions and risks that qualify ecosystem effectiveness; and (4) translating these mechanisms into policy levers and monitoring guidance that can inform ecosystem-building interventions and future hypothesis testing.

From a practical standpoint, the findings underscore that “community participation” is not sufficient unless communities can exercise genuine decision-making power, negotiate fair terms with external partners, and retain a meaningful share of tourism value. For destinations and development agencies, the ecosystem lens provides a roadmap for designing interventions that invest in governance capacity, market access, and resilience—rather than treating CBT as a short-term project. These insights are relevant to policymakers seeking scalable approaches to poverty reduction, decent work creation, and conservation-linked livelihoods in emerging economies.

6.2. Summary of Key Findings and Policy Recommendations

Table 4 summarizes the key findings and policy recommendations aligned to the study's research questions. The recommendations emphasize rights-based governance, ecosystem-building investments, local value capture strategies, inclusive institutions, and resilience planning to sustain SDG contributions over time.

Table 4. Summary of the key findings and policy recommendations.

Research Objective	Key Finding	Policy Recommendation
RQ1: Ecosystem components and mechanisms	CBT contributes to SDGs when enabling institutions, actor networks, capabilities, and value mechanisms are aligned; benefits are amplified when rules specify community rights and reinvestment.	Strengthen community rights and tourism concession frameworks; invest in ecosystem enablers (training, digital connectivity, intermediation, and market access) rather than one-off projects.
RQ2: Addressing grand societal challenges	CBT can create conservation–livelihood feedback loops that simultaneously address poverty/unemployment and socio-ecological degradation when incentives and stewardship are coupled.	Embed CBT in landscape and protected-area governance; use performance-based incentives and co-management agreements that reward conservation outcomes while protecting livelihoods.
RQ2: Local value capture	Even when tourism grows, local capture may remain limited due to leakage through external ownership and imported inputs.	Increase local procurement and supplier development; negotiate joint ventures that build community equity and managerial capacity over time; support access to finance for local complementary enterprises.
RQ3: Governance legitimacy and equity	Elite capture, exclusion, and opaque benefit distribution threaten long-term legitimacy and SDG impacts.	Require transparent financial reporting, community audits, and grievance mechanisms; design participation rules that include women, youth, and marginalized households; monitor distributional outcomes.
RQ3: Resilience to shocks	CBT ecosystems are vulnerable to demand and climate shocks; resilience depends on diversification and contingency planning.	Diversify products and markets; build contingency funds; integrate climate adaptation and risk management into CBT business models; strengthen domestic tourism linkages where feasible.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

Limitations should be interpreted alongside the study's goals. First, the analysis relied on secondary documents that vary in purpose, methodological rigor, and reporting incentives, which can introduce publication and success-story bias. Second, outcome measures were not standardized across cases, limiting a direct comparison of effect sizes (e.g., net household welfare impacts or ecological additionality). Third, because the study was document-based, it could not adjudicate causal attribution or capture informal power dynamics and intra-community negotiations that may shape inclusion and benefit distribution.

Future research can build on this ecosystem framing in several ways. Mixed-method designs could combine document analysis with household surveys, social network analysis, and ecological monitoring to estimate SDG-relevant outcomes more directly and to test propositions about which ecosystem configurations are most effective. Comparative

studies could include “near miss” CBT initiatives or non-tourism livelihood alternatives to better assess counterfactuals and displacement effects. Finally, research is needed on how CBT entrepreneurial ecosystems adapt to climate change and demand shocks, including the role of digital platforms, blended finance, and new forms of community equity and benefit-sharing.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created. All data were derived from publicly available sources cited in the article.

Acknowledgments: The author reviewed and edited the content and takes full responsibility for the integrity of the work.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

References

1. Kalvelage, L.; Revilla Diez, J.; Bollig, M. How much remains in the village? Local value capture from tourism in Zambezi, Namibia. *Tour. Geogr.* **2022**, *24*, 759–780. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
2. United Nations. Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 2015. Available online: <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda> (accessed on 10 January 2026).
3. Scheyvens, R.; Russell, M. Tourism and poverty reduction in Fiji: Comparing impacts of small- and large-scale tourism enterprises. *J. Sustain. Tour.* **2012**, *20*, 417–436. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
4. Jackson, L.A. Community-Based Tourism: A Catalyst for Achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals One and Eight. *Tour. Hosp.* **2025**, *6*, 29. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
5. Ferraro, F.; Etzion, D.; Gehman, J. Tackling grand challenges pragmatically: Robust action revisited. *Organ. Stud.* **2015**, *36*, 363–390. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
6. George, G.; Howard-Grenville, J.; Joshi, A.; Tihanyi, L. Understanding and tackling societal grand challenges through management research. *Acad. Manag. J.* **2016**, *59*, 1880–1895. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
7. Scheyvens, R. Ecotourism and the empowerment of local communities. *Tour. Manag.* **1999**, *20*, 245–249. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
8. Blackstock, K.L. A critical look at community based tourism. *Community Dev. J.* **2005**, *40*, 39–49. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
9. Tosun, C. Limits to community participation in the tourism development process in developing countries. *Tour. Manag.* **2000**, *21*, 613–633. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
10. Dodds, R.; Ali, A.; Galaski, K. Mobilizing knowledge: Determining key elements for success and pitfalls in developing community-based tourism. *Curr. Issues Tour.* **2018**, *21*, 1547–1568. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
11. Dangi, T.B.; Jamal, T. An integrated approach to sustainable community-based tourism. *Sustainability* **2016**, *8*, 475. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
12. Spigel, B. The relational organization of entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Entrep. Theory Pract.* **2017**, *41*, 49–72. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
13. Stam, E.; van de Ven, A. Entrepreneurial ecosystem elements. *Small Bus. Econ.* **2021**, *56*, 809–832. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
14. Cohen, B.; Winn, M.I. Market imperfections, opportunity and sustainable entrepreneurship. *J. Bus. Ventur.* **2007**, *22*, 29–49. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
15. Shepherd, D.A.; Patzelt, H. The new field of sustainable entrepreneurship: Studying entrepreneurial action linking what is to be sustained with what is to be developed. *Entrep. Theory Pract.* **2011**, *35*, 137–163. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
16. McMullen, J.S. Delineating the domain of development entrepreneurship: A market-based approach to facilitating inclusive economic growth. *Entrep. Theory Pract.* **2011**, *35*, 185–215. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
17. Boluk, K.A.; Cavaliere, C.T.; Higgins-Desbiolles, F. A critical framework for interrogating the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Agenda in tourism. *J. Sustain. Tour.* **2019**, *27*, 847–864. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
18. Stam, E. Entrepreneurial ecosystems and regional policy: A sympathetic critique. *Eur. Plan. Stud.* **2015**, *23*, 1759–1769. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
19. Cavallo, A.; Ghezzi, A.; Balocco, R. Entrepreneurial ecosystem research: Present debates and future directions. *Int. Entrep. Manag. J.* **2019**, *15*, 1291–1313. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
20. Roundy, P.T. Small town entrepreneurial ecosystems: Implications for developed and emerging economies. *J. Entrep. Emerg. Econ.* **2017**, *9*, 238–262. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
21. Thai, Q.H.; Mai, K.N.; Do, T.T. An evolution of entrepreneurial ecosystem studies: A systematic literature review and future research agenda. *SAGE Open* **2023**, *13*, 21582440231153060. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

22. Spiegel, B.; Harrison, R. Toward a process theory of entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Strateg. Entrep. J.* **2018**, *12*, 151–168. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
23. Peredo, A.M.; Chrisman, J.J. Toward a theory of community-based enterprise. *Acad. Manag. Rev.* **2006**, *31*, 309–328. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
24. Zapata, M.J.; Hall, C.M.; Lindo, P.; Vanderschaeghe, M. Can community-based tourism contribute to development and poverty alleviation? Lessons from Nicaragua. *Curr. Issues Tour.* **2011**, *14*, 725–749. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
25. Ruiz-Ballesteros, E. Social-ecological resilience and community-based tourism: An approach from Agua Blanca, Ecuador. *Tour. Manag.* **2011**, *32*, 655–666. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
26. Pasanchay, K.; Schott, C. Community-based tourism homestays' capacity to advance the Sustainable Development Goals: A holistic sustainable livelihood perspective. *Tour. Manag. Perspect.* **2021**, *38*, 100784. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
27. Ebneyamini, S.; Moghadam, M.R.S. Toward developing a framework for conducting case study research. *Int. J. Qual. Methods* **2018**, *17*, 1609406918817954. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
28. Elo, S.; Kyngäs, H. The qualitative content analysis process. *J. Adv. Nurs.* **2008**, *62*, 107–115. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
29. Hsieh, H.-F.; Shannon, S.E. Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qual. Health Res.* **2005**, *15*, 1277–1288. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
30. NACSO. Registered Communal Conservancies (Namibia). Available online: <https://www.nacso.org.na/conservancies> (accessed on 10 January 2026).
31. Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT); Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations (NACSO). *The State of Community Conservation in Namibia 2022*; MEFT and NACSO: Windhoek, Namibia, 2022. Available online: <https://conservationnamibia.com/other/meft-nacso-state-of-community-conservation-namibia-2022.pdf> (accessed on 10 January 2026).
32. Naidoo, R.; Weaver, L.C.; Stuart-Hill, G.; Tagg, J. Complementary benefits of tourism and hunting to communal conservancies in Namibia. *Conserv. Biol.* **2016**, *30*, 628–638. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
33. Wenborn, A.; Iiyambo, W.; Ohsawa, T.; Parham, J.; Weaver, L.C. Assessing the equity and effectiveness of benefit sharing in communal conservancies in Namibia. *Wildl. Soc. Bull.* **2022**, *46*, e1327. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
34. UIAA. Case Study: Chi Phat Community-Based Tourism, Cambodia. 2017. Available online: <https://www.theuiaa.org/chi-phat-community-based-ecotourism-in-the-cardamom-mountain-range-cambodia/> (accessed on 10 January 2026).
35. Tieng, S. Perceptions and Motivations of Hostel Owners and Employees Engaging in Community-Based Tourism in Chi Phat, Cambodia. Master's Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand, 2016. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
36. Equator Initiative. *Chalalán Ecolodge, Bolivia: Case Study*; United Nations Development Programme: New York, NY, USA, 2012. Available online: https://www.equatorinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/case_1348151493_EN.pdf (accessed on 10 January 2026).
37. Jamal, T.; Stronza, A. Collaboration theory and tourism practice in protected areas: Stakeholders, structuring and sustainability. *J. Sustain. Tour.* **2009**, *17*, 169–189. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
38. Stronza, A.; Gordillo, J. Community views of ecotourism. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2008**, *35*, 448–468. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.