Koh Tao Regulation Declaration

We, the undersigned, as Representatives of the Declaration for Koh Tao Marine Resource Usage, entered into force by Community leaders, Chiefs of Koh Tao Subdistricts and Villages, Koh Tao Municipality Administrative board members, Koh Tao Community Group, Diving Operators, Diving Instructors, Restaurants, Business Owners, Longtail Boat Driver Group, Tour Boat Operators, Local Fishermen, Koh Tao Residents, Government Departments, School, and Academics, share a mutual vision that:"Koh Tao should work collaboratively on environmental restoration and resource management with the community and business operators of Koh Tao, considering the ecosystems that we have from land to the sea, to set a good example of resource management for the others to follow."

The undersigned acknowledge that

- Koh Tao marine and coastal resources, in particular coral reefs, are abundant. They are an important ecosystem that supports community and environmentally-friendly tourist activities;
- The natural resources of Koh Tao are being affected by the increasing number of tourists and the associated environmentally destructive tourist activities that negatively impact the ecosystem and the sustainable usage of our natural resources;
- Activities that damage coral reefs include dropping anchors, stepping on the corals,finning, dragging diving equipment, dropping CESA lines, disposal of trash into the ocean, fish feeding, and fishing, including spearfishing, on the coral reef area;
- Dive leaders lack the experience and abilities to perform environmentally friendly dives in coral reef area;
- New activities that damage our coral reefs and that are not suitable for Koh Tao include leading an uncertified diver using the 'tea bagging' technique, sea walking, jetskiing and the banana boat;
- Entering and exiting a dive site using the mooring line incorrectly will affect diver safety.

<u>We, the undersigned, agree to collaborate in:</u>

- Strengthening cooperation among and between residents, business operators, visitors, academics, and related government organisations in order to conserve Koh Tao's natural resources;
- Promoting environmentally friendly businesses, in particular hotels and restaurants, which have waste water treatment facilities and trash management systems;
- Ensuring that business operators and owners take responsibility for visitors, tour guides, staff, boat staff, and boat captains if they violate any regulations;

- Gathering information for public decision making with assistance from academics, business operators, volunteers, and related organisations;
- Raising the awareness of visitors, residents, students, and youth on Koh Tao through local school curricula and the media on issues of sustainability and environmental stewardship;
- Conserving and restoring natural resources and following Marine and Coastal Resource management plan of Koh Tao and nearby areas, as well as following marine zoning regulations around Koh Tao and nearby pinnacles;
- Respecting this Declaration and the regulations herein in order to mitigate the negative impacts of marine tourism activities and pursuing sustainable activities on Koh Tao and its nearby coral reefs.

We, the undersigned, agree to limit the negative impacts of tourism activities by respecting the following regulations:

1. **General Marine Regulations**
   - Follow the Koh Tao Marine Usage Zoning Regulations according to the Strategic Plan of Koh Tao Marine and Coastal Resource Management;
   - No feeding of fish in the coral reef area;
   - No littering (fruit peels, food, oil, etc) from any boat within 3 km of the island;
   - No fishing, spearfishing, catching marine animals, or fishing of any kind from tourist boats in coral reef area;
   - No collecting living or non-living marine organisms in the coral reef area, including but not limited to giant clams or their shells and hard or soft coral;
   - No chasing or moving marine organisms for a customer's experience.

2. **Scuba Diving Regulations**
   - Limit numbers of divers and boats per dive site;
   - The ratio of Open Water students to an instructor may not exceed 6:1
   - The ratio of students (specialties, advanced, rescue, etc) to an instructor may not exceed 6:1;
   - The ratio of fun divers to a leader may not exceed 4:1;
   - All visitors must dive with a licensed dive leader;
   - Forming Koh Tao dive leader certification program. Participants will receive a certification card;
   - Dive leaders must take responsibility and will be prosecuted when his or her customer violates the regulations or damages the coral reef;
   - Divers must renew their diving knowledge if he/she
     (1) has no experience diving in a coral reef area;
     (2) has not dived in one year;

(3) took diving courses outside of Koh Tao and has fewer than 10 dives;

- Respecting the entering and exiting time of the mooring line regulation. All boat captains must respect this regulation.
- In order to limit the effects of CESA lines on coral reefs, no one may attach or tie the lines to coral and may not drop the line in water that is less than 7 meters in -depth;
- Diving equipment rental business must always check customer's diving certification and dive leader certification before diving.

3. Snorkeling Regulations

- Snorkeling tourists may not wear shoes, gloves or fins;
- All snorkeling tourists must wear a life jacket;
- Any snorkeling tourist must leave the water when requested due to their use of fins or for finning too close to corals;
- Snorkeling tourists on tours or trips must have a leader in the water, except if they hire a private longtail boat taxi;
- Snorkeling leaders must participate in safety, rescue, and environmental training and be certified as such;
- The ratio of snorkeling tourists to leaders may not exceed 8:1;
- Diving and snorkeling staff must be trained to lead customers in the coral reef area;
- All operators must have certified staff who participate in Koh Tao coral reef dive leader training;
- Any person who violates these regulations will be prosecuted.

4. Other Marine Activity Regulations

- Visitors may try diving with Discover SCUBA Diving (DSD)in accordance with the international diving standards below:
    1) Visitor safety and environmental precautions briefing;
    2) In-water class must be at least 20 meters from the reef;
    3) DSD student must keep a distance of at least 2 metres from the reef (horizontally and vertically);
    4) The ratio of DSD students to leaders may not exceed 4:1;
- The following activities may damage the coral reef and are not suitable for Koh Tao:
    1) Tea bagging with divers who received no safety or environmental briefing;
    2) Snuba with divers receiving no safety or environmental briefing;
    3) Sea walking and any other contact based activities;
    4) Sea scootering;
    5) Banana boating;
    6) Other activities that may damage natural resources such as coral reefs, beaches, and the water quality, and any other unsafe activities.

- There will be strict regulation enforcement if any uncertified diver is found damaging the reef in any manner, including by kicking, stepping, touching or letting his/her equipment dangle on the reef. The business operators and any dive leaders caught allowing uncertified divers to cause any damage to the reef will be prosecuted.

5. Boat Regulations

- Boats and boat engines must be environmentally friendly and safe for visitors and staff by:
  1) Properly servicing the boats every year, and maintaining the record of last service;
  2) Ensuring that all oil, grease, and fuel are properly stored in sealed containers;
  3) Clearing below deck areas of debris or oil;
  4) Equipping a propeller guard if applicable (dive boat and snorkeling boat);
  5) Idling speed within a mooring line area, near any diver down flag or surface marker buoy, and when approaching or exiting a dive site;
- All boats must have a sufficient number of life jackets for everyone on the boat;
- Dropping anchor in the coral reef area is strictly forbidden;
- No dumping of trash or cooked food from a boat, including for fish feeding;
- The use of stryofoam for mooring line markers is forbidden;
- Boat staff are not allowed to fish, spearfish, or collect marine organisms at any dive site or "No Fishing Zone";
- Control the numbers and speed of boats at a dive site
- Mooring line usage regulations:
  1) Limit of 2 large boats per orange mooring buoy;
  2) Limit of 2 longtail boats or one 15 passenger speed boats perwhite mooring buoy;
  3) Yellow buoys ("no-boat" zones) are for coral reef in shallow areas and for snorkelers. Only longtail boats are allowed to use yellow buoy line for mooring.
- Mooring lines must be used correctly and maintained when necessary.

6. Fishing Regulations

Local fisherman group agrees to

- No fishing of any kind is allowed in the "Koh Tao Marine Protected Zone" which covers the area from the Nang Yuan islands to Mae Haad and 300 metres from Shark island;
- No fishing of any kind is allowed within 80 meters of any dive site mooring line (including nearby pinnacle dive sites);
- The use of fishing cages is forbidden;Dropping anchor [in the reef area?] is forbidden;
- Fishing with a fishing net that has less than 3-inch mesh size is forbidden;
- All local fishing boats must have a local fishing group symbol visible to public.

7. Reef Monitoring and Reducing Our Impacts on Marine Resources

The Department of Marine and Coastal Resources and educational institutions agree to:

- Persistently [consistently?] monitor and analyze data collected on Koh Tao reefs, marine organisms, and environment;
- Encourage business operators to monitor the changes in coral reef health and to preserve and restore marine and coastal resources;
- Design curricula and train leaders in coral reef related activities, boat staff, and captains. All will receive a certification card for taking part in the plan to reduce our impacts on coral reefs.

8. <u>Public Relations and Tourism Related Business Control</u>
   - Set a standard for tourism related businesses and environmentally friendly activities;
   - Inform visitors and tourism related business outside of Koh Tao;
   - Monitor and enforce regulations concerning businesses that affect natural resources and the environment;
   - Promote and award business operators that operate environmental friendly activities.