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Aboriginal Tourism as Sustainable Social-Environmental Enterprise (SSEE): A Tlingit Case Study from Southeast Alaska

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Abstract

The Tlingit Aboriginal tourism enterprise named Icy Strait Point in Hoonah, Southeast Alaska is used as a case study to develop the new concept of Sustainable Social-Environmental Enterprise (SSEE). SSEE is defined as an innovative enterprise that has dynamic operational strategies while still maintaining its corporate core values and integrating social, environmental, cultural, economic and political (SECEP) sustainabilities in its operations. The SSEE framework assesses enterprises according to five domains of sustainability: social, environmental, cultural, economic, and political. Applying this framework, we find that while social, economic, and cultural sustainability goals have been achieved in a relatively short time by the Aboriginal tourism enterprise in Hoonah, the political and environmental spheres of sustainability are constrained by the dominant influence of the multinational cruise ship industry over tourism development. Thus, for an emerging tourism enterprise to be sustainable, we suggest each of these livelihood dimensions needs to achieve "a safe operating space" that is adaptable over time and to changing social and environmental circumstances.

Keywords

Aboriginal tourism, Indigenous-led tourism, Southeast Alaska, Hoonah, sustainable social-environmental enterprise, SSEE

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Sustainability or sustainable development is a concept that has become widespread since the United Nations publication of Our Common Future in the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987). Sustainable development was defined therein as "the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987, p.1). However, this general definition does not provide a specific direction on how to build sustainable enterprises within any particular sector or culturally-specific livelihood system. The objective of this article is to link environmental sustainability to social enterprise through the proposed concept of a Sustainable Social-Environmental Enterprise (SSEE). A framework for this concept is developed from an established Indigenous-led, Aboriginal tourism enterprise, named Icy Strait Point (ISP) situated in Hoonah city on Chichagof Island in Southeast Alaska, that is seeking to develop sustainably.

The purpose of the SSEE framework is to provide an alternative business model tailored towards Indigenous communities that have different cultural values, logics, and objectives compared to the various types of business models. Although there is no official universal definition of Indigenous peoples, the United Nations working definition defines them according to the following characteristics: "self- identification as Indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted as members of a community; historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies; strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources; distinct social, economic or political systems; distinct language, culture and beliefs; form non-dominant groups of society; and resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities" (United Nations, n.d., p. 1). An Indigenous view is also highlighted as one of the three major worldviews including Western and Eastern views as classified by Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal who is a Maori member of the Churchill fellowship (Royal, 2002). Royal (2002) linked a Western view with God and heaven, an Eastern view with inner peace and enlightenment, and an Indigenous view with human beings as part of nature and integral to the world. Because of different ways of thinking, practices, and desires between peoples from these three major groups, it is necessary to find a suitable business model for Indigenous peoples to integrate their values, cultures, and traditions into their business practices. Over-exploitation of natural resources, cultures, and traditions may occur if Indigenous peoples do not find a suitable business model for their operations, communities, and environments. Accordingly, the case study of ISP will then be applied to the SSEE model to exemplify how SSEE can be exercised in the Indigenous environment. As a consequence, other Indigenous operations can also follow this instruction to create their own SSEE model and matrices.

This article is structured into six sections. First, we review of sustainability-related concepts and provide a description on the Southeast Alaska tourism industry. Next, we use the case of Icy Strait Point (ISP), which is a Tlingit tourism enterprise to conduct a sustainability analysis of Icy Strait Point and analyze the process of becoming a Sustainable Social-Environmental Enterprise (SSEE). Finally, we present conclusions and recommendations for other Indigenous tourism enterprises based on this case study.

A Review of Sustainability-Related Concepts

In 2011, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2011) set three broad goals toward achieving sustainability in this burgeoning economic sector: environmental protection, social

justice, and economic prosperity. These goals are commensurate with the triple bottom line (TBL)[1] approach to sustainable enterprise introduced more than a decade ago (Elkington, 1998). However, when applying the concept of sustainability, it is important not to do so within a static framework that assumes conditions are stable, predictable, and controllable. As Leach, Scoones, and Stirling (2010) emphasised, the concept of sustainability in business practice needs to be applicable to changing environmental and market conditions. Furthermore, they noted that people have different ways of interpreting sustainability; thus, a viable sustainability framework should allow for interpretation and adaptation to various sociocultural and environmental contexts.

Tourism is often viewed as an economic panacea for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities seeking sustainable development. A common understanding of Aboriginal tourism is that tourism activities are owned, controlled by, or involve Indigenous people, using Aboriginal culture as a core element of the attraction (Aboriginal Tourism Association British Columbia, 2005; Butler & Hinch, 1996). Non-Indigenous people also create Indigenous-themed tourism enterprises; however, the ethos of Indigenous enterprises is to differentiate Indigenous-owned tourism enterprises from their counterparts (Bunten, 2010)—in short, to create a niche.

Hunter (1997) and Sharpley (2000) observed that sustainable tourism and sustainable development have overlapping concerns, as evidenced in Agenda 21 (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2003), wherein tourism is defined as a form of sustainable development. Agenda 21 is the action plan of the United Nations regarding sustainable development forged at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development or "Earth Summit" in Brazil in 1992 (United Nations, 1992). Sharpley (2000) explained that while this vision of sustainable development has an all-inclusive perspective, sustainable tourism focuses only on product perspectives within the sector. Johnston (2014) noted that sustainable tourism and sustainable development are the same only if tourism is the single sector exploiting a particular resource system. However, this is typically not the case because there are multiple sectors and user groups competing for the same resources and services in a given environment.

Recently, debates have arisen over how sustainable tourism should be assessed and for whom it should cater its benefits (Butler, 1998). Echoing the Brundtland report, Butler (1993) defined sustainable tourism as:

> Tourism which is developed and maintained in an area (community, environment) in such a manner and at such a scale that it remains viable over an indefinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and well-being of other activities and processes. (p. 29)

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2011) report recommended that sustainable tourism follows three key principles, "environmental protection, social equity and cohesion and economic prosperity," in its mission to deliver meaningful experiences to tourists (p. 1). These principles also apply to the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (European Commission, 2015).

Jafari (2005) noted that tourism is problematic because it has not been concerned with how the sector articulates with other sectors or impacts socio-economic development in other places. Getz

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[1]Triple Bottom Line (TBL) refers to social, environmental, and economic sustainability.

(1986) and Jafari (2005) suggested such a siloed view of tourism limits the utility of sustainability analyses in fundamental ways and also obscures the ethical and social justice issues inherent in responsible tourism (Holden, 2009; Jamal, Camargo, & Wilson, 2013; Jovicic, 2014; Macbeth, 2005).

Moscardo and Murphy (2014) identified three (mistaken) assumptions of traditional tourism planning, which distort analyses of sustainability. First, when tourism is the main focus of the activity, "tourists" are assumed to be the crucial stakeholders (Moscardo & Murphy, 2014). This myopic perspective neglects other important stakeholders such as locals who are directly affected by tourist activities, which is reflected in our case study of ISP. Secondly, when tourism comes to be viewed as a community's primary source of income, the financial capital associated with the industry tends to be prioritised at the expense or exchange of other assets (i.e., natural, built, social, cultural, human, and political capitals) which may support core community values and quality of life; the effects of these trade-offs, including social and environmental impacts, are rarely considered. Last, concerns over negative consequences of tourism are mostly restricted to physical impacts on the destination, especially immediate environmental impacts detectable by simple monitoring—while neglecting long term and non-physical impacts (see for example Butler, 2001; Hardy, Beeton, & Pearson, 2002; Jamal et al., 2013; Macbeth, 2005; Moscardo, 2009; Saarinen, 2006; Wall, 1997). Moscardo and Murphy (2014) proposed a new framework of sustainable tourism that focuses on quality of life values emerging from responsible tourism principles.

The concept of sustainable tourism development is thus underpinned by a sustainable development approach that considers social, environmental, and economic impacts of tourism on nature and societies. Buckley (2002) observed that sustainable tourism development normally concerns managing growth to reduce negative impacts and optimise benefits. However, Canavan (2014) argued that this might not be the case because a decline in tourism also causes impacts on local communities, local economies, and nature. To sustain itself amid these vicissitudes, the tourism industry requires agility, flexibility, and adaptability as much as any other business sector.

Presently, many companies, including tourism enterprises, are aiming to define themselves as sustainable businesses, social enterprises, or environmentally friendly corporations (Kanchan, Kumar, & Gupta, 2015; Kolk, 2015; Young & Tilley, 2006). The key features of sustainability, sustainable business, and social enterprise is summarised in Table 1. "Sustainable business" usually translates minimally as financially or economically sustainable. "Social enterprise" typically references a firm's prioritisation of positive social innovation and outcomes above financial gain (Dees, 1998; Dees & Haas, 1998). "Environmentally friendly" underscores a company's desire to reduce negative impacts on the earth's resources and vital systems. However, to manage sustainably beyond environmental and economic concerns requires clarification and prioritisation of core social and cultural values, which may differ from Western ones. As we shall see, this clarification process is evident in the case of ISP.

Table 1. Key Features of the Concepts of Sustainability, Sustainable Business, and Social Enterprise

Term	Common Definitions	Key features	References
Sustainability/ Sustainable development	Ability to maintain progressive well-being over time	• Economic prosperity • Environmental protection • Social justice • Equilibrium system within the static framework • Intergenerational equity • TBL of balanced economic, environmental and social sustainability • Infinite timeframe	(Elkington, 1998; UNWTO, 2011)
Sustainable business	Enterprise that aims to meet TBL and tries not to externalise the costs of its impacts on its surroundings	• Stakeholder value • Make profits without undermining natural resources and social justice • Balance business profitability with critical environmental and social returns • May use TBL as a foundation • May have progressive environmental policies • Have progressive human rights policies • Incorporate Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to address societal and environmental matters • Take responsibility of corporate action • Forward-thinking policies	(Jones, 1996; McLoughlin, Kaminski, & Sodagar, 2010)
Social Enterprise	Innovative enterprise that creates benefits foremost for society	• Stakeholder value • Social responsibility to improve communities • Owned & traded for a social purpose • Make profits without undermining human rights • Focus on positive impacts to society • Risk-taking for social benefit • Double bottom line: social and economic capital	(McLoughlin et al., 2010; Weerawardena & Mort, 2006)

Southeast Alaska Tourism Industry

In Alaska, Native business corporations were formally established in 1971 as part of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). Thirteen regional, four urban and 203 village corporations were created to manage lands and compensation money derived from the settlement. ANCSA corporations located in tourist destinations, such as Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Ketchikan, looked to tourism as a form of sustainable development. Opportunistically, the cruise ship industry's phenomenal growth within the state between 1980 and 2005, during which time passenger numbers increased more than tenfold in Southeast Alaska alone (from less than 100,000 to approximately 1 million) (see Cerveny, 2008, p. 66), came at time when ANCSA corporations were ramping up their investments. Job creation in the tourism sector in Southeast Alaska now ranks second in terms of overall employment, after government jobs in the region (Figure 1). In addition, the number of cruise passengers visiting Southeast Alaska has increased between 2000 and 2014, as depicted in Figure 2.

In Southeast Alaska, several corporations became significantly involved in tourism, including the village corporations of Saxman (Cape Fox) (see Thornton & Wanasuk, 2016), Hoonah, and the regional corporation, Sealaska. This involvement in tourism has not only brought economic benefits to these communities but also social, environmental, cultural, and political impacts. Of 13 Alaska Native Regional Corporations, Sealaska is the largest in terms of shareholders with more than 20,000 (Sealaska Corporation, 2013). After 40 years in operation, the corporation undertook a self-evaluation of its priorities in and decided to place sustainability at the core of its "values in action." The corporation sought to identify their core guiding principles in terms of cultural values of sustainability, expressed through its own Indigenous (Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian) languages, social architecture (clan house), and mission as illustrated in Figure 3.

Table 2 shows the core collective cultural values identified by Sealaska Corporation (2013) as *Haa Aaní* (Our Land), *Wooch Yax* (Balance, Reciprocity, Respect), *Haa Latseen* (Our Strength, Leadership), and *Haa Shagóon* (Our Past, Present, Future). The above Alaska Native Values (ANV) were "rolled-out" in 2013 as new guiding principles for the corporation's conduct in investment and management of its enterprises.

Recently, Sealaska Corporation completed a major new cultural centre, the Walter Soboleff Centre, in downtown Juneau, the state capital and regional hub (population 30,000), which seeks to fulfil its sustainability objectives for heritage (Haa Shagóon), well-being (Haa Latseen), land (Haa Aaní), and balance (Wooch Yax). The 30,000 sq. foot, $20 million building lies just opposite the corporation's headquarters and will be a major tourist destination, exhibition and gathering space, and research centre (Sealaska Heritage Institute, n.d.). At this stage, Sealaska's tourism plan has yet to be fully implemented, so it is too early to tell if it will meet the corporation's sustainability objectives. With more than one million tourist visitors a year to the "honey pot" destination of Juneau, however, this major Indigenous-owned and managed site would seem to have high potential for success. In contrast, for Native village corporations in rural Southeast Alaska, like Hoonah, the challenges are more daunting because they do not sit within an existing hotspot for tourism.
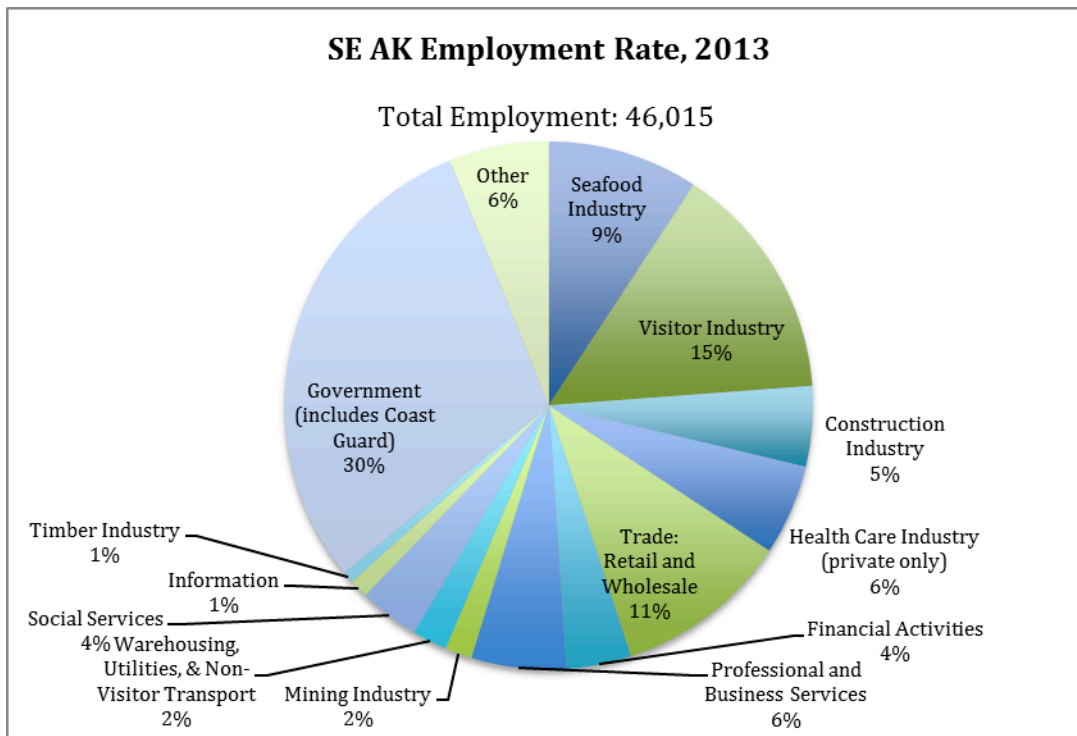
Figure 1. Employment in Southeast Alaska by industry for the year 2013. Tourism and visitor industries comprise 15 percent of employment in Southeast Alaska, although only 8 percent of overall wages, due to the comparatively low-paying and seasonal nature of most jobs in this sector. Still, its impact on the economy is significant and rising against the traditional seafood and timber sectors (Southeast Conference, 2014).
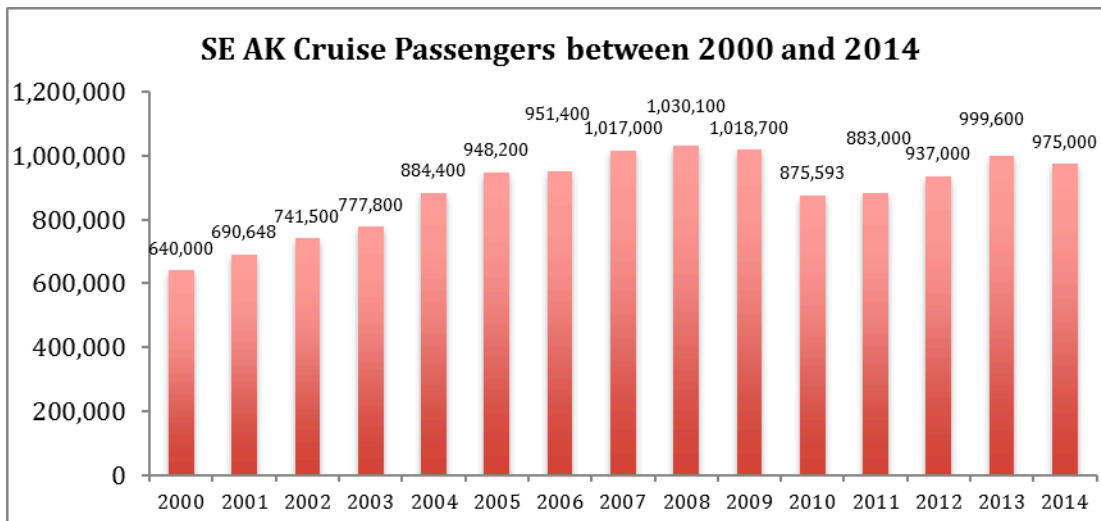

Figure 2. SE AK cruise passengers between 2000 and 2014. The figure for 2014 is estimated (Southeast Conference, 2014).
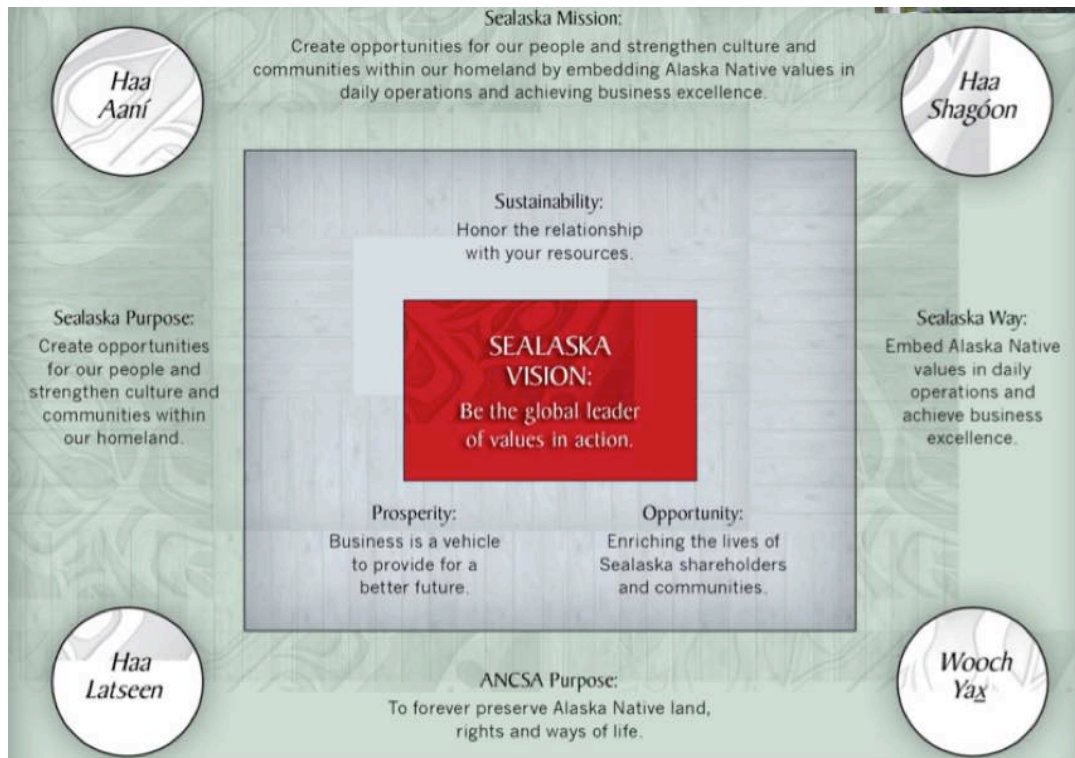
Figure 3. Overview of the Sealaska vision framework, which builds on Native values (Sealaska Corporation, 2013).

Table 2. Alaska Native Values as a guide for Sealaska Corporation

Alaska Native Values (ANV)	Implications for Enterprise
Haa Aaní (Our Land)	• The basis of our collective identity and culture • Utilizing the land while protecting for future generations • Sustainable relationship with our lands • Sustainable community economies
Haa Shagóon (*or Haa Shuká*) (Our Past, Present, Future)	• Our collective identity reaches across generations • Sanctity of ancestral cultural and sacred sites and heritage • Social and financial benefits for current and future generations • Social and environmental responsibility for sustainable operations
Haa Latseen (Our Strength, Leadership)	• Our collective identity gives us strength • Discipline, resilience, perseverance, and adaptability • Education and training • Healthy families and communities
Wooch.Yax̱ (Balance, Reciprocity and Respect)	• Our collective identity relies on spiritual and social balance • Institutional partnerships and collaboration • People, tribes and organisations working together (*Wooch.éen*)

The Case of Icy Strait Point (ISP): A Tlingit Tourism Enterprise

Alaska's Icy Strait Point tourism enterprise was investigated as part of a broader study of Indigenous-led tourism in the Americas (see Peredo, Ordóñez, & Belohrad, 2015; Peredo & Wurzelmann, 2015). Methods included multi-sited ethnography based on participant and non-participant observations, interviews, and grounded theory. Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used to build up and link perspectives on Indigenous tourism enterprises into a conceptual model of a Sustainable Social Environmental Enterprise (SSEE) from fieldwork. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with stakeholders in the tourism industry, using snowball, purposive, and convenient sampling techniques. Participant and non-participant observations, and surveys provided further opportunities to probe and triangulate the perceptions of stakeholders on the five dimensions of sustainability in the SSEE model. In total 122 people were interviewed, including 22 Native locals, 31 non-Native locals, 10 independent travellers, 6 cruise ship passengers, 3 local guides, and 50 key informants from 24 organisations. To minimise any sampling and measurement bias, three different communities within Southeast Alaska were visited—Hoonah (village, small tourism market), Juneau (city, large tourism base), and Sitka (town, medium market) —with different geographic, demographic, and tourism profiles to gather opinions from people with different tourism experiences and expertise.

In this study, we focus on Huna Totem Corporation (HTC)'s Icy Strait Point (ISP) enterprise in Hoonah (Figures 4 and 5), in particular, using notions of sustainability developed by both Sealaska (which includes Huna Totem shareholders) and HTC. The mission statements of the regional Alaska Native enterprises—Sealaska, HTC, and its ISP enterprise—are presented in Table 3. Significantly, these statements reflect the emerging differentiation, or niche, of Alaska Native tourism in relation to mainstream tourism.

While Sealaska is a large regional corporation based in a major hub (the state capital and regional business and logistics hub with access to the glaciers and North America's largest ice field), Hoonah is a rural island village with a population of just under 1,000. Until the recent establishment of its cruise ship-catered tourism enterprise, Hoonah was very much off the beaten path of Southeast Alaska's million cruise ship passengers, and of most independent tourists traveling by air or ferry.

In attempt to create a new cruise tourism destination, HTC co-developed Icy Strait Point (ISP) with a private investor, opening the tourist facility in the 2004 on the northeast shore of Chichagof Island, just north of Hoonah village. In addition to being among the largest Native villages in the region, Hoonah is the closest village to Juneau by ferry and air transport (39 miles), and is also positioned at the gateway to Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve (22 miles northwest), a major cruise ship destination. HTC owns substantial lands adjacent to the village and the old fish-canning site that was chosen to redevelop as ISP. Aboriginal tourism held the potential to buffer declines in commercial fishing, seafood processing, and timber production, which had anchored employment in the village in the late twentieth century. By its ninth season in 2012, ISP had 63 cruise ship calls from 6 different cruise lines—Celebrity, Royal, Holland America, Regent Seven Seas, The World, and American Cruise Lines—carrying more than 120,000 guests (Icy Strait Point, 2012).

Figure 4. Southeast Alaska village and land wwnership map showing Hoonah in relation to Juneau. Hoonah lies just south of the region's largest National Park, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve (light green), comprising more than 2 million acres, and the majority of Hoonah's traditional territory (Juneau Economic Development Council [JEDC], 2010). HTC's lands lie in the vicinity of the village of Hoonah, where a large portion of the corporation's shareholders resides.
Source: JEDC, 2010

Figure 5. Icy Strait Point with small cruise ship docked. Larger ships must anchor offshore and ferry passengers to sites. *Source*: author.

Table 3. Southeast Alaska Native Corporations and their Mission Statements

Enterprises	Details	Mission Statements
Sealaska Corporation (22,000 shareholders)	The regional corporation of Native people (Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian) in Southeast Alaska	"We work for our Elders, for our young people and for those yet to be born. The past, present, and future merge at Sealaska to unite us in a vision of an enduring and successful Native institution dedicated to responsible growth and cultural prosperity."[a]
Huna Totem Corporation (HTC) (1,360 shareholders)[b]	Native village corporation of Hoonah	"To advance the economic aspirations and culture of the X̱únaK̲aawu (People of Hoonah) through business excellence, sustainable economic growth, leadership, and education."[c]
Icy Strait Point (ISP) (130 employees of which 95% are local and 85% are Native)[d]	Wholly owned & operated subsidiary of HTC	"To become Alaska's premier (#1), authentic and profitable, cruise destination, operating with local hire, fostering Hoonah community development while using best business practices within the solid framework of Alaska Native culture and values."[e]

[a] Sealaska Corporation, 2013, p. 1
[b] Huna Totem Corporation, 2014a, p. 1
[c] Huna Totem Corporation, 2014b, p. 1
[d] Travel Weekly, 2008
[e] Icy Strait Point, 2016, p. 1

The operations at ISP are mainly carried out by a core group of employees, which includes Native and non-Native members. Various positions are set up in order to maintain relationships with the cruise ship industry, local people, and tourists; operate tourism activities and businesses; showcase cultural performances; facilitating cruise ships for docking and servicing their customers; manage food and beverage service, including retail sales onshore and offshore; supervise employees; and ensure safety for their own people and tourists (Icy Strait Point, 2011).

Johan Dybdahl, director of special projects at ISP, describes their operation as conducted under the "guestism" concept, encouraging local employees to host tourists as their guests (e.g., getting to know their names and origins) instead of merely as tourist consumers in their homeland. Although this requires high personal engagement with tourists, this level of service legitimises charging a premium price for maximising guests' experiences in their homeland, while at the same time providing a living wage and other benefits to the community. Mr. Dybdahl also believes better hosting can enable ISP to attract visitors looking for a better experience. He observes:

> You have to sell experiences and hospitality and the rest will take care itself. (Interview)

At the same time, however, he notes that the tourism experience has to authentically support the host culture as a culture, and not just as a business:

> I want tourists to experience ISP as a living, breathing culture, our home, our land and how we live. (Interview)

This role is quite consistent with the traditional Tlingit ceremonial role of hosts, as for example at a potlatch (Emmons & De Laguna, 1991).

While the metrics for insuring a symbiosis of culture and economic sustainability through tourism are still evolving, ISP's unique business practices earned them a "Travel to a Better World" award for sustaining an Indigenous culture or community from the Travel Industry Association and National Geographic Traveler magazine in 2008 (Icy Strait Point, 2013a). More recently, ISP received the Royal Caribbean's 2014 "Tour Operator of the Year award, reflecting "the highest gross revenue per port per day out of 527 tour operators around the world" (Cruise Buzz, 2015, p. 1). The latter award is perhaps more a measure of ISP's good relationship and alignment with the cruise ship industry and its economic goals for tourism than the symbiosis of culture and economic sustainability, but it nevertheless reflects ISP's success in hosting tourists with a strong Indigenous cultural focus.

Cerveny (2007) characterised ISP as Alaska's first purpose-built destination, and one that illustrates how powerful the cruise industry can be in shaping tourism development in local communities. Yet, ISP can also be seen as a niche operation, as it seeks to complement existing tourism destinations, especially Glacier Bay, which operates at full capacity for cruise ship sailings. ISP offers a complementary, intimate look at the Aboriginal people of Glacier Bay in their contemporary homeland just across Icy Strait in a unique cannery setting, which celebrates not only their traditional culture but also their success in the commercial fishing industry. Indeed, ISP's feature exhibition provides a comprehensive overview and intimate details of commercial fishing and processing as it took place in the Hoonah community and beyond throughout much of the 20th century.

Huna Tlingits are proud of this heritage, and tourists also embrace it as an alternative to the "wilderness" of Glacier Bay National Park and other destinations. The demands of seine fishing, at

which local Tlingits excelled, are also celebrated, particularly the challenges of fishing "the Laundry," an especially narrow stretch of Icy Strait featuring powerful tides and roiling currents that could rip the fishing nets and even sink the boats of under-skilled fishermen. In 2012, a special series of events were staged to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Hoonah Packing Company, the commercial canning company for which the ancestors of many contemporary Tlingit employees of ISP worked. Significantly, when fire destroyed Hoonah on June 14, 1944, the cannery was chosen as some locals' residence while they were rebuilding the city (Icy Strait Point, 2013b). Conveniently, the physical dimensions of the cannery, including its ample floor space, storage, waterside location, and docks make it an ideal facility for tourism.

Despite its rich beauty and cultural history, as a remote island community, Hoonah faces challenges in hosting tourists. Buhalis (1999) and Keane, Brophy and Cuddy (1992) found that small islands often face economic and social problems due to their isolation from the mainland, smaller size, and limited human and infrastructural resources, and fragile natural resources. Small island economies are often highly reliant on imported products (Ayres, 2000) and undiversified development, including mass tourism (Duffield & Long, 1981). Despite advantages of tourism industry, small islands are vulnerable to changes in social, economic, or ecological conditions (Canavan, 2014). Accordingly, it is important for small island tourism enterprises such as ISP to be adaptive and flexible towards their internal and external environments in order to sustain their businesses, environment, and local communities. Based on multiple issues that emerged from fieldwork and literature review data collections, five sustainability domains (which are environmental, economic, social, cultural ,and political) of ISP are analysed in the following section and consequently serve as a stepping stone to build a comprehensive SSEE framework in the final section.

Sustainability Analysis of Icy Strait Point

In what follows, we evaluate the ISP operations against environmental, economic, social, cultural, and political sustainability domains and criteria as defined by the SSEE.

Environmental Sustainability

From an environmental standpoint, all tourism in Alaska can be said to have significant impacts on the basis of carbon footprinting alone (Thornton & Wanasuk, 2016). Cruise ships generate significant carbon emissions and most tourists connect to their cruise through carbon-intensive air travel, often from distant origins, such as Europe and Asia. As a local corporation, ISP has limited control over these externalities and thus must concentrate on environmental impacts within its own sphere of operations. In this realm, cruise ship tourism can be viewed as more sustainable because the island community does not have to add major lodging or transport infrastructure to host cruise ship passengers, as the ships themselves host these services. Furthermore, due to its proximity to existing cruise ship destinations, the addition of Hoonah as port to Southeast Alaska itineraries does not add significant fuel miles or emissions costs to transport.

Construction and material impacts on the environment were mitigated by ISP's decision to redevelop an existing fish cannery (dating from 1912) just 1½-road miles from the village centre. This provided an opportunity to use existing infrastructure and conserve commercial fishing and Tlingit heritage. In fact, many Huna Tlingit fishermen and their families worked for or at the cannery, or otherwise used the facility during their involvement in the commercial fishing industry, and have pleasant memories of it as community institution; they are pleased to see it revitalised. As a locale for tourism, ISP has the virtue of being meaningful (as a cultural and historical site) and accessible (to

locals and tourists alike); yet, not central (i.e., in the middle of the village) such that it places direct environmental stress on the village (although there is increased foot and vehicle traffic and other impacts).

According to Don Rosenberg, vice president of tourism development for HTC, ISP's facility was built with strict environmental obligations and in many areas utilised skilled, hand labour instead of heavy equipment to avoid damage to the existing landscape. Similarly, the ISP cannery facility was restored and repurposed using recycled timber from the site or from new timber sourced from local, sustainable logging operation and sawmill on the island. More than 1,000 trees were replanted on ISP grounds and surrounding areas to restore and enhance forest values associated with the site, and mosses were replanted by hand around the newly cut trails.

A major expense and source of environmental impacts for many rural villages is diesel power generation. Hoonah's energy costs are currently among the highest in the Southeast Alaska region, averaging $808 per 1,500kWh (JEDC, 2010), more than 4 times the cost in Juneau. Mr. Rosenberg noted:

> Since electricity is very expensive and generated by diesel generators for the town of Hoonah where the power is purchased, we converted lighting fixtures to CFLs and other high efficiency lighting fixtures and appliances and don't heat most of the buildings and use propane whenever possible. (Interview)

Despite such conservation measures, growing tourism operations ultimately bring increased energy demands, especially during the summer season. This demand has further stimulated the City of Hoonah's efforts to secure renewable energy through the development of hydropower from one of its local watersheds, Gartina Creek. The 455 kw run-of-river project is expected to serve some 30 percent of Hoonah's yearly electricity loads when it comes online, and to offset about 110,000 gallons of fossil fuel consumption and 1,500 tons of carbon emissions per year (SEACC, 2013). The project will not only have direct environmental benefits but also will provide affordable sustainable energy without significant ecological impacts to the watershed, which is a customary and traditional subsistence use area. ISP supports the benefits of this development project, the main funding for which comes from Alaska's Renewable Energy Fund.

Beyond materials, energy, and carbon emissions, there are other impacts of tourist development, including significant draws on freshwater, generally in abundant supply, and contributions to waste through landfill refuse and sewage. These impacts have not been assessed as part of this study, but opportunities for recycling waste materials are limited. These are important long-term considerations for a remote community that prides itself and bases its tourism enterprise on "pristine" landscapes and "clean" waters. As Mr. Rosenberg emphasized, environmental sustainability in tourism is a matter of self-interest:

> This effort to protect the environment also stems from our basic marketing tenant that our visitors will experience the wilderness and culture of the people. ISP's basic survival in the marketplace requires an extreme sensitivity to the environment and it's built in to all the operations. (Interview)

Tourism may promote natural resource conservation schemes at different levels and scales and may assist in transitioning from extraction-based industries such as logging and mining into more conservation-based industries instead. Yet, tourism has been implicated in poor environmental

management too, and industry groups, such as Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) have evolved to promote sustainability in the industry. Significantly, TBMP is a voluntary program that asks participants to show their commitment by taking responsibility for implementing best practices, including environmental ones (Juneau Convention and Visitors Bureau, 2013). Currently, "there are 90 members, which include about 98 percent of tour operators that are big enough to cause impacts in town," according to Kirby Day, director of shore operations at Princess Cruises in Juneau. Based on his experiences with the cruise ship industry, he added that "it solves 98 percent of the problems we [cruise lines] had in the 90's; what's left still is flightseeing's noise and the number of people coming" (Interview).

Many locals and tourists concur that environmental protection under tourism is better than other extractive industries. Some view tourism impacts as small to nil because of the limited time each cruise ship spends in the community, typically less than a day. Yet, actual implementation, monitoring and evaluation of TBMP in meaningful terms remains limited, so much of the assessment is based only on perceived low impacts than actual reductions of impact.

However, in other areas, environmental management issues stemming from tourism are not so benign. Many people have raised issues concerning tourism impacts to fisheries, wildlife, and noise pollution, for example. In fact, sport fishing and wildlife excursions for tourists constitute a major aspect of the tourist economy in Alaska. Allen M. Brackley, team leader of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, commented on sport fishing regulations in relation to sustainability:

> People don't know what is sustainable . . . The limit [set] doesn't mean that it's good for the ecological system now. They may catch more fish than [they are] supposed to. (Interview)

Furthermore, sport fishing tourists may catch fish in areas close to ports that are also used by resident subsistence fishers, thus posing direct competition for limited resources. Ultimately, the over-consumption of natural resources will lead to unsustainable environment impacts (Tao, 2006), but even biologically "sustainable" environmental impacts within local resources may prove stressful on resident populations due to competition in coveted, accessible areas. Fishing and seafood processing are among the main commercial and subsistence activities in Hoonah and they rely on healthy stocks of salmon, halibut, crab, and other fish and shellfish. Competition from tourist recreational fishing can negatively affect local fishing activities, and this remains a concern to residents.

In fact, there may be a lack of consensus of what constitutes both sustainability and "acceptable impact" when it comes to local environments. For example, locals may be dissatisfied with the noise pollution from tourist activities (e.g., floatplanes) and from tourists themselves, while the tourists see the landscape as quiet and unspoiled. Locals may also have a lower tolerance for violations of air and water quality standards than non-locals. Thus emissions and wastewater discharging from cruise ships have been ongoing concerns among locals reliant on fish and wildlife resources for their livelihoods, despite the fact significant regulations are already in place to limit exhaust and waste water discharges in nearshore areas (Deur & Thornton, 2015).

An art specialist at Sealaska Heritage Institute in Juneau with social ties to Hoonah explained the general paradox when tourism companies embrace an "acceptable impact" view of environmental pollution on a comparatively pristine landscape like rural Alaska:

> I don't see any tourism companies coming to the community and asking questions like "how we can clean up your areas? How can we help you environmentally?" It's the last thing in their mind . . . The tourist industry brings in different types of pollution, views and discrimination . . . They are unaware of what they are bringing on [in terms of] their toxins . . . People view Alaska as the Last Frontier and a clean place and no toxins, but they don't realize that we are suffering from the environmental impacts. (Interview)

Many locals feel cruise companies are not environmentally friendly or socially responsible. However, compared to the early days of cruise ship tourism, state and federal regulations and changes in cruise ship practices raised environmental standards reducing pollutant emissions and waste dumping. Cruise ships nowadays abide by higher standards of environmental protection and monitoring (see for example Princess Cruises, 2009, pp. 23–26). Yet, there is also heavier traffic from cruise ships and sightseeing boats, increasing the cumulative environmental impacts; moreover, these vessels can collide with or intimidate wildlife. Tourists may exacerbate these impacts by harassing animals.

Economic Sustainability

A key social and economic benefit to shareholders is employment. Despite living in a rural community with a high reliance on non-commercial subsistence foods (Hoonah residents average about a pound per person per day in consumption of wild foods (see Schroeder & Kookesh, 1990), residents need cash (for boats, fuel, and other equipment) to secure wild foods. To date, ISP has created more than 130 seasonal and permanent jobs annually with most of the jobs going to Hoonah residents (90% of which are HTC shareholders or their descendants), making the Aboriginal tourism enterprise the largest local employer. In addition, ISP allows shareholders who are shopkeepers in its facility to pay their rent in instalments, which creates more flexibility in their financial management. ISP also attempts to regulate business "overlap" through structured diversity and niche identification, so that businesses are not competing directly against each other (Johan Dybdahl, interview).

At the same time, the comparatively low wages and seasonality of tourism jobs restricts economic security for ordinary employees. A middle-aged interviewee involved with managing personnel suggested:

> Some employees are not satisfied with their wages, which are lower than jobs from logging and they need more working hours to earn more money.

Also, there is some dissatisfaction in the difference in salaries between local and non-local employees. Another middle-aged staffer's statement reflects this tension:

> This place is built for us but [we] see the big proportion of salary and benefits go to those outsiders. I work so hard for ISP, being proud to show my visitors about my homeland but I don't feel that I am treated properly. (Interview).

ISP offers 23 different shore excursions, including distinct features of Huna Tlingit culture, Tlingit hospitality and history, and Alaska's wilderness and wildlife (e.g., whale watching and brown bear searches), adventure tours (including the world's largest, longest, and highest ZipRider), and positions itself as a truly "authentic Alaskan experience" (Icy Strait Point, 2012). Many of these jobs thus require Tlingit hosts to guide their guests out on the land in pursuit of fish, wildlife, and other geographic highlights, providing transferable skills for the subsistence economy.

One problem with the structure of the tourism economy versus subsistence activities is co-existent timing. Tourism peaks at the busiest time for subsistence (and commercial) fishing, particularly for Pacific salmon, the mainstay of the Tlingit diet. This means that tourism can have a "crowding out" effect on other livelihood values, unless appropriate breaks are built into employment schedules to facilitate subsistence food gathering. At present, this is not a major issue, according to our consultants, because the number of ships in the summer is still limited to 3 to 5 per week, which leaves time to pursue other activities. However, for those participating in commercial salmon fishing enterprises, the conflicts are more significant.

A related conflict that has emerged is tension between charter (recreational excursions for tourists) and subsistence fishing. Many people are concerned about this competition and feel subsistence users are not being given priority. Some also commented that tourists often think of fishing as a leisure sport; however, remote village dwellers in Hoonah actually rely on fishing for their livelihoods, and thus should have priority use of fish stocks. Even if the overall supply of fish is deemed sustainable, competition from user groups close to port can lead to increased catch-times and thus frustration for either or both recreational and subsistence fishers. Many Tlingits have high expectations in terms of respect from tourists and want them to be more considerate when visiting their homelands. Violating this respect through careless or wasteful fishing or other impacts may stress locals and engender feelings of resentment and a sense of invasion. As one HoonahTlingit man put it:

> Did you see the airline shipping tons of fish? That's just people visiting you know [tourists], and that's a huge impact where Natives can't go out and fish. It's harder to find them and there are so much restrictions how much we can catch because of that impact. (Interview)

The economic sustainability of tourism is most directly affected by conditions in the world economy. A recession can bring significant declines in leisure travel, including cruise ship sailings, which is what occurred in 2010 and 2011 (see Figure 2). Since its inception a decade ago, ISP has enjoyed more or less steady growth in its operations, but there is clear sense that too much growth will lead to negative social impacts on the community through crowding, employee fatigue, infrastructure stress, lack of privacy, and the like. Consciously, ISP positions itself as a "wilderness" and "village" based alternative to the mass tourism where visitors can avoid the experience of being "herded" in Juneau and other ports. Obviously, this image of wilderness and village intimacy, what ISP (2012) terms "the real Alaska experience," could be spoiled if more than one large cruise ship (a practical limit) was in port at Hoonah. There is also a premium placed on innovation and keeping the experience fresh and differentiated from other offerings in the region. ISP's embrace of "adventure capital," such as zip lines, represents one such attempt niche construction. However, this can be risky as there is nothing particularly "Hoonah" about a zip line experience; such attractions can be built most anywhere, and indeed are cropping up in many areas in Southeast Alaska. The local labour market is also limited, although this has currently been mitigated by bringing in HTC shareholders (and some non-shareholders) living in other communities, such as Juneau.

Finally, the multiplier effect of ISP on related businesses and services within the community has yet to be studied. Tourists generally spend most of their time at the ISP facility or on other presold excursions, but some ancillary businesses have developed to serve tourists visiting the village, including food service stalls, Tlingit medicine dispensaries, and handicraft sellers. At the same time, ISP leases stall space within its facility at the redeveloped cannery to independent business, including local artisans, and the Hoonah School Store, which benefits local students and education. The long-

term viability of these businesses is not clear, however, especially as the number of presold onshore excursions increases, potentially giving tourists less time to browse and shop.

Overall, economic pressure is quite strong in the cruise tourism industry in Alaska because it can only operate profitably for about six months, from May to October, and local tourism businesses need to cover their costs for the rest of the year (while cruise ships themselves serve other markets in warmer climes.) Local businesses are also under time pressure due to the logistics of cruise ship travel, which limits visits to between 7 and 14 days. This in turn limits the number of places cruise ships can stop within the distance they have to travel over the short period (a fact that aids Hoonah, due to its proximity to other ports, but harms Sitka, which lies on the outer coast, far from other ports.) These economic constraints shape the landscape of economic opportunities for local businesses, even ones like ISP that may have a high degree of control and limited competition in their local operations. Ideally, tourist expenditure helps to improve the local economy at every level, reducing both poverty and inequality through broader employment and economic benefit flows throughout the community (Ashley, 2000; Tao, 2006). It is clear that ISP tourism has given a significant economic boost to Hoonah in terms of investment, employment, and spending, but less clear is how equitably economic and other benefits have been distributed. Indeed, earlier studies of economic development at the hands of Southeast ANCSA corporations suggest that increased socioeconomic differentiation and inequality may develop as a result of Native corporation activities (Dombrowski, 2001).

When economic inequalities become embedded within the structure of the tourism economy, it may lead to a point where there is both a high "leakage effect," wherein benefits are siphoned out of the community to wealthy non-local interests (employees, proprietors, contractors, etc.), and a correspondingly low "multiplier effect," wherein tourism benefits within the community are not significantly enhanced beyond the boundaries of the tourist enterprise itself. Just how equitably economic benefits of tourism flow within Alaska Native communities, even ones that have a high degree of Native ownership and control, remains a question that requires further study.

For ISP, economic sustainability is paramount. As Mr. Rosenberger emphasised:

> Tourism is sustainable only when the market can support it. The economic sustainability has to come first before helping the cultural, social, and environmental sustainability. (Interview)

The challenge, of course, is that the global capitalist market for tourism is very much beyond the control of ISP, and Alaska Native corporations in general. The whole of Alaska makes up less than 4 percent of the global cruise ship market, as HTC's CEO pointed out, and thus limits how much any Alaska tourist destination, much less a small Aboriginal enterprise, can influence sustainability practices in tourism according to their own cultural values.

Social Sustainability

In addition to being an economic benefit, employment can also be a major social benefit of tourism, promoting positive self-esteem, social interactions, education, and lifestyles.

The tourism industry offers various types of jobs for locals at ISP. There are many different types of tourist activities that require staff such as wildlife tours, cultural tours, tribal dance, and sightseeing with Native narratives. Huna Tlingits can apply for various positions without prior work experience

because training and assessment take place before the commencement of job duties. Local employment not only provides local community dwellers with employment but also gives Huna Tlingits residing elsewhere the opportunity to return to their home village from university or other non-local employment. A Native guide tour at ISP celebrated this aspect of tourism:

> I am able to come back home because of the job provision that ISP offers to me so far. It provides me an opportunity to be with my family and stay with the place I belong to. (Interview)

Furthermore, Aboriginal tourism provides jobs for Native Elders as part of activities such as the tribal dance and storytelling performances (Figure 6), which they typically lead. Younger Alaska Natives working alongside them have the opportunity to seek knowledge and training from Elders about cultural values and heritage. This training, in turn, may instil feelings of pride, value, and an increased sense of self-worth among younger generations. Bringing Elders and youth together through vital work is considered important to the integrity of family and community in Tlingit culture.

For Native youth, the opportunity to have work experience often helps them gain confidence and perform better at school. This was one motivation for making space for the Hoonah City Schools Store, which is co-run by local students who gain exposure to tourists and tourism enterprises. In addition, profits from the shop are donated back to the schools, ensuring further educational and social benefits from tourism.

Figure 6. Huna Tlingits engage in a cultural performance for tourists with one or more Elders who have the authority to tell stories belonging to their clans.
Source: Author.

The quality of social interactions among employees and between employee hosts and tourist guests plays a big part in engendering a positive impact from tourism businesses, particularly because many tourists are interested in the lives of their hosts. Tourism can be a powerful tool for educating the public about Tlingit culture and for Natives themselves to understand and appreciate who they are and how they differentiate themselves from the dominant culture. To the extent that genuine sharing between hosts and guests occurs, it helps build mutual respect and understanding. In addition, when tourism valorises and complements (or at least does not compete with) other cultural activities, such as the production of subsistence foods, Aboriginal art, language learning, and other skills, it can be said to support Native ways of being.

Although many cited positive contributions from Aboriginal tourism, there were also negative effects, with six categories being highlighted. They are loss of self-esteem, loss of community character, locals' lives being controlled by tourists' demands, internal conflicts in the community, disrespectful behaviour, and loss/diminution of Native identity.

Some Native peoples suggested that they could lose their sense of positive identity and satisfaction with their lives when comparing themselves with wealthy or patronizing tourists. During an interview, some locals also mentioned disrespectful behaviour and the fact that some visitors "behave like they are in Disneyland, not in someone's homeland." These impacts, in turn, may lessen cultural cohesion and connections with the ancestral homelands. Furthermore, some shops are owned by non-Natives and sell goods that are not produced locally. Several interviewees decried this as an affront to the community and pandering to the lowest common dominator (e.g., presenting a stereotypical view of Alaska Natives as Eskimos.) However, Eleanor Davenport, retail director at ISP, suggested that such non-local products help increase sales by meeting tourists' expectations for a range of Alaskan products and prices. Generally, authentic Native art objects are more expensive to produce and limited in supply, making them harder to sell to the mass tourist market (see Figure 7). In our interviews at ISP, we found that non-Native managers tend to emphasise the financial sustainability of the business more than the relationship with nature and culture as Natives do.

Following from previous discussions about locals' lives being controlled by tourist demands, interviewees noted that time, resources, and tourism packages are highly dictated by tourists' preferences. For example, shops at ISP are only open when cruise ships come to town and the clan house at the site is far removed from where Natives live in the village. As one interviewee remarked:

> Why are there no clan houses built in town for Tlingit people to join and interact? Why is it only done for tourists? . . . I want our clan house so I want to feel it at my heart that my identity is still here. (Interview)

Demand for space in tourist areas had resulted in crowding.

Figure 7. Non-Native products (left) and Native products (right). Visitors often require more explanation of Northwest Coast art forms, which may be abstract and include unfamiliar themes, as well as being more expensive to produce.
Source: Author.

Cultural Sustainability

Native corporate ownership provides an opportunity to feature Aboriginal culture as a central aspect of tourism. At ISP, the most direct way of featuring culture is through the corporation's own branding as a Tlingit institution and its own employees, some 90% of whom are local Tlingits and natural "ambassadors" for their culture. However, of the 23 shore excursions offered in 2012, only 2 could be classed as explicitly or predominately based on local Indigenous culture. These are: (a) Tribal Dance and Cultural Legends exhibition, an "interactive performance showcasing the ancient heritage [of the Huna Tlingit through] . . . interpretive song, dance and storytelling (1 hour)" (Icy Strait Point, 2012, p. 23); and (b) Hoonah Sightseeing excursion, including a local guide who shares the "history and culture of the Tlingit" (Icy Strait Point, 2012, p. 24). Other tours are predominately based on wildlife viewing, flightseeing, fishing, natural history, or adventure (kayaking, zip-lining, etc.). In practice, other excursions may include some introduction to Tlingit culture and perspectives, and dialogue with guests about cultural topics, but culture is not what is highlighted in advertising the tours. Thus, it seems, there is no guarantee that a Native-owned enterprise will by default feature a high degree of Indigenous cultural content as part of its tourist enterprise.

However, tourism can also support culture in other ways. Guiding people on the land, spotting wildlife, and operating boats, four wheelers, and other equipment are arguably important livelihood skills that are being honed as part of the training and on-the-job duties. Similarly, artists, ethno-medicine specialists, and producers of other cultural products are featured for their skills, and have the opportunity to run their own enterprises at ISP. Through the exercise of these skills, as well as the more traditional storytelling, singing, and dancing, local Tlingits may gain pride and confidence in presenting their own unique culture, history, and identity to tourists. Tyler Hickman, vice president operations at ISP, believes that

> People work here because they are part of it [the enterprise]. They don't work here because of dollars per hour. They have their own stories related to this place. When people work here they feel like they are part of something. Their ancestors, relatives and family were involved in the cannery before. (Interview)

Aboriginal control of the tourist experience may provide opportunities to educate tourists away from harmful stereotypes, unrealistic expectations, commodification of selected traditions, or impacts on sacred traditions or sites (e.g., Shamans' graves). Yet, tourist expectations may still stimulate feelings of loss, especially if host Tlingits can no longer speak their own language, as is common.

Three categories of cultural sustainability identified with positive impacts of tourism are cultural perpetuation, cultural appreciation, and cultural education. Cultural perpetuation happens due to several factors. For example, Tlingit tourism employees receive cultural and Tlingit language training from their workplace. This offers them an opportunity to appreciate and understand their culture more. Similarly the use of Indigenous place names and socio-geographic concepts reinforces the connection between ancestral homelands and Native identity (Thornton, 2008, 2012), helping to further instill a sense of pride, stewardship, and belonging. ISP employees also share their appreciation of their culture to visitors and invite them to learn more about Native culture; thus, furthering cultural perpetuation through appreciation and education.

Cultural diversity becomes an asset for tourism, varying the content of tourist experience according to local cultural assets. This is a welcome antidote to the crass uniformity of products that characterise much of tourism in Southeast Alaska. As Tlingit woodcarver Tommy Josephof Sitka commented:

> I see the same things [types of shops and articles for sale] in Juneau, Skagway, and Ketchikan. By allowing this to happen, it pushes local people away from doing unique things. They only allow people who have money to set up these stores. Ketchikan don't have the feel at all, [of] the old fishing town. (Interview)

Being inclusive of local Native culture and its diversity is natural remedy for the potential monotony of industrial tourism.

Political Sustainability

ISP's ownership of its land and operations should, in theory, give it a high degree of control over its tourism enterprises. Yet, this local control may not be sustainable, as it is circumscribed by the dictates of the cruise ship industry, which controls the supply of tourists and their availability in time and space. While ISP has created an attractive site for tourists, it cannot singlehandedly redefine the nature of the tourism landscape in Southeast Alaska. The only hope for doing this would be for Alaska Native corporations to collaborate to exert more pressure on the cruise ship tourism industry to accommodate Aboriginal interests, or alternatively to start their own cruise ship enterprise to achieve vertical integration. Either strategy brings with it costs and risks and if unsuccessful could compromise the sustainability of existing operations.

In British Columbia, First Nation businesses have formed an Aboriginal tourism association to assert greater control and political sustainability over tourism in their region (see Aboriginal Tourism BC, 2015; Williams & O'Neil 2007). As we have suggested elsewhere, such an industry association could work toward reforming the existing hegemonic climate of cruise ship tourism away from perpetual

growth and profit maximization and towards sustainability based on higher quality of experience for tourist guests and Indigenous host communities alike (Thornton & Wanasuk, 2016).

Another aspect of political sustainability that can be enhanced through Aboriginal tourism is its potential as a vehicle to educate visitors about issues and rights of importance to Alaska Natives, such as subsistence uses of the land and sea. Dr. Rosita Worl, president of Sealaska Heritage Institute, remarked:

> If [non-Natives] can learn from Native people . . . maybe they can look at the world from a different lens and maybe they can be supportive of legislation that affects Native people . . . If the public thinks that cultural diversity, linguistic diversity, and different languages are good they may vote in support [funding for] Native people [and programs]. (Interview)

Importantly, Indigenous-managed tourism gives people the power to manage their work life balance and to control the content of cultural performance and storytelling shared with tourists based on their own standards of appropriateness. ISP's success as an Aboriginal tourism enterprise proves that Native people have status in the Western political economy of commerce and business. With this status, they can further influence the nature and conduct of tourism in their homelands.

Yet, there are often real political differences *within* Native corporations about how they should be run and sustained. In this context, corporate elites, often in concert with non-local corporate leaders, tend to triumph in pushing their agendas, even if they represent a minority opinion. Thus, one Native ISP employee complained:

> We own this place but we had no power to say or change things. (Interview)

Others complained that ISP as a "relative-owned" enterprise in which "a good connection" is needed to be in the top position, although this may imply only that it functions more like a traditional lineage based corporation (or house group), than a modern Western one.

Becoming a Sustainable Social-Environmental Enterprise (SSEE)?

Generally, sustainable tourism covers principles, policies, and management practices for tourism development (Lane, 1994). However, Hunter (1997) criticized the simplicity of this paradigm of sustainable tourism, arguing that it is too tourism-centric and loses connection with local sustainable development needs. He concluded that "sustainable tourism should not be regarded as a rigid framework, but rather as an adaptive paradigm which legitimizes a variety of approaches according to specific circumstances" (Hunter, 1997, p. 851). As reflected in the case of ISP, it requires multi-function strategies to allow it to be sustainable. Not only does it have to manage their operations, employees, and tourists simultaneously, but also it respectfully incorporates their Alaska Native values into their business practices and strategies.

In Southeast Alaska, the standard has been to look at community-based tourism (CBT) because of the remoteness and disconnectedness communities. CBT can be interpreted as tourism that the community has significant power to control, is intimately involved in the development and management of, and profits most as it develops (Saarinen, 2006; Saarinen & Niskala, 2009; Scheyvens, 2002). A tourism venture can be considered a social enterprise if it positively transforms the livelihoods of members and benefits flow to the communities. Nonetheless, Blackstock (2005) criticises CBT as "naïve and unrealistic" because it considers communities as homogenous, singular

entities rather than complex and heterogeneous, if not conflicting, aggregations (p. 45). The ISP case study reflects this heterogeneous conceptualisation of community as a set of stakeholders who may or may not hold consensus or conflicting opinions and visions within the same community. Following Iorio and Corsale (2014), the ISP case also highlights the role of local leadership and networks in mitigating potential conflicts that tourism brings to communities. Moreover, community buy-in and meaningful participation in management are also necessary to make the enterprise more effective, equitable, and legitimate (Boyd & Singh, 2003; Buanes, Jentoft, Maurstad, Søreng, & Karlsen, 2005; Murphy, 1985; Okazaki, 2008; Simpson, 2008; Tosun, 2006).

Alexis Bunten, an Alaska Native who worked as a tour guide in an Aboriginal enterprise, pointed out that in many cases community leaders do not have a full understanding of or capacity to achieve the requirements of a Western business model, such as financial accountability and marketing (Bunten, 2010, 2015). This lack of capacity can make it difficult for CBT to succeed. Bunten (2010, 2015) emphasised the challenge to Native tourism in building a business model that is competitive with the current, dominant Western political economy. The mere "self-commodification" of Aboriginal cultures and landscapes for tourist consumption is not enough, and often leads to distortion and exploitation. Nor is the conventional TBL enough when dealing with Indigenous cultural enterprises. To remain diverse, cultural principles must not simply be a product or exhibit of tourism but part of its core bottom line operations and practices. That is, cultural values, along with social, environmental, and financial values should be guided by and enhanced through tourism operations (Honey, 1999; Zeppel, 2006).

Based on the assessment of ISP above, it is clear that this enterprise inevitably engages with social, environmental, cultural, economic, and political domains of sustainability over a period of time in a changing environment. Nonetheless, existing concepts and frameworks of sustainability, sustainable business, social enterprise, or even sustainable tourism are unable to explain the exhaustive situations of ISP (including other enterprises) as discussed in previous sections. We thus develop the Sustainable Social Environmental Enterprise (SSEE) framework to address this need for an adaptive paradigm with its dynamic approach to assessing any business model from an integrated and holistic sustainability perspective linked to core values.

We define an SSEE as "an innovative firm with adaptive operational systems and strategies to define, balance, and maintain core social, economic, cultural, environmental, and political values." Table 4 shows the key dimensions of the SSEE concept.

The SSEE framework (Figure 8) may be conceptualised as a spatiotemporal diagram with corporate values at the centre of five domains of sustainability: social, environmental, cultural, economic, and political. In order to be sustainable, each of these livelihood dimensions needs to possess a safe operating space that is flexible over time and adaptable according to circumstances. The safe operating space is akin to that posited within the parameters of the planetary boundaries framework (Rockström et al., 2009), but also consists of the requisite infrastructure necessary sustain social, environmental, cultural, economic, and political conditions for the well-being of human social-ecological systems; whereas, the disruption zone refers to externalities that can cause deleterious changes in the safe operating space. For example, changes in national regulations and policies, competitors' strategies, market conditions, or environmental parameters may undermine a firm's capacity for social-environmental sustainability. In tourism, such disruptions could take the form of natural disasters, pollution, overcrowding of destinations, or other changes.

Table 4. Key features of a Sustainable Social-Environmental Enterprise (SSEE)

Term	Common definitions	Key features	References
Sustainable Social Environmental Enterprise (SSEE)	Innovative ecocultural enterprise that has dynamic operational strategies while still maintaining its core values & implementing SECEP*	• Respect for ecological and sociocultural health and diversity • Prioritization of stakeholder value principles combined with profit maximisation • Maximise SECEP through systemic metrics and feedbacks • Financial profitability co-prioritised with the balance of SECEP and local values • Aligning business with culture sustainability goals • Connectedness between SECEP held actively maintained and assessed through metrics • Flexibility of the implementation of SECEP depending on the local dynamics of sustainability	(Bendell & Kearins, 2005; Elkington, 1998; Epstein, 2008; Jones, 1996; McKeown, 2013; McLoughlin et al., 2010; Stirling, 2007; UNWTO 2011; Weerawardena & Mort, 2006)

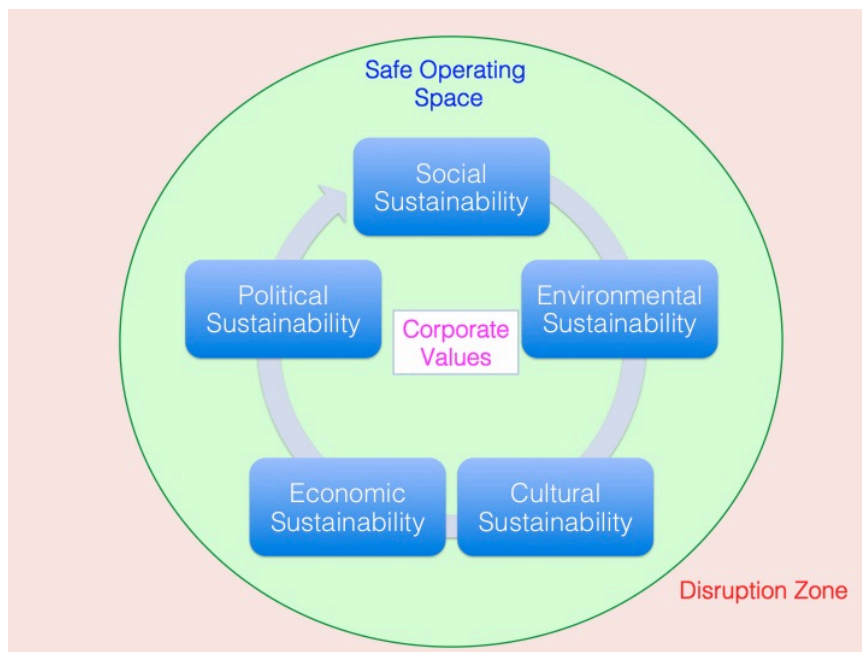*Note.* * SECEP = social, environmental, cultural, economic and political sustainability.

Figure 8. The SSEE framework featuring the five dimensions of sustainability that are critical to the niche and overall well-being of an Indigenous enterprise. Sustainability emanates from the core values and is subject to disruption from various forces both within and beyond the sector.

Necessarily, a comprehensive SSEE framework is created not simply because rural Native communities may lack capacity to fulfil a Western-style business model, but also because the conventional tourist business model is not suitable for Native communities, which may hold different cultural values, logics, and objectives. Thus, the typical metrics of success in Western capitalism, such as financial profit maximisation, even if combined with environmental accountability, may not be enough to sustain key cultural values and objectives in an Indigenous enterprise. To the contrary, they may undermine or even pervert them. Yet, building a culturally supportive SSEE is challenging, particularly in a sector where an enterprise's diverse values and alternative metrics may not be rewarded by the mainstream global industrial economy.

In response to this challenge of how to build a culturally supportive SSEE, we suggest that Indigenous corporations, such as ISP, should commence by:

- Identifying their core cultural values including their metrics as the central dimension of sustainability;

- Stating what goals they need to achieve individually and altogether for sustainability domains;

- Assessing sustainability domains as individuals and groups in relation to their core values by choosing their own criteria;

- Analysing the operations of each domain over a period of time;

- Evaluating what may pose threats to the safe operating space internally and externally; and

- Assessing how their corporate value (ANV in the case of ISP) extends to the circulatory system of their sustainability action plans, safe operating space, and disruption zone.

Significantly, the key to the SSEE model is to encourage the corporate core values to work in conjunction with the sustainability model so that any enterprise has to interpret the meanings, criteria, and action plans of sustainability itself and be responsive to internal and external change. Figure 9 provides an example of the simplified SSEE model for any Alaska Native Corporations.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Cultural tourism can be a means of enhancing Indigenous peoples' status and improving their livelihoods in sustainable ways. However, even when owned by indigenous entities, such as Huna Totem Corporation's ISP facility, tourism is a business that ultimately caters to and is constrained by Western standards in meeting non-Native people's expectations for a travel experience. Its very existence hinges on this expectation, which in the present political-ecological context of Indigenous peoples' status as minorities, limits key aspects of Aboriginal tourism's sustainability. The SSEE framework makes clear why this is the case, and the challenges that any tourism venture faces if it is to deliver real environmental, economic, social, cultural, and political sustainability.
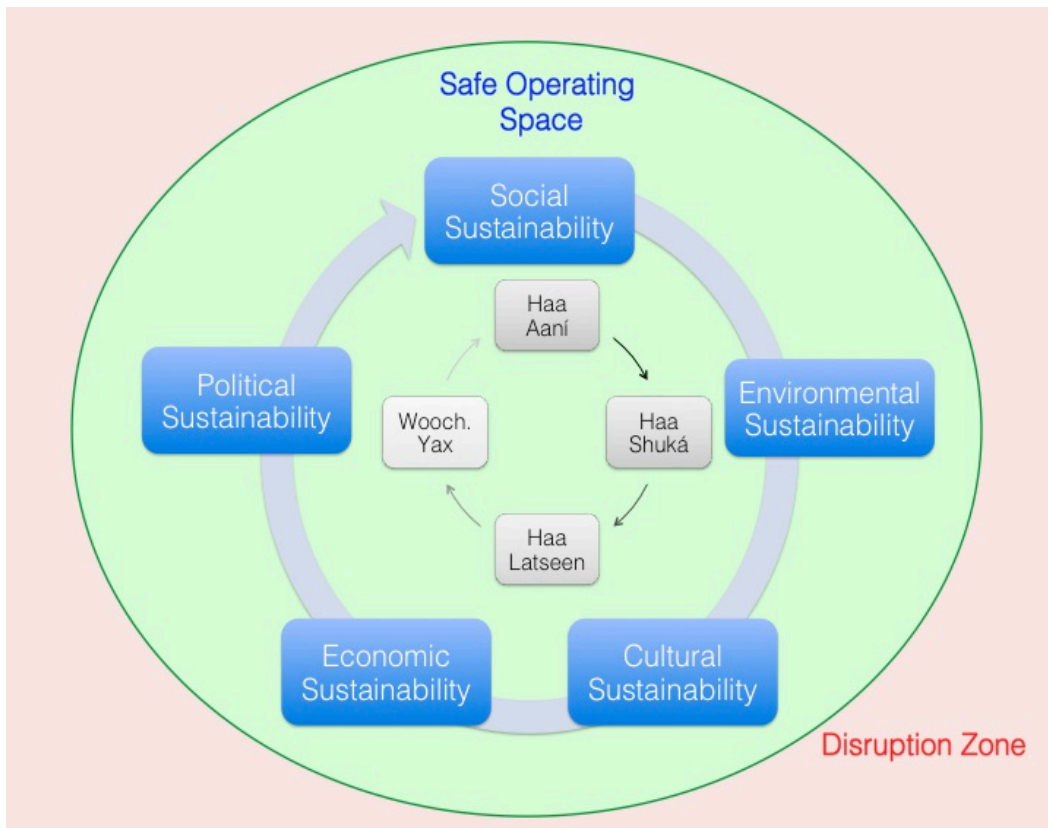
Figure 9. The integrated model of SSEE centred on the Sealaska Corporation's "values in action" in which the Native firm generates objectives that can be realised through each dimension of sustainability. Ideally, these objectives would be operationalised and assessed according to the corporation's own metrics (as outlined in Table 2) and the feedback loops in each sphere.

The SSEE framework further allows us to assess tourism enterprises like ISP from different angles of sustainability, and how these align (or do not align) with the core values of a particular Aboriginal group. It shows that there is no clear boundary between each type of sustainability; rather, sustainabilities are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Yet, strong values alone are not enough: Each sustainability value needs a set of principles to guide its implementation within a particular domain, such as tourism, as well as a set of metrics to measure success in achieving sustainability goals. ISP aspires to be an SSEE and seems to have made progress on all fronts, but most especially in economic, social, and cultural sustainability, although opinion is divided among shareholders on the strength of these successes, especially in the area of culture, where sustainability outcomes are not as well defined and there is a dearth of excursions with strong Tlingit cultural themes due to constraints and expectations imposed by the mass tourism.

As a sustainable development tool, the SSEE model may serve newfound Aboriginal enterprises best in their initial stages by helping them to envision sustainable tourism in relation to core values, and to build a development plan for realizing sustainability values within a culturally appropriate operating space for tourism enterprises. The model can also help a nascent enterprise anticipate and innovate where specific sustainability challenges and potential disruptions may lie, such that they can strategize to mitigate them. Yet, some disruptions, such as certain environmental impacts of tourism—CO_2 generated from aircraft and cruise ships, for example—may be beyond a small SSEE's

control. An evolving SSEE would measure trends in each area of sustainability, and adapt and innovate continuously according to its values and developing capabilities.

The SSEE concept offers an analytical lens to see beyond the classic, triple bottom line of sustainability. In addition to an Indigenous enterprise's social, environmental, and economic performance, other critical aspects of well-being may be considered, including strong cultural values and effective political representation. By broadening and diversifying the focus on sustainabilities, the SSEE framework helps to identify emerging niche opportunities for Aboriginal tourism ventures in a competitive market.

What are the policy implications of this model? Clearly, SSEEs, especially in marginalised or remote Indigenous communities, need support to succeed, both internally to envision sustainable tourism futures among their own stakeholders, and externally from government, trade associations, and other organisations to help enact these futures. Sustainable tourism requires policies and coherent governance to regulate sustainability at multiple scales, such that unsustainable practices are not imposed on communities, thus creating an unfair advantage for unduly powerful, exploitative, or unsustainable enterprises. While the tourism market encourages niche opportunities for diverse Indigenous enterprises, based on their unique cultural values, landscapes, and experiences they offer, the market does not ipso facto help sustain that diversity or the values and lifeways the underlie it. As Johnston (2014) suggested, drawing lessons from the case of Hutong tourism in Beijing, sustainability is always relative, dynamic, normative, contestable, and reflexive. Tourism policy must therefore consider the five SSEE sustainabilities within the holistic and dynamic social-environmental framework outlined above to support niche innovations and prevent controllable disruptions such as overcrowding, pollution, and market extremes.

The ISP case contributes to the literatures on sustainability, sustainable tourism, and social enterprise by showing how a firm can transform a community towards multi-dimensional sustainability. ISP is a good example of a potential SSEE that is seeking sustainability according to some key cultural and livelihood values, which the Huna Totem Corporation has determined can be met better through a community-based tourism venture than through commercial timber harvesting as they had pursued, divisively and unsustainably, in the first decades of their existence. At present, however, the ISP venture pursues sustainability with little external policy support beyond basic environmental regulation, and the community has yet to reach consensus on, or fully appraise, the social limits of tourism development, beyond which the community benefits of hosting visitors begin to erode regardless of profits. At the same time, remote Indigenous tourist ventures must weather the ebb and flow of tourism cycles, and compete economically with other tourist enterprises in their region and around the world, some of which may align more seamlessly with the dominant cruise ship industry's emphasis on mass tourism and profit maximisation.

The challenge for ISP, as for most remote Indigenous tourism enterprises, will be to balance sustainability with profitability such that they are not only delivering livelihoods and revenues for their employees and shareholders but also the co-benefits the enterprise seeks to sustain, including social cohesion, education and training, cultural and environmental conservation. Stronger political advocacy for these values may be necessary, perhaps through broad based Indigenous associations with political and economic clout. The goal of this study has been to assess ISP's success to date and suggest how further implementation of an SSEE model by the firm and tourism's governing authorities and trade associations can lead to additional gains in sustainability and a unique, enduring, values-enhancing Aboriginal tourism enterprise.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Interview Questions for Key Informants from Various Institutions

1. What does sustainability mean to you?

2. What are the important key factors of sustainability?

3. What is your vision on sustainability?

4. How is your operation addressing sustainability?

5. What do you think is the main barriers of applying sustainable business practices?

6. What strategies or methods do you use to take into account the local cultures of the local communities when performing business activities or setting corporate strategies?

7. What strategies or methods do you use to take into account the limited natural resources of the local areas?

8. In your opinion, what practices should responsible tourism take initiative on?

9. What are the impacts of your operation on local communities?

10. What important aspects are required for the sustainable Native tourism businesses in Alaska?

11. What do you think are the main barriers for implementing sustainable business practices?

12. In your opinion, what would be the best way to facilitate the implementation of sustainable Native tourism business practices or sustainable businesses in general?

13. What indicators do or will your company use to measure the achievement of sustainable Aboriginal tourism business or current business practices?

14. How do you perceive the quality of tourism enterprises within the geographical area defined?

15. Under what circumstance do you think it is appropriate to apply social entrepreneurship strategies?

16. Under what circumstance will you not consider to use social entrepreneurship strategies?

17. What are the challenges and opportunities of bio-regional and cultural tourism network in Southeast Alaska?

2. Interview Questions for Tourists

1. What would you like to preserve in the Alaska community? Why?

2. What makes you most satisfied when spending time here? Why?

3. What are the main problems you find when travelling in particular (e.g., transportation, language, people)?

4. What would you like to change in the Alaska community? Why?

5. In your opinion, what are the impacts of tourism on local communities?

3. Interview Questions for Locals

1. How have you benefited from the tourism industry?

2. What threats have affected you because of the tourism industry?

3. What makes you satisfied with tourism businesses?

4. What makes you unsatisfied with tourism businesses?

5. What is the participation process in your community?

6. What do you want to see in your community in the short term?

7. What do you want to see in your community in the long term?

8. What do you think that the community can do to improve the management of tourism?

9. To what extent is your opinion taken into account in the community and by the Native corporation?

10. What does sustainability mean to you?

11. What are the important key factors in sustainability?