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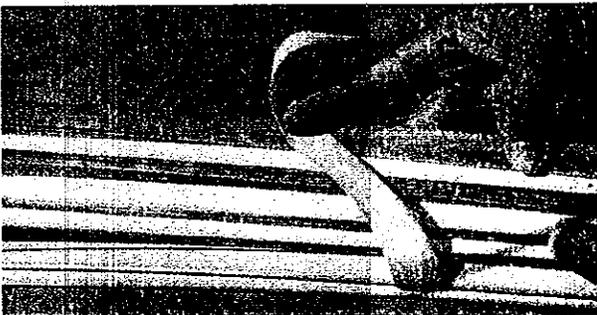
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Ecotourism Enterprise Development

COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

By Maria Monina M. Flores



Coastal Resource
Management Project

A Project of the
Department of
Environment and
Natural Resources

Supported by the
United States
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Ecotourism and Enterprise Development for Coastal Resource Management

Terminal Report

submitted by

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to the

Coastal Resource Management Project

of the

Department of Environment and Natural Resources

supported by the

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*I dedicate this work to the women, fishers and youth
in the villages of
Suba, Sabang, Olango Island,
Gilutungan Island, Cordova,
Cambuhat, Buenavista
Panadtaran, Candijay and
Matutinao, Badian*



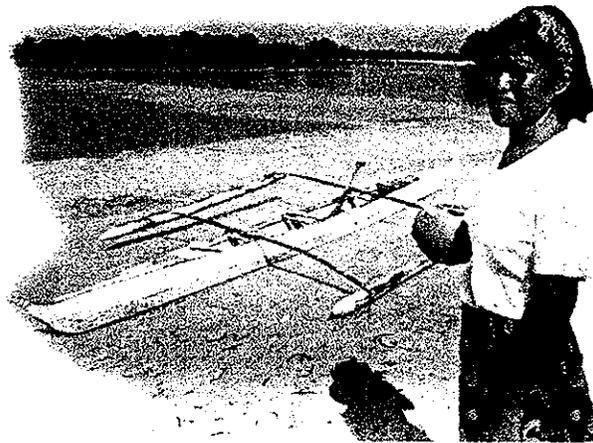
*With their kindness, trust, hopes, wisdom, determination,
generosity of heart and spirit,
I learned that anything is possible.*

Monette

Ang kinabuhi sa tao, wala'y siguro
Duha ka butang ang gidangatan sa tao
Usahay mudangat ang kapalaran
Usahay usab ang kadaotan

Malipayon kung mudungo
Sa baybayon sinugat sa kapikas
Ug sa mga kabataan
Labi na kong makadala ug kaayuhan

- Onofra Canete*



Translation:

Life is full of uncertainties
And two things can happen
Sometimes you succeed
Sometimes you fail

But we are happy
If we reach the shore and
Our spouse and children await us
All the more so when
We bring home a good catch

* Nang Onofra, as I fondly call her, is one of the pioneer leaders of the Olango Birds and Seascape Tour. She wrote the lyrics to this song, as a send off song to their sons and spouses who go out to sea. The Women's Group of the Suba Olango Ecotourism Cooperative also sing this song to wish their ecotourism guests a safe return voyage. - *Monette*

My deep gratitude, sincere appreciation and heartfelt thanks to all who encouraged, supported, shared their knowledge and expertise to me and the enterprise projects that I worked on. Specially:

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END

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Here in this compendium of articles is presented glimpses of a journey in the development of a small community ecotourism enterprise project, known as the Olango Birds and Seascape Tour (OBST) Project, that the author led to conceptualize, design, plan, implement, monitor and turn-over to the host community and local supporting institutions, as an enterprise development consultant to the Coastal Resource Management Project (CRMP).

CRMP provided technical assistance to local stakeholders in the islands of Olango and Gilutungan in Cebu, among many other areas in the Philippines, to establish effective management of coastal resources. CRMP is an initiative of the Philippines Department of Environment and Natural Resources, supported by the United States Agency for International Development, and managed by Tetra Tech EM Inc.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACES	Alternative Commodity Exchange Services
BA	British Airways
CATO	Cebu Association of Tour Operators
CATG	Cebu Association of Tour Guides
CEDFA	Cambuhat Enterprise Development and Fishermen's Association
CFLI	Canada Fund for Local Initiatives
CI	Conservation International
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CRMP	Coastal Resource Management Project
CRVT	Cambuhat River and Village Tour
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DOT	Department of Tourism
ECoVentures	Environment and Community Ventures Foundation, Inc.
FCB	First Consolidated Bank
FCBFI	First Consolidated Bank Foundation, Inc.
FIT	Free Independent Tourist
FSSI	Foundation for Sustainable Society, Inc
ICM	Integrated Coastal Management
LGU	Local Government Unit
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OBST	Olango Birds and Seascape Tour
PAMB	Protected Area Management Board
PATA	Pacific Asia Travel Association
PRS	Preliminary Resource Scanning
SCF	Seaweed Consultative Forum
SOEC	Suba Olango Multi-Purpose Ecotourism Cooperative
TIES	The International Ecotourism Society
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCF	Visayas Central Fund
WTO	World Tourism Organization
ZEDA	Zone of Economic Development Approach

The Enterprise Development Component of CRMP

The enterprise projects of CRMP were implemented by the Enterprise Component, which was formed in October 1997 and completed work in June 2001. The goal of the Enterprise Component was to assist local stakeholders (fishing communities, government agencies and private organizations) in selected CRMP learning areas to plan, design and implement viable and environment-friendly enterprises for local coastal communities, as tools for improving management of coastal zones. Initially, three learning areas, namely, Olango Island in Cebu province, Malalag Bay in Davao del Sur and Saranggani Bay in Saranggani province were selected by CRMP for the development of pilot enterprise projects. Later, enterprise development activities were shifted by CRMP from the learning areas in Mindanao to learning areas in Bohol, Negros Oriental, Palawan. Learning area is a term used by CRMP to refer to geographic zones (cluster of coastal municipalities) in selected provinces, where coastal resource management activities are implemented by the project in partnership with local governments and other organizations.

The main strategy that was adopted at the beginning by the enterprise team to jump start enterprise development was to identify and establish local production on specific commodities that were selected for their high marketability, high value, technical and economic feasibility for production by local fishers in the learning areas, and low or no adverse impact to the environment and community. The methods used earlier to identify these marketable commodities were: participatory assessments and consultation activities with the coastal communities and other local stakeholders in the coastal zone; preparation of a Preliminary Resource Scanning (PRS) report on project sites; long-listing and short-listing of potential commodities; and selection of priority commodities for enterprise work up, using the Zone of Economic Development Approach (ZEDA) selection and ranking criteria. After the preliminary selection of and initial feasibility studies on priority commodities, host communities and trial participants were identified. Implementation plans were then drawn up for each enterprise project.

In establishing local production of identified commodities, CRMP contracted required product specialists, or requested the services of available product specialists from public institutions, to help train and assist selected community project participants in testing commodity production in local areas. Success in the initial production stage qualified the community participants for the second phase – gradual enterprise development work up in the succeeding years.

Out of the successful production trials emerged the model community enterprise projects of CRMP which development provided valuable lessons and innovations to other projects and communities, not only in terms of the strategies for successful community enterprise development, but more so, on mobilizing and sustaining community and multiple stakeholder involvement in natural resource management.

As we became more familiar with the area and gained deeper understanding on the intent and requirements of coastal management in each area, we modified our methods and innovated better ones. In my own experience I devised an approach that integrated environmental

management, community development and multiple stakeholder involvement goals, principles and practices in the entire phase of enterprise development in communities. This integrated enterprise approach, by itself, is a unique contribution to the arsenal of tools for effective resource management at the community level, addressing the concerns for sustainable economic practices and wider, more sustained community participation in coastal management

Key Strategies that Worked in Olango and Bohol

I was tasked by CRMP to lead the enterprise development work (assisted by 3 able enterprise development team mates) in Olango and Bohol. Here, successful production trials emerged. The pilot projects that showed enterprise potential were: ecotourism and cottonii (seaweed) culture for Olango, and ecotourism and various mariculture (oyster, mud crab) for Bohol.

The key strategies that worked well for our team, leading to the successful development of pilot enterprise projects in Olango and Bohol were as follows:

1. local counterpart sourcing (host communities and LGUs) and institutional linkages (national government agencies, donor agencies, private sector) for financing and marketing support
2. business organizational development for communities
3. production, financial and marketing management (whenever appropriate) for communities
4. integration of environmental management goals and activities throughout the entire course of enterprise development
5. integration of community development goals and activities throughout the entire course of enterprise development
6. capacity building and mobilization of multiple stakeholders (key sectors of community, local governments, national government agencies, NGOs, trade groups) for project support at the village, municipal, provincial, regional and national levels
7. project promotion at the national and international levels

The Olango Enterprise Development Experience

In Olango, the initial enterprise assessment revealed strongest enterprise potentials for the following commodities: tropical aquarium fish (using sustainable methods of capture and trading), cottonii seaweed farming and ecotourism.

Exploratory activities and feasibility studies showed that the sustainable tropical aquarium fish trade project could become economically viable, and if successful, become a model in sustainable practices for the global tropical aquarium fish industry, particularly in terms of completely stopping the use of cyanide and engendering reef management by tropical aquarium fish gatherers using economic incentives, among other resource management tools. However, this enterprise project idea was eventually scrapped as an option, as there was strong opposition

within CRMP against it. The risk management strategies that were identified, such as, intensive training and close monitoring of participant fishers to the program; strict implementation of reef management policies and plans by fishers and host local governments / communities; and strict implementation of product quality control and labeling throughout the distribution chain, were thought to be too complex to set up for the duration of the project, as well as too risky to the coastal environments that will be affected (complex control requirements on fishing gear and volume of wild harvest for project success).

Cottonii farming, on the other hand, was aggressively pursued. As cottonii was going to be farmed in very extensive shallow reef flats south of Olango, free from coral growth and affecting only a small parcel of sea grass beds, it was perceived by the project as a very environment friendly option. Production trials and expert advice by our in-house seaweed consultant indicated that cottonii was suitable over at least 200 hectares of coastal waters surrounding Gilutungan Island. That meant a potential of 200 fisher families deriving additional income by growing cottonii. Demand projections for dried cottonii by carreegeenan producers based in Cebu indicated an increase of 10% per annum over the next 5 years while buying prices were projected to fluctuate very minimally. General monthly net income projections were at P 6,000 to P12,000 per household following the seaweed farm model (net bag farming technology using quarter of hectare of coastal water space) designed by CRMP's seaweed consultant.

Twenty-nine (29) fishers were selected and assisted by the enterprise project to establish cottonii farms over approximately 8 hectares of coastal waters along the Gilutungan and Olango channels. Credit support to finance start-up operations amounting to a maximum of P1.5 million , as well as marketing assistance were secured from the Foundation for Sustainable Society, Inc (FSSI), Visayas Central Fund (VCF) and Alternative Commodity Exchange Services (ACES), who, together with CRMP, formed the Seaweed Consultative Forum (SCF) to manage assistance to the seaweed farming project in the Olango Learning Area. The seaweed enterprise project along with the institutional partnership in the SCF represented a breakthrough in linking community based coastal management to economic incentives derived from sustainable practices in the seaweed industry. The initial gains marked by the successful first cottonii harvest and sales by seaweed growers in April 1999, affirmed the direction of the project and provided momentum to institutional partners comprising the SCF to adopt cottonii farming and trading, along with the sustainable technology and coastal management practices introduced by CRMP, as a major program for promoting sustainable economic development in rural communities.

The initial success of the Olango seaweed project, however, was short-lived. The onset of two successive major climatic phenomena, El Nino then La Nina, which wrought havoc to marine life, extensive coral bleaching to cite an example, did not spare the cottonii farms. Attempts to revive the farms were not successful as changes in the biophysical conditions of the coastal waters were unfavorable to further cultivation of cottonii in the area. Today farming of seaweed in Gilutungan drastically decreased, including that of the sturdier but cheaper variety called "spinosum" which had been extensively cultivated by the islanders way before the cottonii project was introduced.

Among the three enterprise ideas that were prioritized for the Olango Learning Area the ecotourism project in the village of Suba was the enterprise project that was able to sustain its initial momentum, develop into a full-blown enterprise and become a commercial success.

Maria Monina M. Flores
May 2002

A Global Role Model on Ecotourism

The Olango Birds and Seascape Tour Project today has become an international and national role model of what true ecotourism should be – one that combines wise practices and good values in tourism operations to natural and cultural areas; contributes directly to conservation of the environment and good management of natural resources; educates visitors on the values of and respect for the natural environment and local culture; and provides for optimum participation by and benefits to local communities.

Many public and private institutions, organizations and communities from different parts of the world and the Philippines join and study about the tour not only to be fascinated by the experience but also to learn about how it was developed, how it animates and benefits the local people and how it improves the management of certain natural resources and environments. In this sense it has become for different sectors and nationalities, an active focal point for cross-area and cross-discipline learning on ecotourism and sustainable tourism development, natural resource management, sustainable community development, multiple stakeholder mobilization and responsible governance.

The making of OBST is by itself a very unique contribution by the CRMP and the Philippines to the growing body of knowledge and experience on ecotourism in the world. Not a few tourism experts who have experienced the ecotour have commented that OBST is one of the very rare examples in the world that truly embodies the principles of ecotourism, especially in regard the deep involvement of local communities in environmental conservation, tourism benefits, and enterprise ownership and management.

Following the post-CRMP development of OBST with technical assistance from the Environment and Community Ventures Foundation, Inc. and with funding support from the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, the community ecotourism organization known as the Suba Olango Ecotourism Multi-purpose Cooperative (SOEC) was able to establish and manage booking operations, increase market linkages, participate in travel marts, and sign a tie-up with a leading e-commerce company for the immediate online promotion and trading of OBST. This resulted to an unprecedented increase in the community's ecotour sales by 150% in the first quarter of 2002. What this groundbreaking experience proves is that local communities could actually learn to perform complex functions related to a tour operation business such as booking, tour operation management, market linking, promotional activities, and financial management functions, if given the appropriate development assistance. I think that this achievement is yet unmatched by existing ecotourism initiatives in the world today.

International Awards and Media Coverage

The OBST has been honored by two major international tourism award giving bodies for sustainable tourism and ecotourism programs. The prestigious British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Awards chose OBST as the winner of the Environmental Award Category in October 2001 from among 115 competing global entries (the biggest and best batch of applicants according to BA). The Conservation International Excellence in Ecotourism Awards 2000 honored CRMP with the highly commended award for developing OBST and the Cambuhat River and Village Tour Project in Buenavista, Bohol. OBST also received the prestigious Anvil Award of Merit from the Public Relations Association of the Philippines.

CI's global publication, entitled *Role Models in Sustainable Tourism* and its ecotravel website features OBST as a model ecotourism project. OBST was also listed and recommended by the Lonely Planet travel guide on the Philippines.

Media coverage of the ecotour became a bandwagon as word-of-mouth endorsements by highly satisfied visitors spread around the country and abroad. Almost all major public affairs and travel programs in Philippine television featured OBST, among them: Brigada Siete, The Correspondents, Magandang Gabi Bayan, Laksay TV, and Travel Magazine. NHK of Japan and other major television networks in Germany, Switzerland filmed OBST as a good and interesting ecotour for their national audiences. OBST also enjoyed widespread coverage in various print media in the Philippines and abroad, to name a few: Action Asia Magazine, Conde Nast Travel Magazine, British Airways in flight magazine (3 million readership) and different British newspapers, leading Philippine and Cebu dailies (Daily Inquirer, Sun Star, Malaya, Business World, Today, The Star, etc.) Good Housekeeping, Travel Update (US West Coast) and many more.

Olango Birds and Seascape Tour: An Ecotourism Venture and Conservation Initiative of the People, by the People, and for the People

December 2000

The Olango Birds and Seascape Tour (OBST) is a community based ecotourism business venture in the island of Olango, Cebu Province in the central region of the Philippines. Residents of Suba, a fishing village in Olango Island, collectively own and operate the ecotourism venture through their business organization, which they formed and named as Suba Olango Ecotourism Cooperative (SOEC).

The ecotourism venture stands out as a project that successfully integrates the ideal elements of community-based ecotourism, such as, full community benefit and participation, contribution to environmental conservation and education, product differentiation and marketability, economic viability and promotion of local culture.

The development of the Olango Birds and Seascape Tour started in March 1998 and was made possible through the technical assistance of the Coastal Resource Management Project (CRMP), an initiative of the Philippine government's Department of Environment and Natural Resources, funded by the United States Agency for International Development.

The community ecotourism project was conceived by CRMP together with community residents and key stakeholders in government and the private sector. The goals of the project are to:

1. develop environment-friendly livelihood alternatives for resident fishers,
2. model sustainable tourism development in islands as a strategy for improving coastal management by local stakeholders, and,
3. promote local cooperation in the conservation of natural protected areas.

Uniqueness of the Ecotourism Product

1. **The ecotourism venture is built around the unique environmental attributes and serene beauty of Olango Island's coast, seas, reefs, and bird life.**

The Olango ecotour combines a broad range of environmental experiences and learning with fun and enjoyment of sun, sea and sand. Bird watching, coastal trek, canoe paddling, snorkeling, swimming, visit to seaweed farms, and island hopping are among the activities that bring guests closer to nature. Activities are conducted with the least impact on the environment. Guests are briefed and guided for appropriate behavior in the natural areas and communities. A naturalist interpreter/expert on migratory birds is on hand to provide quality information.

2. The tour promotes and showcases local conservation of threatened coastal habitats as well as marine and bird life.

A tourist learns from the tour experience that the valuable and beautiful resources she is enjoying are not inexhaustible, but are in fact under severe pressure from human use. The tourist observes that the tour package he/she is paying for is in itself the realization of a fishing community's effort to promote conservation by engaging in a non-extractive form of enterprise while promoting environmental understanding to visitors.

The tourist snorkels and sees the abundance of fish in a protected coral reef that is declared by the local government and managed by the community as a marine sanctuary. He/she learns that community members help monitor the reef, and boat and dive operators pay user fees and observe user guidelines. He/she then realizes that these local efforts are paying off in terms of better regulation of human activities, generation of tourism revenues, and improved regeneration of marine life. The experience imbues him/her with a feeling of connection with Nature, a grounded awareness of the realities that threaten it, and a new resolve to care for the environment and its people.

3. The project showcases the potential, viability and benefits of full community participation in the ownership and operation of ecotourism ventures.

Its effectiveness as a conservation tool is illustrated by the active enlistment of community cooperation in the management of a protected area. Its impact on the community's sense of empowerment is exemplified by the community's substantial economic benefits, growing sense of pride in their achievements, renewed confidence in their ability to reach their goals, acquisition of technical skills, spontaneity in expressing their ideas and sentiments, and manifestation of enthusiasm and creativity in their activities. For perhaps the first time in their lives, Olango folks feel they are able to contribute to something noble for which they get affirmation from people outside their community. What's more, their efforts allow them to earn extra income and acquire new skills that raise their capacity to achieve their dreams of a better future for themselves and their children.

Background on Olango Island

Olango Island is located about 4 kilometers from the east coast of Mactan Island in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu Province, the second largest staging area for tourism in the Philippines. Mactan Island holds an international airport, five star resorts and numerous tourism businesses. Olango's proximity to existing tourism markets and facilities in Mactan and mainland Cebu, adds to the island's potential as a coastal tourism destination.

Mainland Olango's flat and elongated dry land measures about 1,000 hectares. The intertidal wetland, known as the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary (OIWS), extends the island further south by 904 hectares. The OIWS is the first area in the Philippines to be declared as a RAMSAR site, or an internationally important wetland for migratory birds belonging to the East Asia Migratory Flyway. An extensive, submerged reef that connects the island to 6 other islets in the south also surrounds Olango. One of these islets is called Gilutungan Island, which harbors a protected reef that serves as a strategic spawning ground for marine organisms, as well as a growing destination for diving, snorkeling and swimming.

The potential of Olango Island as a tourism destination comes from its beautiful seascape, islets, fringing reefs, white sand beaches, migratory birds and coastal village culture

Underneath Olango's natural beauty and tourism potential, however, lies a growing concern for the sustainability of the natural environment and socio-economic welfare of communities living there. Out of the estimated 23,000 residents, 75% depend on fishing and related activities for their livelihood. These include activities such as harvesting of shells, starfish, sea cucumbers, sea urchins, tropical aquarium fish, live food fish, corals, mangroves, etc. Yet, Olango's fisheries continue to decline considerably due to over fishing and destruction of coastal habitats. The latter deals the worst blow to the environment and is achieved through the use of cyanide and dynamite in fishing, transformation of wetlands in reclamation, and coastal pollution. Declining resources, high population density and insufficient basic service delivery all contribute to the low income, low education and low occupational mobility of fishing families in Olango. Moreover, early initiatives in coastal tourism development have marginalized the communities in terms of participation in decision-making and benefit sharing.

The Coastal Resource Management Project sees in the case of Olango Island the challenge as well as the opportunity to assist the communities and key public and private stakeholders in the island by introducing sustainable tourism and participatory development to catalyze alternative livelihood opportunities for fishing families and secure local cooperation in the long-term conservation of natural attractions.

Thus, ecotourism development for environmental conservation and community development was pursued. The Olango Birds and Seascape Tour became the first ecotourism product and business to be developed in Olango Island.

Project Evolution

The Olango Birds and Seascape Tour Project started in March 1998 and went through six stages of development with the community and other stakeholders prior to commercialization in 2000.

Stage 1. Assessment

A rapid survey of Olango's resources was made to determine product options for enterprise development, including ecotourism products that met the following criteria:

1. low environmental impact
2. marketability
3. community benefit

Ecotour operation was listed and pursued among the feasible options for the following reasons:

1. Nearby Cebu had a developed tourism market.
2. The migratory birds, seascape and coastal villages of Olango are unique and accessible attractions that remained untapped.
3. Environmental management and community interest represented a potential competitive edge when developed.

Consultations were conducted with the key sectors, leaders and communities on the island to determine their development needs, goals and willingness to participate in ecotourism enterprise development. This was done hand in hand with CRMP efforts to bring together local stakeholders in government, communities and private sector to plan and implement integrated management of the Olango coastal zone.

The village of Suba was identified as potential host community for the ecotourism livelihood project because of its scenic and strategic location vis-à-vis the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary. The community was located at the backdoor of the protected wetlands; their cooperation was therefore important to secure the sanctuary from unauthorized access to and illegal harvest of marine resources.

Stage 2. Participatory ecotour product development

Meetings and workshops were conducted with community members who were interested in joining the project to orient them on the nature of and potential benefits, constraints and problems related to tourism and ecotourism development.

Weekly experiential workshop sessions were organized to achieve the following:

1. Relate tourism concepts to the participants' own "travel" experiences;
2. Identify, map and assess potential tourism resources in the village of Suba and the wildlife sanctuary;
3. Understand what an ecotourist would look for and need;
4. Draw an initial itinerary that would showcase the uniqueness of the local environment and way of living;
5. Package services that they could offer to enhance visitor experience and differentiate their product from others.

Product development was fast-tracked when CRMP learned about the holding of the Annual PATA Chapters Congress at Shangrila Mactan Resort in Cebu on March 25-27, 1998. The project saw the perfect occasion to test the market viability of the Olango destination and community interaction with international guests who were experts in the tourism industry. Their feedback would be valuable in determining future efforts for the project. With assistance from the Philippine Department of Tourism, the project organizers secured permission from PATA Congress organizers for CRMP to invite selected PATA delegates to the first familiarization tour under the Olango Birds and Seascape Tour project on March 28.

The PATA guests gave their tour experience an A rating and shared valuable suggestions to improve the tour. The events that unfolded that day made history -- for the small village of Suba, for the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary, for Cebu Province and for the Philippines. An authentic community ecotourism product was born in the country.

It is worth noting that no infrastructure was built, and that the product was developed on an "as is, where is" basis, meaning nothing was physically altered or added in the community and the wildlife sanctuary.

Stage 3. Linkages established with public institutions and tour companies for marketing, policy, program and promotional support.

From April to December 1998, the project began a series of consolidating activities to strengthen the foundation of community business development on the ecotour product. The focus of efforts during the period were:

1. Getting legally mandated institutions (national government agencies and local government units) to provide policy, promotional and program support to the project;
2. Establishing marketing linkages with national tour companies that were based in Cebu.

To get the support of the government agencies and the tour operators, CRMP organized familiarization tours for them to experience the enormous potential of the project in promoting sustainable tourism business in Cebu and addressing environmental and poverty issues in the province.

The tour experience never failed to win the mind, touch the heart, and capture the support of the visiting institutions. It was the honesty of the experience with simple but hopeful village folks in a spiritually inspiring natural environment that drew their commitments. It was also the freshness of the approach -- variety, surprise, physical and emotional exhilaration, professional and community services, rich information and child-like wonder and fun - - that made them refer to the Olango Birds and Seascape Tour as a very different product, a heretofore hidden jewel of Cebu.

Stage 4. Strengthening community capacity and resolve in tour operations and business development.

The community members learned to perform and adjusted comfortably to their individual roles in the tour operation as test and familiarization tours were run from September to December 1998, mostly for groups who wanted to learn from the emerging ecotourism model.

Community meetings were held after every tour to introduce improvements, affirm good work, thresh out differences and solve problems. These activities helped them to understand new, complex ideas, learn new skills and internalize the nature of what they were embarking on. As their understanding grew, a question was repeatedly thrown to them: "Knowing what ecotourism is all about, and what it exacts from you, do you still want to continue? Is this what you want to do in the long term?" After deep thought, their answer would always be YES.

The understanding and mastery that came with repetitive experiences melted community inhibitions and unleashed a surprising creative energy that led to spontaneous community improvisations in cultural interpretation, hospitality and entertainment. The community captivated their audience with their newfound spontaneity, confidence and genuine warmth. The affirmation from the guests enhanced these even more.

Stage 5. It's time to lead -- the community takes on administration of tour operations and formalizes collective ownership of the ecotour business.

Year 1999 was a year of tremendous leaps for the Suba community and the Olango Birds and Seascape Tour project.

The project started introductory runs without any promotional campaign, but word-of-mouth endorsements by highly satisfied clients kept the community busy and earning. There was an average run of three tours a month. Clients came from traditional and new tourism markets in the Philippines.

The project's strategy was to test the product with as many desirable market segments as possible as there was no developed ecotourism market in the country and focusing on a specific market segment would prematurely lock out other markets with greater potential. As it turned out, the tour was acceptable to a wide range of foreign and domestic markets already existing in the Philippines. In fact, the tour became highly differentiated as a tourism product in Cebu because it provided a very accessible alternative to city and resort destinations. The study tour market emerged as a strong and broad market, covering students, development organizations, professionals and programs, government institutions, and research groups.

While actively operating tours, the community gradually assumed management of their enterprise, with CRMP assisting them in installing and implementing operating and financial systems. A booking office to be jointly run by the community and a private partner is currently being established in mainland Cebu.

CRMP helped organize the community members involved in the tour operation to function collectively and lead themselves. The men, who are mainly involved in paddling guests and guiding at the sanctuary, formed the Paddlers' Group. They set and implemented guidelines for accrediting, orienting, assigning and monitoring paddlers for each tour. Their current membership count is 25.

The Women's Group provided the venue for the women (40 of them) to discuss and agree on the direction and rules for participating in the ecotour. Their roles covered a wide field -- purchasing, cooking, physical arrangement, hospitality, cookery and shell craft demonstration, bookkeeping, payroll, etc. The tour management structure involved three departments: administration and finance, housekeeping, tour guiding and paddling. The marketing department will be set up this year (2000).

The Suba, Olango Ecotourism Cooperative (SOEC) was organized in June 1998 after the community attended a pre-membership seminar for cooperatives. A membership of individuals from 55 families (belonging to the Paddlers' and Women's Group) elected their board of officers, applied for registration with the Cooperative Development Authority and opened a bank account from tour profits that accrued to the community.

CRMP helped define and install operating and financial systems for the cooperative. On-the-job training proved to be effective in teaching community members with very low numerical literacy (achieving no higher than elementary education). The community later prepared their own tour income statements and ran the entire tour on their own upon notification of the date, time of arrival, and number of visitors.

Except for the naturalist interpreter who was hired by the cooperative on a per tour basis, community members performed all services in the tour.

Stage 6. Phasing-out. CRMP initiated marketing support, environmental management systems and preparations for phase-out. These were:

1. **Marketing.** Mechanisms were developed for booking services under co-management by the community and its partner outside the island: networking with tour operators, guides, hotels and resorts to undertake marketing of the tour; and building community capability and understanding on the marketing of their products.
2. **Environmental management.** The tour project development framework gave primary emphasis on coastal resource management as a motive and tool for sustainability of the ecotourism endeavor. The design and conduct of the tour itinerary was based on low-impact visitation, experiential learning, as well as incentives and contributions to biodiversity conservation. At the community level, best practices in waste management and visitor guiding at the sanctuary by paddlers were defined, agreed upon, and enforced.

With assistance from CRMP, the community presented a proposal to the government agency in-charge of managing the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary. The proposal sought to deputize the cooperative to assist in protection, rehabilitation, and research activities at the sanctuary.

CRMP saw that the long-term sustainability of the ecotourism venture depended on its integration to the wildlife sanctuary's comprehensive management plan, enforcement of environmental laws outside the sanctuary boundaries, and harmonization of land use practices in adjacent villages. Initiatives were made with authorities at the wildlife sanctuary to formulate a protected area management plan. CRMP drafted and submitted visitor management guidelines, which were adopted by the sanctuary management as a key reference in the formulation of a visitor management program.

3. **Phase-out.** CRMP would phase out from providing technical assistance to the community ecotourism project starting in December 2000. This would allow the community and local institutions to begin to manage the ecotourism enterprise on their own. CRMP would then monitor the ecotourism project for a brief period before fully leaving it and share its lessons to a broader audience.

Key Strategies

1. Key Socio-cultural strategies

- 1.1 The design of the tour product was oriented around the use of local skills, everyday activities, local crafts/arts and music.
- 1.2 Community ownership of the tour product was promoted to optimize local participation and economic benefits. Community ownership also helped preserve local culture and identity.
- 1.3 Participatory processes and mechanisms were installed and implemented. A policy of inclusion of various community stakeholders was adopted by CRMP.
- 1.4 A training strategy of "learning by doing" was implemented. Example 1: To operate a tour, CRMP together with the community, developed and operated an actual tour (from conceptualization, implementation and fine-tuning). Example 2: To manage an

organization, key community leaders were placed on the job training and coaching on appropriate systems and procedures.

- 1.5 Immediate economic returns were delivered to further encourage active local community participation. The community did not subsidize familiarization and test tours and the initial visitors had to pay for at least the full cost of the tour. Development organizations were utilized as initial visitors.
- 1.6 Spreading benefits through local sourcing of services and goods expanded community stakeholdership. A contribution to a community development fund was built into the tour package price.
- 1.7 CRMP supported the community organization to influence planning and policy development as well as supported its position against threats to access and use of the natural resource for the tour. These were done by generating a high media profile (including awards), generation of multi-institutional support and endorsements by visitors for the project.
- 1.8 It was also essential to manage the following:
 - 1.8.1 number, frequency and behavior of visitors
 - 1.8.2 other community uses of the natural resource
 - 1.8.3 other development interests within the locality

2. Key Marketing strategies

- 2.1 The development sector was tapped as the primary market to jump-start and test-run the tour.
- 2.2 A tour product was developed to capture tourist segments from resorts and hotels in nearby Cebu City.
- 2.3 The tour product was designed to be flexible enough to capture niche markets (e.g. corporate incentive and training participants, study tour programs, student and development sector).
- 2.4 The tour product was also differentiated from existing island hopping tours by the provision of expert interpretation, interaction with coastal villagers, visit to a marine sanctuary and a front-seat view of migratory birds.
- 2.5 The tour product was positioned as the country's leading community ecotourism product. It capitalized on the community's virtual monopoly of prime access to an international bird sanctuary and community ownership and management was made a highlight by itself.

3. Key Environmental Strategies

- 3.1 Promotion of shoreline management among landowners, residents, and public resource managers.

- 3.2 Implementation of a participatory resource assessment, integrated coastal management and ecotourism planning including identification of resource use zones.
- 3.3 Formulation and implementation of resource use guidelines that include:
 - 3.1.1 Preservation of natural landscape
 - 3.1.2 Minimal use of island resources (e.g. freshwater, food, etc.)
 - 3.1.3 Minimizing waste
- 3.4 The tour itself was designed with a low impact itinerary.
- 3.5 A training and accreditation system was established for boatmen, tour guides and service deliverers that include strong emphasis on environmental consciousness and practice.

4. Key Stakeholder strategies

- 4.1 A multiple stakeholder development approach was adopted to widen involvement and minimize conflicts among and between players. Sharing of roles and resources was promoted among stakeholders throughout the entire tourism development process.
- 4.2 Areas for stakeholder involvement and support were identified as follows:
 - 4.2.1 Policy enactment
 - 4.2.2 Planning and enforcement
 - 4.2.3 Tenurial and resource access rights
 - 4.2.4 Marketing and promotions
 - 4.2.5 Community organizing and education
 - 4.2.6 Institutional linkages

Project Highlights

- Environment initiatives were the foundation upon which the Olango Birds and Seascape Tour community enterprise was established and flourished from 1998 to 2000.
- Product development and differentiation for the OBST was achieved by designing the tour product around unique environmental themes and experiential activities on the values of and initiatives in marine and bird life conservation by local communities.
- Local perspective on and plans for the long-term sustainability of the community ecotourism business were integrated with strategic management of the natural environments that comprised the tourism attractions.
- Together with the implementation of the major environmental initiatives, volume of tourists to the OBST increased by 30% in 2000 (357 tourists in 1999 introductory runs to 462 tourists in 2000's first commercial operation). Projected sales volume for 2001, based on current marketing tie-ups with tour companies, increased the 2000 figure dramatically by 70%.

- The ecotourism venture's environment initiatives consisted of the following: integrated coastal management planning and implementation in Olango and adjacent islands, environmental education of communities and tourists, formulation and enforcement of visitor management and ecotour operation guidelines, ecological destination management framework plan for the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary, local legislation and establishment of a local marine sanctuary, implementation of user fees in protected areas, community training on environmental laws, best practices and promotion of environmental support from the tourism industry and various publics.



Olango Birds and Seascape Tour: A True Community Ecotourism and Conservation Initiative

Submission to the British Airways
Tourism for Tomorrow Awards 2001

April 2001

The Olango Birds and Seascape Tour (OBST) is a community owned and operated ecotourism venture by the Suba Olango Ecotourism Cooperative (SOEC) in Olango Island, Lapu-lapu City, Cebu Province in central Philippines. It highlights unique, diverse and authentic environmental and cultural experiences around an internationally important protected area.

Objectives of the Project

The project was established to model a community ecotourism venture that:

1. substantially contributes to the conservation of an internationally important protected area;
2. educates villagers and visitors on the values of managing the coastal environment;
3. mobilizes public, private and village stakeholders to work together to improve coastal management; and
4. provides direct optimum economic and other benefits to poor families in the host communities.

Financing

From 1998 up to 2000, the USAID / DENR Coastal Resource Management Project provided technical assistance to develop the ecotourism product, train and organize the villagers, establish an environmental management program, start up the business and commercialize the ecotour operation.

The community, on their part, commanded their available resources (e.g., labor, fishing canoes, huts) and accessed supplier credit (e.g., rental of motorized boats, services of a professional naturalist guide) to operate several trial runs that enabled them to accumulate start-up capital for the subsequent commercialization of their operation. No fixed costs were allotted nor spent to run the tours. The OBST operated entirely on variable costs.

A small grant to the cooperative by the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives partially paid for the establishment of the OBST booking office. This greatly enhanced OBST promotion and booking services for FITs, hotels, resorts and tour operators.

Visitor Numbers, Facilities

Olango Island is just 20 minutes by boat from Mactan Island where its international airport has direct flights to Tokyo, Hongkong, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Taiwan. Nearby Mactan and Cebu are hosts to five star hotels and resorts like Shangrila, Marriott Cebu, Plantation Bay, and Maribago Bluewaters.

In 2000, the Suba community handled approximately 500 foreign and domestic visitors all in organized tours. A 50% increase in visitation is projected for this second year of commercial operation. On the other hand, the Gilutungan marine sanctuary received an average of 400 visitors a month last year.

No facilities were built in Suba village for the purpose of the tour. The tour runs on an "as is, where is" basis allowing the tourist to fully experience the natural environment and the authenticity of community life and spirit.

Social Benefit

The OBST brought back pride-of-self and pride-of-place to the poorest fishing village in Olango Island, as they became owner-manager-operators of the most successful community ecotourism venture in the Philippines. It provided a more responsible tourism occupation to shell vendors in nearby Gilutungan Island who were organized into marine sanctuary lifeguard-guides. They guarded the safety of swimmers, interpreted marine life for them, and instructed guests on how to undertake visual census of fish population and check the condition of reefs in the marine sanctuary.

The OBST economically directly benefits 69 households in two villages through payment of service fees, purchase and sales of various products, part-time and full-time employment, and shares in the profits of the business.

There is a provision for extending benefits to other members of the community by way of a Community Development Fund established from a portion of the net income of the OBST.

The OBST facilitated the organization and empowerment of the two villages (women, fishermen, and youth) to: participate in identifying management goals, priorities and policies on their natural environment; set and pursue common development goals and activities; and make representations before the local government units and visiting organizations.

They used to be very shy and timid and insecure about their abilities to speak to other people, to learn skills, much less to lead projects by themselves. Now, they confidently face all types of guests. They speak about their dreams and their ideas about their tourism project before the press and dignitaries that join their ecotour and rave about it. They also teach other communities who visit them on study tours and teach other villagers in far away towns to conduct coastal clean ups, implement participatory coastal resource assessments, reef monitoring and community ecotourism operation.

Heritage

The Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary (OIWS) in 1994 was declared as the first and only RAMSAR site in the Philippines. It is a protected wetland of international importance

because of its high biodiversity and critical role as feeding and roosting site for birds flying the East Asia Migratory Flyway. Three globally threatened species included in this migration and sighted in Olango are: the Asian Dowitcher, Chinese Egret and Far eastern Curlew. Annually, tens of thousands of shorebirds from the northern hemisphere, consisting of at least 70 species, stop over at Olango during their southward migration (to escape winter) in the months of September to November, and their northward migration (to breed in the north) in the months of February to April.

Pressure from human coastal settlements and development activities in Olango and Mactan islands pose the biggest threats to these birds and their fragile habitat. The wetland opens to the sea on three sides and securing its perimeter through park patrols is almost impossible. Moreover, surrounding rural villages, until recently, did not understand why they can no longer move freely in the wetland as before and, therefore, harbored ill sentiments against the protection of the wildlife sanctuary.

The introduction among Olango folks of the community ecotourism venture around the wildlife sanctuary played a pivotal role in changing their mindset and behavior towards conservation of the wetland and the birds. The Suba village of 200 households, positioned at the strategic backdoor of the sanctuary, became an active ally in securing the sanctuary. When interviewed by the media the members of the cooperative would say that because of the ecotourism and the feedback that they get from their visitors they have become proud of their natural heritage and culture and desire to preserve these for the future benefit of their children.

Management

Only guided day tours are allowed. Overnight stays are not encouraged to limit the generation of wastes and minimize consumption of limited fresh water in the island. There is a maximum tour group of 30 persons per visit and lengths of stay are limited to the OIWS at 1 hour, the community at 3 hours and the marine sanctuary at 1 hour. The project is lobbying for a ban on hotel and resort construction on the island in as much as the nearby Mactan island is already providing hotel and resort accommodations. The project is also pushing for and assisting the local government to legislate implementing guidelines to the environmental protection zone to secure a no-development area around the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary.

Communication

The tour is promoted among different marketing channels as an environmental and community tour. The fam tours, guest feedback, promotional activities and media coverage on the OBST help to concretize the concept and intention of ecotourism among tourism industry players. This helps to raise their awareness regarding environmental concerns and social responsibility involved in tourism.

A naturalist guide, who is an expert on migratory birds and the Olango wildlife sanctuary is hired by the cooperative to lead each tour and provide expert nature and cultural interpretation together with villagers. Guests are encouraged to interact with the people and to give feedback on their experience and suggestions for improvement.

Community participants explain and demonstrate their folkways like fishing, crafts making, cooking, courtship, folksongs and dances. They also tell the story of how they have shifted their livelihood from some destructive fishing practices to sustainable

tourism. They share their life view as they bid their guests goodbye with a song which they composed: "Our life is full of uncertainties. Sometimes it's good, sometimes it's bad. Work in the sea is hard and dangerous. But we are happy when it is our loved ones we see waiting for us by the seashore."

Leadership

The project is an innovative model of ecotourism business development that features full ownership, involvement and management of operations by members of a fishing village with very low educational attainment and skills. Moreover, it is able to strategically link the tourism operation to enhanced management of and education on internationally important protected wetlands for migratory birds and a locally significant marine sanctuary. In addition, the project has successfully mainstreamed itself to become a very competitive product and regarded as world class and one of the best ecotourism models in Asia and Pacific.

Several natural park and protected area management agencies as well as environmental NGOs are now adopting ecotourism development approach and strategies drawn from the experiences of the OBST project.

Through the project, the host community was effectively positioned to guard a sensitive backdoor to the Olango wildlife sanctuary, decreasing incidents of illegal cutting of mangroves and unauthorized entry to the wetlands by motorized tour boats and visitors. The host community in Gilutungan Island was also effectively mobilized to implement: boat anchorage on and guarding of mooring buoys, restrictions to unsustainable uses of the marine sanctuary, user fee ticket inspection and education of visitors on values of the protected marine resource. As a result reef destruction halted, fish population and coral re-growth dramatically increased, tourism revenues for sanctuary management rapidly accumulated and sustainable community tourism services were created. Fishermen learned to become reef guides and reef managers as well.

Olango island is where fishing by use of sodium cyanide for tropical aquarium and live food fish trade originated in the world. The fisher folk who now run the ecotourism venture are now aware and are actively promoting a new way of life. This is the single biggest contribution of the project to global environmental conservation.

With only part time technical assistance provided for the project at the onset, the ecotourism development experience that evolved is replete with valuable lessons and innovative technologies. One of these is the capacity building approach used, consisting of experiential, coaching and on-the-job methodologies for generating new awareness, teaching new skills and instilling professionalism. Another is the multiple stakeholder involvement approach which encouraged the participation of all key stakeholders (government, private sector, community, civil sector organizations) throughout the entire development phase, in various capacities and roles, depending on the need and opportunities available, sharing together, responsibilities, risks, resources, lessons and glory.

The project's success ultimately rests on the very high level of visitor satisfaction. The tour experience provides a very diverse and interesting combination of activities: swimming in glorious waters and doing fish visual census to check the reef with local fishermen; cruising the multi-hued sea surrounding six islets on a private boat; being paddled one-on-one by fishers on small canoes amidst tranquil, mangrove-lined shallow channels; authentic community interpretation, demonstration, interaction and hospitality

in a lovely remote coastal village that never fails to touch the heart of guests: bird watching in the vastness and minimalist beauty of the Olango wetlands; and, experiencing the sunset's magnificent transformation of sky and earth into a world "where the spirit can run free".



Resource Management and Community Involvement in Ecotourism

December 1999

Ecotourism development can serve to catalyze the creation of sustainable economic opportunities for coastal community residents who are dependent on fishing. It can also encourage sustainable planning and best practices by multiple stakeholders in the economic management and operation of coastal areas. These are just two of several promising results from efforts by the Coastal Resource Management Project-Philippines (CRMP) to use ecotourism as a tool for coastal resource management (CRM).

CRMP has implemented three ecotourism strategies in selected areas in Cebu and Bohol. These are:

1. Modeling of sustainable and community-based ecotourism enterprises in strategic communities to develop local management capabilities and generate economic incentives for conservation.
2. Multiple stakeholder mobilization in sustainable planning and management of ecotourism destination and operations. This is done in conjunction with overall integrated coastal management planning and implementation in the coastal area.
3. Developing leadership in ecotourism best practices in terms of environmental planning and management, community benefit and empowerment, and economic growth and market competitiveness.

The Olango experience

In Olango, a community ecotourism enterprise venture was developed and located in one of the strategic gateway communities to the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary. The village of Suba at the southeastern tip of the Olango mainland was chosen over three other villages because of its attractive and strategic location, accessibility from Mactan, community need for income-generating options, and readiness for coastal management work-up.

The project model shows that ecotourism could catalyze community awareness and cooperation in protected area conservation, best practices in coastal resource use, community business ownership, benefit and tour management capability.

The initial success of the project has triggered closer coordination with and support from the tourism industry. Key institutional partners where the local government unit of Lapu-Lapu City, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Region 7 (DENR-7), Department of Tourism-Region 7, (DOT-7), Cebu Association of Tour

Operators, and a non-governmental organization. Partnership with the Protected Areas Management Board (PAMB) will soon be initiated.

A planning process has been initiated for ecological destination development and management for Olango Island. The planning would be integrated into the comprehensive management of the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary, sustainable land use and development activities in adjacent land areas, and integrated coastal management in the coastal zone. It is being undertaken by CRMP with DENR-7 and the government of Lapu-Lapu City.

Community-based enterprise development has also started at Gilutongan, one of several islets around Olango. Ecotourism planning will be stepped up to manage tourism use of the Gilutongan Marine Sanctuary and raise public revenue for its management. CRMP's lead partners in this undertaking are the municipal government of Cordova and community associations on Gilutongan Island.

The Bohol model

In Bohol, a riverside village in Cambuhat, Buenavista was selected to serve as a model of a community venture in a non-protected area. The enterprise/ecotourism strategy proved to be an effective entry strategy to win the interest and support of the local government and the community in adopting CRM.

Key to this model was the leadership of women in the economic venture. The women were given primary roles in the management of upland resources. To complete the ecotourism experience, the men were designated to supply tourism products and services from the coastal area, as well as stewardship to the coastal resources. As they began to experience economic benefits and collective pride in their joint economic ventures, the community was effectively united, organized and mobilized to actively manage their resources.

Ecotourism destination planning and resource management for the Daet-Cambuhat River, estuarine and mangrove areas are being considered to consolidate the initial gains in ecotourism in Cambuhat. This will be implemented in cooperation with the municipal government of Buenavista, the village government and community associations in Cambuhat, a corporate foundation, and the provincial association of travel and tour operators.

Initial project gains

The ecotourism project was started in 1998. Since then, it has chalked up a number of major accomplishments, and generated important benefits for the various stakeholders involved. It has also served as a "study tour" destination, providing a learning model for other products and areas.

Other accomplishments include:

- Communities were organized and highly motivated to develop and manage their business and natural resources.
- Initial business operations earned additional incomes and profits for participating individuals, households and community organizations.
- Substantial amounts were contributed to protected areas in the form of entrance and user fees.
- Interest was generated in the tourism market, generating increased sales and patronage for community ecotourism products.
- Strong local government and national government support were secured. This came in the form of policy enactment, human and financial resource augmentation, and visible project leadership. The models created an impact on other local governments within and outside the two provinces, motivating them to implement similar initiatives in their localities.
- The tourism industry has come to regard CRMP highly and helped promote its ecotourism products. Its recognition of the project as a key player in and authority on ecotourism opened for CRMP a wider arena for promoting CRM best practices in the tourism industry and encouraging collaboration between industry players, local resource managers, and communities. As a result, environmental management propositions and community-based approaches to ecotourism development have become more acceptable.
- Quality and highly marketable ecotour products were developed and earned a good reputation in both local and international ecotourism markets.
- A non-traditional market for ecotour products emerged through word-of-mouth endorsements by visitors. The "study market" consisted of visitors from government offices, development agencies, schools, diplomatic community, scientific community, and others, who were on the lookout for model projects to learn from or support. This time of market expanded the opportunities for promoting CRM and ecotourism to other areas and sectors.

Key Insights into Developing Ecotourism for Community Development and Conservation

The following processes were found to be important in developing ecotourism to achieve conservation and community development goals.

Ecotourism Product Development

- Determine if ecotourism is viable in your area.
- Get started by developing a product. Always remember four things: Visitors must feel safe, comfortable, happy and informed.
- Product development is often initiated or facilitated by a technologist to demonstrate to the community how it is done.

- Differentiate your ecotourism product from the rest.
 - Look at potential attractions in your area and focus on their uniqueness (Olango: migratory birds, seascape; Cambuhat: oyster farms, picturesque river and village).
 - Look for things that could make people want to stay or come back to the area (Olango: tranquil coast, village culture, people's warmth; Cambuhat: diversity of people's occupation, activities along the river and upland, people's character).
 - Paying attention to your visitors' comfort, safety and enjoyment in getting there adds great value to your product (Olango: cruising the southern seas in a private boat; Cambuhat: river cruise in small paddle boats).
 - Weave story around events and things as they happen or appear and provide interesting information to heighten the quality of the experience (Olango: tide controls the rhythm of all life in the coast; Cambuhat: the river mirrors the changes that happen in the village people's lives).
 - Combine scenes, things, events, stories and services to come up with an exciting, innovative, and substantive tour experience (Olango: seascape tour, snorkeling, wetlands trek, bird viewing, coastal village demonstrations and interaction, scientific knowledge, canoe ride, good food; Cambuhat: river paddling, all-oyster experience, buri crafts, resource management, seafood lunch by the river).
 - Invite the industry to test your product and recommend improvements.
 - Substantiate claims to ecotourism standards in terms of conservation value and community benefit. An ecotourism venture undertaken together with conservation and resource management efforts differentiates and sustains an ecotourism product, but it is a good ecotourism product owned and operated by the community whose culture is featured that stands above the rest.

Community Ecotourism Venture Development

Communities learn to understand what ecotourism is all about by playing roles in a tour product. Although the product technologist initiates the packaging of a product, communities could participate by providing valuable information on resources, and then adding or innovating on the product later as they become more familiar with the process. When communities grasp the process and overcome their inhibitions, their creativity springs forward and the resulting tour experience is authentic, filled with local color, dynamic and mutually inspiring to visitor and host community.

Understanding the requirements and demands of owning and running an ecotour venture comes with experiencing regular tour runs. Once the community grasps what an

ecotourism venture entails, decision-making becomes more internalized and directed at more substantial matters.

Uncertainties and conflicts will periodically arise as the community steps up their efforts in running the venture, a sure sign of growth, of increasing stakeholderhip, of vigilance, and of participation. The important thing is for the community to learn to welcome disagreements, prioritize concerns, and work for common solutions.

Building community capability in ecotourism management involves formulating practical systems, teaching the community how the systems work, and guiding them in implementing and modifying these systems through constant practice.

Many forms of business organizations can work for a community-based tour venture. These include joint venture arrangement between the community and marketing group (clear contractual obligations set); venture shareholding among select households; and community cooperative. Choose the arrangement most suitable to the situation in the community and the market.

To get accreditation and be legally recognized, communities may apply for the usual business permits from the municipal or city local government in their area of operation. There are no guidelines for DOT accreditation of community tourism ventures, but, as in the case of Boracay, the tourism agency may accredit community operations if it is so warranted.

Interpretation

A key element of a successful product is good interpretation. A well-thought-out theme, interesting information and well-crafted delivery are important ingredients. Find out interesting information about the place from local residents, professionals who work in the area, and available literature. Integrate into your tour the sharing of these stories and information with visitors. Relate specific experiences to the main theme of the tour, so visitors can better appreciate what they learn.

In Olango, an articulate naturalist guide who has done biological work on the bird life and mangroves in the Sanctuary is employed by the community to do the natural interpretation. The community, however, performs the interpretation of village culture. The community will be trained to gradually take on more interpretation roles now being done by the naturalist guide. Also, a bigger pool of freelance guides and part-time tour interpreters from local schools, a science university, the DENR, and tour agencies are being trained and tapped to provide interpretation services to the ecotour.

In Cambuhat, the task of interpreting the tour is divided among the different members of the community who can articulate in the local or national language the tour sub-themes. For domestic tourists, the current system would suffice, but as more foreign market segments are being developed, there is a need to identify and train English-speaking guides.

Destination development in protected areas

Community ecotourism may be linked to conservation by the following:

- Allowing communities to have managed access to protected area resources for their ecotourism operation;
- Contributing part of community ecotourism revenue an environmental management fund through entrance fees and concessionaire fees for exclusive tour operators;
- Making the community accountable for managing ecotourism impacts;
- Requiring the community to participate in protected area management activities such as patrols, resource monitoring and reporting threat activities.

Because the ecotourism venture is greatly dependent on the maintenance of the wildlife sanctuary in the case of Olango, it has become clear to the community that they would need to actively participate in protection and conservation activities.

Protected area authorities may grant exclusive contracts to organized community ventures to protect their economic viability from undue competition, limit visitor access to carrying capacity levels, effect monitoring and control of open access points.

Because ecotourism development connotes economic opportunities, multi-faceted development activities, creative and inter-disciplinary collaboration, interactive engagement with diverse nationalities, among others, it has become an attractive proposition to many protected area or resource managers. Where most appropriate, therefore, ecotourism should be tapped as an entry point for activating management bodies to carefully plan and implement more comprehensive and effective management strategies to natural environments.

In Olango, CRMP is building on the interest generated by the community ecotour project to influence comprehensive planning for effective management of the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary, starting with the DENR, the PAMB and the Lapu-Lapu City government.

Marketing

- Know the travel needs and product demands of the market nearest your area to start with. Develop a product that satisfies those needs and demands. Then, you can build on what you have already started to include other markets farther away from your area.
- Position your product to reach target market segments through promotions, appropriate marketing channels, pricing and product differentiation. Offer test runs to different types of tourists and their marketing channels to assess the suitability of your product to each market type and their willingness to pay.

It would be practical for ecotourism ventures to tap existing markets first, especially the domestic market, when starting up operations. As the community's

confidence and skills in tour management increase, the venture managers can move to handling more sensitive and high-end clients.

Your best marketer is a satisfied customer. The same customer who is very happy with your tour is your best promoter. Treat tour participants as you would your personal guests. Anticipate cultural differences and be prepared to deal with them. Remember you are not selling an attraction. You are selling an experience.

Cebu is a major tourist destination in the Philippines. It has tourism infrastructures that meet international standards, from an international airport to five-star hotels and resorts. But it suffers from a lack of new and exciting day tour activities and sub-destinations to make the stay of tourists more satisfying.

The Olango Tour was initially conceived to answer the need for more exciting day tour activities for guests staying at the hotels and resorts on Mactan Island. Its package of activities - a tour of the Olango Island Bird Sanctuary that incorporates experiencing the glorious waters, scenic seascape, vast natural surroundings, the minimalist and tranquil beauty of wildlife, and diverse but simple coastal village culture on Olango Island - provides a striking contrast to the tourist experience offered by bustling, urbanized Metro Cebu and the high-class amenities of Mactan resorts.

Stakeholder development and management

- Identify key tourism and resource stakeholders in your area and establish good relations with them.
- Know the various stakeholders' sectoral interests and competencies and analyze the potentials and constraints of working with them in relation to your project goals.
- Discuss and position your project with each stakeholder, stressing the potential area for cooperation and collaboration. Take note of the best timing for their involvement. Their involvement will vary, and some may opt not to participate. The important thing is to establish goodwill and remain open to future participation.

Stakeholders are generally categorized into different sectors. These include the tourism industry (private companies, industry associations, industry practitioners, tourists); government (local government units, national government agencies, special management bodies, development councils); non-governmental organizations (social development groups, development agencies, civic organizations); and communities (resident households, resident associations, landowners in the rural sector).

Ecotourism development and local governance

Under the Local Government Code, the mandate and authority to formulate, approve and implement local development and most natural resource management plans and activities lie with local government units at the provincial and municipal levels.

Although the accreditation of tourism operations is performed by DOT, and the supervision over the management of national protected areas and certain environments remain with the DENR, the local government units play a major role in influencing the course of local development that affect our environments and communities. Concretely, local governments have management mandates over municipal waters, which extend to 15 km from the shoreline. They formulate and allocate budgets for overall and specific development and investment plans. They provide business and building permits. And they legislate ordinances and enforce them to regulate activities in their localities.

Management problems related to tourism development in a given region and locality may be greatly mitigated if local government units were affected by efforts to rationalize economic development and tourism development plans, projects and activities according to sound environmental management standards and practices and community development principles.

Ecotourism provides a sustainable economic development model that is appropriate to the resource management requirements and economic capacities of most municipalities. Because of this, local government units are naturally receptive to propositions for collaboration. A major prerequisite for pursuing such collaboration is the availability of technical assistance for planning and implementation. Caution must be exercised so as not to raise undue expectation that ecotourism can be launched in every municipality that welcomes it. Initiatives must be guided by correct and adequate information about current trends and projections for the tourism market affecting the country, region or locality.

Recommendations to Strengthen Ecotourism Development to Benefit Conservation and Community Development

The following are recommended:

- Optimize strategic impact of model projects.
- Build local capability in ecotourism development and management.
- Provide adequate guidelines to development planners, investors, local executives, industry players on sustainable planning and management of ecotourism.
- Implement regional and local ecotourism planning, regional and local sustainable tourism planning and management, guidelines for industry best practices, sustainable alternative technologies, and trainers training for ecotourism facilitators and technologists, and a network of national and regional ecotourism practitioners.

Some important lessons

1. Define your project goals.

2. Analyze the potentials and consider the limitations of ecotourism in achieving your goals.
3. In planning your ecotourism project, be sure to integrate other important environmental management and community development interventions.
4. Position your ecotourism project well in relation to the resource area you would like to affect. Aim to achieve the widest impact where the chances for success are best.
5. Develop a good product right away. Differentiate your product well from the rest, and have a clear and strong vision for the business.
6. Test run your product at the first opportunity and continue to assess and modify it with every run so that it is refined to the needs of the market and the requirements of the area management.
7. Motivate your community. Build in them a strong sense of ownership for and pride in the venture. Position them to undertake as much responsibility as they can perform in the operation and management of the tour venture, at the soonest time possible. Provide as many experiences as they need to learn and practice concepts, systems and skills.
8. Involve key stakeholders from the start. Provide them roles that fit their mandates, skills, and interests. Promote cooperation between communities and stakeholders, and encourage sharing of resources.
9. When facilitating an ecotourism venture project, know well the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the area's resources and tourism market to ascertain the feasibility and potential impacts of any planned ecotourism development. Be prepared for multi-faceted work on the ground. Promote partnerships with various institutions. Even though it seems you do most of the hard work, allow partners to take center stage, if this will strengthen collaboration. Remember, the satisfaction lies in seeing the cooperative process succeed.
10. Focus your efforts on achieving project excellence. Excellence is your best investment to achieving strategic impact.



Ecotourism Product Development

June 1999

What is ecotourism?

Ecotourism refers to responsible travel to natural destinations to experience “nature and culture”, while contributing to environmental conservation and the well being of local people. It covers a wide range of activities, such as strategic planning, product development, physical development, tourism stakeholder’s management, and environmental impact management. It involves the development of different kinds of products, which are sold to tourists to make their travel safe, enjoyable, comfortable, and informative. Products and services include all types of transportation to and from the tourist destinations, food and drinks, accommodation, tours, tour guiding, tour books, facilities for interpretation, rest or recreation, and other things.

Based on a pre-determined itinerary and time, an ecotour product is created by skillfully combining different kinds of tourism resources (tourism attractions and activities), tourism workers (e.g., guides, boatmen, and cooks), tourism products (crafts, food and accommodations), and other things, to enable tourists to have an active experience with the natural environment and local culture.

Ecotourism must, at least in some manner, contribute to the following to be considered true “ecotourism”.

1. conservation of nature and/or culture;
2. education of tourists and local communities;
3. economic development of local communities;
4. experiences which motivate people to conserve; and,
5. participatory development.

Why ecotourism?

Ecotourism represents the fastest growing sector of the US\$3-trillion global industry, growing at 25-30% per annum.

An ecotour is a good product for developing community-based enterprise ventures. Once linked to a viable market, an ecotour venture can be a good income source for a core group of community owners, as well as give supplemental incomes to other people who provide services and supplies to the tour. As the flow of tourism grows,

ancillary enterprises can be developed around new products and activities such as handicrafts, biking or kayaking, bed and breakfast, camping facilities, and others.

By providing economic incentives to a wide group of local people, an ecotour venture can catalyze environmental awareness and commitment by the local people to protect the natural resources on which their livelihood depends. Moreover, the tour visits help bring national and international attention to protected areas, thus providing additional opportunities for leveraging policy and resource support for conservation. Natural environments and culture attract more tourists coming to the Philippines, but few operators offer true ecotour packages which meet the above criteria. In order to optimize the benefits of ecotourism for the local community and environment, one must pay attention to market information and linkages, planning, local participation and benefits, stakeholder education, and natural resource management.

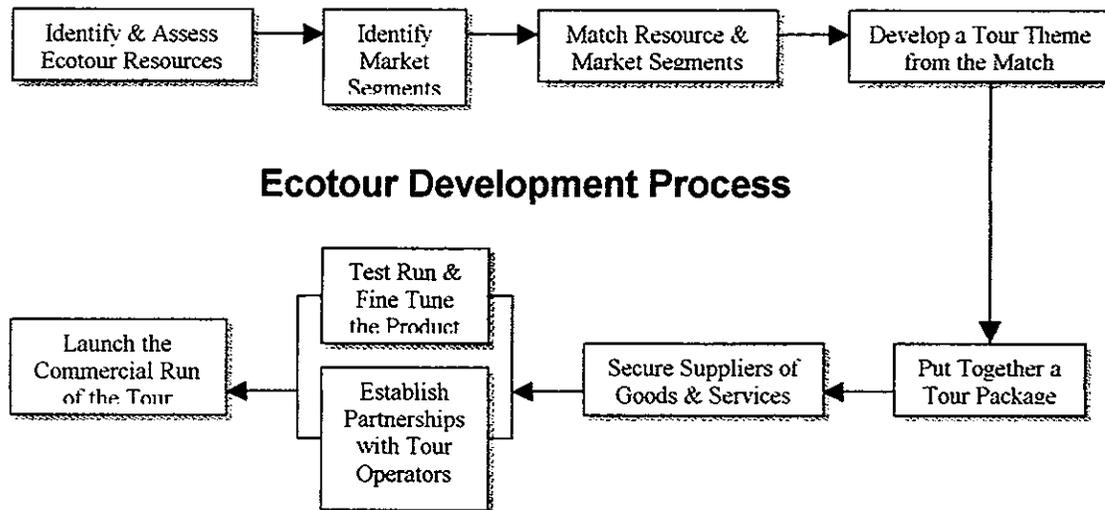
Is an ecotour venture appropriate for your area?

The following self-test will help you determine if your area can benefit from an ecotour venture:

- Do you have appropriate ecotourism resources to attract visitors to your area?
- Do you have something unique to offer (attraction, experience, knowledge, package, price) that is competitive in relation to other tour products in the area or those sites being visited by your target tourists?
- Is your area accessible to tourists safely, reliably and regularly? Are there tour operators (marketers) who could sell your product directly to tourists, and who could be responsible for bringing the tourists to your area?
- Are there dedicated tourism workers (people who will work in the venture) who enjoy relating with people, work hard, and are willing to commit to work even in difficult times?
- Are the people in the community organized for and involved in decision-making on ecotourism development in their area? Will the community share in the economic benefits of the ecotour venture?
- Are government bodies on local government, resource and tourism management in the area supportive of the planned venture?
- Do the community, concerned public agencies or private groups integrate the ecotour venture in a larger environmental conservation effort?
- Will there be a professional business management system to run the venture in the locality?
- Is there access to financing for starting the venture?

What is the ecotour development process?

The following diagram summarizes the ecotour development process.



1. Identify and assess existing and potential ecotour resources in the target area

Ecotour resources are natural, cultural or historical attractions in a given locality. These are the core resource for ecotour product development. Attractions can be places, objects, events, and the people's unique way of life. These attractions include surfs and beaches, coral reefs, mangroves, rivers and waterfalls, caves, mountains and cliffs, forests, lakes, churches, artifacts, festivals, rites and rituals, traditional production (such as fishing, loom weaving, wood carving, and brass making), as well as annual local competitions like banca (boat) and carabao (water buffalo) races.

Other important resources that need to be identified and assessed are food and accommodation services, stores (for souvenirs, film, rentals or sale of outdoor gear), transportation, information services, access to infrastructure (ports, communications, roads and trails), public services (police, rescue, health and medical), local skills (cooks, guides, boatmen, entertainers, natural and cultural interpreters, etc.). If any of these resources are not available locally, identify the nearest place where they are available or what training is required.

Knowledge of available financial services and organizations assisting in ecotourism development is useful.

To start the identification process, make a list of attractions with a brief description of what is unique or special about them. Begin with attractions that are already popular with locals and visitors. Proceed to list other less popular but potential ecotour attractions.

Score the resources identified for attractiveness, ability to draw visitors, accessibility, integrity, and contribution to environmental conservation and cultural promotion. The higher the score, the greater the resource potential for ecotour product development.

2. Identify market segments

Identify and analyze existing local tour destinations and products. Destinations are places and events that attract visitors. Products are tour packages that are put together by tour operators. In places where there are no tourists yet, get information about destinations and products near the locality:

- What kind of visitors goes there? (Include both local and foreign.)
- Where do they come from?
- How many?
- From what month to what month do they visit? (Seasonality)
- Who brings them? (Tour operator)
- What activities do they engage in?
- How long do they stay?
- How much do they spend?

Be specific with the data gathering. List down names and places. Primary and secondary data can be gathered from the nearest Department of Tourism office, local tour operators, guides and local residents around the destination. Interviews with the visitors themselves are very useful.

Group the visitors according to activities that they do. List the visitor groups under one column and the activities they do under another column. This exercise should give a good picture of the nature of the existing accessible visitor markets. (Note that schools and companies are also potential markets.)

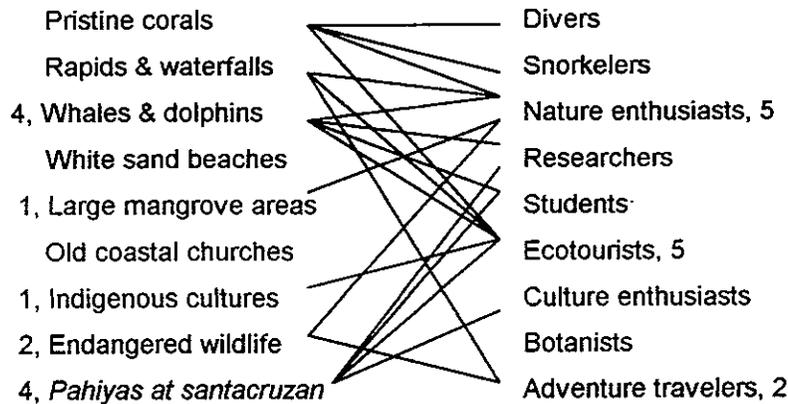
Example:

Divers	shipwrecks and corals of Coron, diving and snorkeling
Surfers	cloud nine surf in Siargao, surfing and swimming
Birdwatchers	bird sanctuary in Olango, bird watching
Nature enthusiasts	Tanon Strait, whale and dolphin watching
Researchers	mangroves, sea turtle nesting places
Mountaineers	mountains and rocky cliffs, Batangas
Collectors	craft villages, Lake Sebu
Adventure travelers	kayaking, camping, trekking, remote areas
Schools/students	natural parks

3. Match resources and market segments

Organize the list of local resources and visitor groups into a matrix: one column for resources and another one for visitor groups. Draw lines connecting resources that match with a market segment and vice versa. Count the number of matches for each resource and market segment. The three highest scores in each column will be the resource and market segment that should be pursued for tour product development.

Example: (complete this example to get the idea of how to do matching)



4. Develop a theme

A tour theme is a clear, concise statement that aptly describes and captures the combination of natural resources resulting from the resource-market matches. The tour theme provides guidelines on how to weave the activities and itinerary that will be developed from the identified resources and target market segment. Try to differentiate the theme from existing tour products.

Examples:

Mount Isarog is but a glimpse into the vanishing biological diversity of ancient Philippines.

Six hundred years in the making, the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo demonstrated the raw power simmering inside Earth.

If a tour has a variety of attractions, it can have different sub-themes that is unique to each attraction.

Examples:

Migratory birds from Japan, Russia and China are genetically programmed to stop over Olango (Cebu) during their seasonal round trips to avoid cold weather.

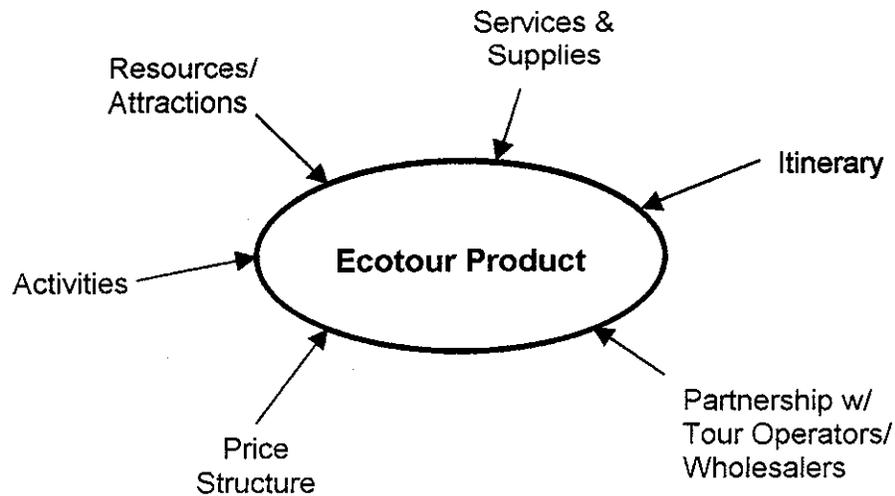
Sea horses are monogamous and will not breed once separated from their partners. (Bohol)

5. Secure suppliers of goods and services, and cost of the tour

The starting and ending point of the tour should be made the reference for determining the kind and frequency of goods and services that the tour product would need. Generally, these are:

- Transfers from visitor pick-up point to tour starting point and back*
- Accommodations, home stay, camp, hotel and/or lodges*
- Food (and snacks), for all inclusive meals and drinks*
- Charters (for boats, jeeps/trucks) for travel between attractions*
- Guide services*
- Local entertainers*

List down suppliers of goods and services, get price quotations, put them together and then add 30% to estimate the selling price of the tour.



6. Test and fine-tune the product

Do several test runs of the tour and evaluate each run. Cultivate relationships with tour operators by inviting them to the test runs (commonly referred to in the industry as “fam tours” or familiarization tours). Another way of testing and promoting the new ecotour product is to mark the tour as a promotional or exploratory run and offering the product at cost. Again, make sure that the tourists give their feedback about the tour.

Depending on how quick fine-tuning can be done, test runs can graduate to full commercial runs after 3-5 trial runs. This usually takes a full tourist season or one year.

7. Build marketing partnerships and promotion

Establish marketing partnerships with tour operators and guide associations.

Tour products are best marketed through established tour operators and guide associations. They have links to the market and know their way around the industry. Choose tour operators that share or are sympathetic to the mission and objectives of your ecotour. At the minimum, get operators who deal fairly in business.

A fam tour of the chosen tour operators is one of the best ways to establish marketing partnerships. While usually covered by the product tour developer, the cost of the fam tour may be shared with the guests. Once it is agreed that the tour product is viable, get down to the details of pricing, bookings and payment systems. Tour operators add on at least a 30% margin to the tour product price to cover their marketing and administrative expenses plus profit.

For additional advice, get in touch with the nearest DOT office or ecotourism-oriented NGOs.



Community Enterprise Initiatives for Coastal Management in Cambuhat, Buenavista: The CRMP Experience

May 2001

Background

Barangay Cambuhat is a rustic coastal community surrounded by lush mangrove and palm vegetation, sloping landscape and clear winding river, nestled quietly in the town of Buenavista, northwest of Bohol. It will take you one and a half hours travel by hired pump boat from the east of Mactan, or two hours land ride from Tagbilaran City, to reach this beautiful place.

Like other coastal communities that are situated very far from the urban center, Cambuhat was barely touched by development assistance when the Coastal Resource Management Project (CRMP) got in touch with the barangay in early 1998. Most families subsisted on fishing and production of traditional handiworks as nipa thatches, raffia weaves, brooms and other buri palm manufacturers. Local prices for their products remained low and income from fishing was never enough for the village households. The people needed to access more livelihood opportunities to augment their meager incomes. At the same time, the coastal environment, which included fisheries, mangroves, an estuary and a river was neglected and lacked active management by local villagers and institutions.

CRMP entered into a memorandum of agreement with the municipality of Buenavista to help them to plan and implement an integrated coastal management program. The village of Cambuhat became the pilot area for modeling enterprise development strategies among village leaders, fisher folk and women craft makers. The objectives of the enterprise projects were to:

- 1) provide incentives for co-management of the Cambuhat River and coastal resources by the community and government institutions;
- 2) increase household incomes through viable alternatives to capture fishery; and
- 3) promote wise coastal practices.

A River Highway of Cultured Oysters

Oyster culture at the Cambuhat River was reintroduced, but the ownership and management of the oyster culture facilities were given to individual households instead of the village association. The beneficiary families shared start-up production costs while the local government contributed counterpart resources. CRMP provided training and field advisory throughout the project development phase. The design, planning and installation of culture facilities were made after careful assessment of the river's carrying capacity and other resource management considerations.

Two years after the project started in June 1998 with 17 fishermen, oyster culture along the sides of the Cambuhat River reached its peak of 64 oyster growers earning an average additional income of P1,000 per month. The project also secured "food on the table" for the growers' families, and inspired two adjacent villages to replicate oyster culture in their areas.

The involvement of the community in oyster culture and management increased their awareness and knowledge on the management of river, estuary and mangrove resources. The community and the local government units started to protect their river from waste pollution and illegal fishing through corrective action, local legislation and organizing.

The following changes were observed in Cambuhat as a result of the enterprise project's introduction:

1. less capture fishing activity by 64 oyster growers
2. stoppage of all illegal fishing activities in the Cambuhat River
3. increase in fish population in the river
4. removal of pig pen, housing structure along the river bank
5. community and local government action on river and mangrove management issues
6. formulation of management zones, and user guidelines for river and mangrove areas
7. increased environmental awareness, action and organization among fishers and oyster growers
8. spread of experience and lessons to other villages, municipalities, provinces and countries through study visits to the project

A Village Ecotourism to Charm Everyone

The women of Cambuhat have their own enterprise to boost. Cashing in on the oyster-culture project of the fishermen, the natural beauty of their surroundings and the

variety of Cambuhat traditional crafts and folk cultural forms, the Cambuhat Women's Group went into ecotourism venture development. CRMP provided them with the technical assistance and market linkages to create a unique ecotourism product, which later became the Province of Bohol's flagship ecotourism project.

The Cambuhat River and Village Tour provides an exhilarating experience of Cambuhat's river, mangrove, estuary and lowland ecosystems that are interpreted by that local folk. Local villagers paddle guests up and down the river or walk them through the natural landscapes to entertain and educate visitors on the values of nature and their efforts to protect it. Visitors are treated to riverside lunches of delicious fresh oysters (served n 4 ways - fresh, grilled, omelet or bottled) and other seafood. Guests learn how oysters are cultured as they ride the small outrigger canoes. A short trek inland and guests get a glimpse of traditional crafts making beneath houses on stilts. The day tour offers variety and authenticity of experience of coastal environment and rural village life.

The Cambuhat River and Village Tour, together with the Olango Birds and Seascape Tour, won for CRMP the Highly Commended Status from the Conservation International Excellence in Ecotourism Award in April, 2000 at Toronto, Canada, where 69 global entries competed.

The CRVT project has brought tremendous pride of culture and place among the people of Cambuhat, the town of Buenavista and the province of Bohol. The impact of international and national guests and media visiting Cambuhat placed the once reclusive village on the national and international scene. Aside from monetary benefits, the project facilitated the formation of the village cooperative called Cambuhat Enterprise Development and Fishermen's Association (CEDFA) comprised of men and women. The ecotourism business created opportunities for the community to learn service, management and creative skills. The multiplier effect of tourism began as catering and crafts making for the tourist market were started. Ecotourism increased sales of "burl" palm products by women and the oyster harvests by the men.

The ecotourism project inspired the Cambuhat community, the local government units and the Philippine's environment and tourism departments to support coastal resource management and tourism promotion of the locality. The guidelines set for conducting tourism activities and building facilities at the different environments provided the voluntary framework for regulating use of these areas.

The local government enacted local legislation to protect the estuary and river by declaring parts thereof as a local reserve. The local experience in ecotourism enterprise development prompted the local stakeholders to formulate an ecotourism destination development and management plan that extended to four villages. The plan covered zoning of the area according to appropriate uses, user guidelines, development of sustainable products and services, training of local human resources and organization of management committees, among others. The Cambuhat tour attracted many to go on study visits to learn about the local people's initiatives in managing diverse coastal resources, establishing community enterprises and collaborating with different institutions.

The ecotourism project contributed to achieving the following results:

1. regulation of structures and activities at the river and easement areas

2. proper design and installation of guest facilities
3. participatory setting of local resource use zones, guidelines and development plans which were made part of the Integrated Coastal Management plan of the municipality
4. formation of village ecotourism and resource management committees

Sustaining Traditional Crafts Making in Cambuhat

Most women in Cambuhat weave bundles of raffia cloth using wooden handlooms underneath their houses. They fashion brooms, doormats, grass skirts and other products from different parts of the “buri” palm tree. To enhance their incomes, CRMP worked with a local institution to assist the community to improve the production and marketing of their products. Access to direct and more sustainable markets for “raffia” cloth (blanket weaves from buri fibers) was established for the village.

Technical assistance and training accessed from government and international development agencies helped to improve the efficiency of the community’s weaving looms and introduced to them high value products like the “buntal” fiber. These activities and plans to set up a business incubation center will greatly enhance the competitive edge of the Cambuhat’s crafts making and entrepreneurial capability.

If successful, the marketing assistance being extended to the women weavers in Cambuhat will boost the earnings of about 200 women. Increased efficiency in weaving, hopefully, will save time for women to engage in value-added production.

The introduction of improved technologies in crafts production resulted to increased community awareness and knowledge on sustainable harvesting and processing of the buri plant to eliminate any harmful effects of buri production on land and water resources. Community appreciation of sustainable agro-forestry and agriculture activities was also enhanced.

Lessons Learned

What was unique about Cambuhat’s enterprise development initiatives?

The enterprise projects provided both women and men in the community with appropriate and balanced opportunities to earn additional incomes, learn new skills, create organizations, learn new knowledge, assume collective responsibilities, gain self-confidence, experience collective pride and achieve unity.

The micro-enterprises were a combination of traditional and non-traditional types, and provided the community with variety of experiences and ideas to enhance existing livelihoods, revive failed attempts and pioneers new undertakings.

The enterprise projects that were introduced:

- enhanced community appreciation of their environments
- enabled them to learn and implement environmental controls
- enabled them to share to others learning on the values of managing the river, mangrove, estuarine and inland resources
- gave them positive results of implementing best practices to their environment
- increased their participation in natural resource management planning and implementation

The following factors were key to the success of Cambuhat as a model for integrated enterprise development and local resource management: .

- The identification of projects was tailored to the expressed needs of the target sectors - the fishermen and the women. Because the stakeholders felt the projects were meeting their needs, they became highly committed to environmental management, and learned to trust that CRMP's local coastal management efforts were in their best interest.
- The projects started in a modest scale, with very little infusion of capital from external sources, with whatever resources were available locally, and with a conscious effort to link socio-economic objectives with environmental objectives on a very practical level. Moreover, they valued community spirit and creativity as much as technical efficiency in the delivery of assistance to local stakeholders. Participants were encouraged to generate bold ideas, to experiment, and to innovate. They were taught to be always on the lookout for opportunities to expand and to network, and to distribute risks, responsibilities, contributions and recognition among community participants and their government and private sector supporters. Even while the products were still being developed and polished, they did not hesitate to promote their products to wider audiences. They readily welcomed and encourage assistance from others, as well as the opportunity to assist other projects and communities in return.
- The projects combined in a very creative way a wide range of enterprises - oyster culture, ecotourism, traditional crafts, and eventually agro-forestry and agricultural development - which were already intertwined in the community's way of life. By linking community needs with natural conservation, the projects not only provided ample room for future expansion into other doable, creative projects but could also serve as a catalyst toward ecological balance.



Alternative Livelihood Development: A Strategy for Sustaining Coastal Resources

October 1999

In the practical field experience of many organizations, the question of livelihood always looms large in the development and environment equation. In coastal resource management, alternative livelihood is recognized as a very crucial strategy for sustaining coastal resources. There are two main reasons for this.

The first reason is because alternative livelihoods provide an economic fallback for fishers who would be displaced by the enforcement of access restrictions to certain marine protected areas or by the enforcement of laws against destructive fishing. Having a fallback increases the chance against backsliding into old habits due to economic contingencies in coastal households.

The second is because alternative livelihoods provide an economic incentive for fishers to reduce fishing effort by shifting to other potential sources of income, especially as fishery resources become scarcer.

In both scenarios, the aim would be to ease economic pressure off coastal and marine resources to allow these to regenerate naturally and continuously.

The introduction of alternative livelihoods alone, however, does not guarantee the sustainability of resources. This has to be accompanied by complementary strategies that help raise the awareness of coastal resource users and build their capability to plan and manage their resources well. Without careful planning, alternative livelihoods could lead to more environmental problems.

What works?

One way of providing alternative livelihoods is to create enterprises that provide opportunities for self-employment and generation of surplus capital to community members. Enterprises will have more impact on the behavior of resource users if these gainfully employ a substantial number of people. And, having a steady flow of surplus capital favors expansion and enhancement of the competitive edge of the community enterprises and thus increases community benefits.

The following criteria may be used for selecting enterprises that could meet the above requirements:

1. The enterprise should be based on a specific commodity or service.

2. The commodity or service meets a strategic market demand that is not filled by other suppliers and may be accessed by the community over the long term.
3. The margin is good and potential revenue exceeds cost (including loan interest) by at least 20%.
4. At least 10 coastal community families should participate in each type of enterprise so that their aggregate production output could satisfy commercial volume requirements.
5. Commodity production is suitable to the site.
6. The community participants are committed and capable of producing the commodity.
7. The community participants have access rights to the resource base.
8. The resources for start-up production and marketing are available.
9. The alternative enterprise will not add to environmental degradation.

What are some environmental considerations?

In the selection, planning and operation of enterprises, the following coastal environmental impacts should be avoided:

1. Deterioration of seawater quality due to pollutants, toxic chemicals and siltation. Common culprits are industrial effluence, fish feeds, animal and human wastes, garbage, oil spills, etc.
2. Destruction of natural habitat such as poisoning, siltation, and degradation of corals; over harvesting of mangroves; removal and trampling of sea grass beds. Causes include sea farming operations, construction of ports and wharves, sea walls, beach resorts, boat anchorage, quarrying for construction materials, etc.
3. Alteration of physical conditions affecting ecological balance, including blocking of water motion, mining of sand and stone, etc. Common causes are the building of sea farming structures, fish cages and pens, sea walls, and ports, and quarrying for construction materials.
4. Decline of mature stocks from the wild. Common causes are fry gathering, gathering of high-value wildlife products, construction of fish-aggregating devices (including payaos), commercial fisheries, etc.

How could alternative livelihood development be implemented?

1. Set your goal for alternative livelihood. Often, it is easier to aim for the generation of supplementary incomes for subsistence fishers than it is to aim for alternative incomes for destructive fishers. The economic requirements and risks

are higher for livelihood programs that involve destructive fishers. but. if these were achieved, the impacts would be greater and immediately felt.

2. Based on your goal, identify your enterprise sites and community partners. Choose sites that have the potential to be productive and are not environmentally critical. Select communities that have the potential to play a strategic role in relation to the management of a critical resource area, such as a gateway community to a protected marine environment. In doing so, you are effectively positioning the project to achieve wider impacts beyond the actual number of community participants that are directly benefited. Community participants should include critical users of resources as well as potential catalysts of change.
3. Together with your community partners, choose the appropriate enterprise for your identified site. Involve your government and private sector partners, so you are assured of their support for the rest of the product development cycle. Selection of enterprise should be guided by information from an appraisal of area resources, marketing potentials and constraints, carrying capacity of the environment, and socio-cultural sensitivity of communities.
4. Once the commodity is chosen, test the feasibility of producing the product in the community. Initial orientation and training may be conducted to equip the community participants with production skills. Prior to this, community participants are carefully selected for their interest, willingness to put up counterpart resource (in kind or labor), and strategic role in relation to resource management concerns.
5. After production trials are found to be successful, develop and write your business plan and use it as your blueprint for the implementation of the business. The business plan should clearly define the goal of the business and the strategies on how to achieve them. Activities are implemented to access start-up financing and technical expertise. The market is scanned to determine existing demand and supply, and to initially identify potential marketing linkages.
6. Begin commercial production and marketing as soon as the resources are ready, and after technical feasibility has been verified. Formal business organizations as well as managing and operating systems are organized and installed to establish community ownership and management of the enterprises. When starting a community business, it is important to focus community efforts on production and to tap existing marketing channels to distribute the products for the community.
7. In marketing the products, the environmental values of the enterprise can and should be optimized to:
 - 7.1 educate the market about environmental values
 - 7.2 position the product to capture appropriate market segments
 - 7.3 promote support for the enterprise.
8. Monitor and periodically evaluate the progress of the business to appropriately respond to changing conditions, solve problems, and implement management of environmental impacts.

Three Things to Remember

When developing sustainable community enterprises that provide alternative livelihoods, keep in mind three things:

1. The business must operate profitably while providing for optimum livelihood benefits for its employees or members.
2. The design and conduct of the business, including its facilities must be consistent with sound environmental management practices that are fully understood by the community participants involved. Support from mandated public bodies should be sought to secure policy and tenurial mechanisms for sustainability of the business. Business participants should be linked to resource management responsibilities to raise their awareness of the need for and participation in sustaining the resources on which their livelihoods are based.
3. Community participants must be organized and equipped to manage their business profitably, distribute benefits equitably, manage potential conflicts by themselves, and conserve the resources along with other members of the community.



12

**Application Submitted to the
Conservation International
Excellence in Ecotourism Awards 2000**

Ecotourism Excellence Award
Conservation International
2501 M Street, NW Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20037

Company Category

Applicant's Name: Coastal Resource Management Project—Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Government of the Philippines (CRMP-DENR) c/o Dr. Catherine A. Courtney, Chief of Party, Tetra Tech EM Inc.

Application References

Reference 1

Name: Megan Epler Wood
Organization: The Ecotourism Society

Reference 2

Name: Oliver Hillel
Organization: Conservation International

Reference 3

Name: John Semone
Organization: Pacific Asia Travel Association

Individual Category

Applicant Name: Ma. Monina M. Flores
Company: Tetra Tech EM, Inc.

Application References

Reference 1

Name: Dr. Catherine A. Courtney
Company: Tetra Tech EM Inc.

Reference 2

Name: Oliver Hillel
Organization: Conservation International

Reference 3

Name: Megan Epler Wood
Organization: The Ecotourism Society

Questions:

How long have you been involved in the ecotourism industry?

Company:

Since March 1998.

Individual:

Since March 1998.

What is your role in the industry?

Company

CRMP provides technical assistance to stakeholders in selected regions called "learning areas". It facilitates planning and implementation of effective development and management strategies for local integrated coastal resource management.

- 1) For ecotourism and other local enterprises, CRMP develops and popularizes model community-based products and businesses that are linked to conservation of protected areas, local resource management and alternative income generation to fishing communities.

To date, CRMP has assisted communities and other stakeholders in the development of two community based ecotour products:

- a) Olango Birds and Seascape Tour (OBST) – owned and operated by the Suba, Olango Ecotourism Cooperative (composed of 55 coastal village residents) in Olango Island, Province of Cebu, Philippines. The day tour package features:
 - Boat cruise over 4,000 hectares of seascape fringed by 6 islets
 - Snorkeling / diving (optional) at a protected marine sanctuary
 - Visit to seaweed farms (optional)
 - Individualized, paddled canoe transfers from main boat to island destinations
 - Authentic interaction with community
 - Interactive showcases of village fishing gears, traditional shell craft, native cookery and songs
 - Community-served lunches, snacks, and drinks
 - Guided bird watching at the 920-hectare Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary (OIWS), an internationally protected coastal wetland (declared a RAMSAR site for the East Asian Migratory Flyway and wildlife biodiversity – at least 77 species of shorebirds; 31 mangrove species, etc.)

CRMP assists in developing promotional materials and temporary booking services pending installation of communication facilities at the community. Introductory tour runs started in January 1999 bringing in approximately 350 guests or 25 tour groups. Local economic benefit includes community service fees, product sales and profit margins (20 – 50% of tour cost).

- b) Cambuhat River and Village Tour – owned and operated by coastal villagers at Cambuhat village, Municipality of Buenavista, Province of Bohol, Philippines. Day tour package showcases rustic coastal village life side-by-side local management of river, estuarine and mangrove areas. Activities include:
 - Paddling with a fisherman on a small canoe along mangrove-lined river to visit oyster culture rafts, shrimp traps and mud crab-catching pots
 - Oyster and seafood lunches and drinks by the river
 - Quick demo on how-to-grow oysters
 - Visit to village traditional crafts making (hand loom weaving of buri palm leaves into “raffia” cloth; broom making; grass skirt; door mats; etc.)
 - Village interpretation on values, uses and local management of river, mangrove and estuarine ecosystems
 - Swimming / boat racing (optional)
- 2) Facilities joint planning, training and advocacy among private and public stakeholders and communities on sustainable coastal tourism / ecotourism for integrated coastal management.
- 3) Works with tourism companies and tourism associations to market community ecotourism products, enhance environmental awareness and best practices within the industry, and promote appreciation / understanding of community development needs, dynamics, sensitivities, roles and capabilities.

Individual

I designed, manage and implement CRMP ecotourism projects and activities as well as provide technical assistance to and work with industry players, government sector and private groups and communities on ecotourism development.

Brief Description of CRMP's work:

To establish improved management of coastal resources along 2,000 km of shoreline through multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary, integrated coastal management. At the local level, to develop and institutionalize a municipal management system within each learning area.

In implementing it's work, CRMP is guided by three principles: 1) To encourage partners to lead and for CRMP to facilitate CRM activities. 2) To build self-reliance by making do with available resources and adding primarily technical and management assistance value to existing processes and organizations, and 3) To prevent the project from becoming an institution itself.

Environmental Commitment

Company

What are you currently doing to support conservation?

1. CRMP implements policy advocacy, information-education-communication and technical assistance to enable local government to adopt and institutionalize integrated coastal management (ICM) as a basic service.
2. CRMP works for modification and adoption of national policies and programs to effect strategic management of Philippine coastal waters.
3. CRMP implements transformational communication strategies to catalyze national and local citizen awareness and mobilization to improve attitudes and behavior of people in the use of coastal resources. Activities include the formation of "I love the Ocean Movement" (20,000 card-bearing members), coastal conservation advocacy in corporate marketing, mobilization of schools, churches, civic organizations and media for national campaigns.
4. CRMP conducts national, regional and local training programs involving different stakeholders in courses on integrated coastal management technologies.
5. CRMP models environment-friendly enterprise /ecotourism projects that demonstrate clear and effective linkages between generation of economic and welfare incentives to conservation / management of natural resources. These are often community based, market oriented and commodity specific enterprise ventures.

6. CRMP's approach is to combine participatory approaches with cutting edge technologies that work to address immediate and strategic concerns. CRMP works on multiple levels of intervention, from the highest level of national decision-making down to village implementation, in order to achieve strategic environmental impact.

Individual

What are you currently doing to minimize the environmental impact of tourism and make a positive contribution to conservation?

1. Motivating tourism stakeholders toward a common vision (where good environment, good business and thriving communities coexist). Linking environmental conservation to their own interests and work mandates and assist in working out solutions to their business / work problems. Involving them as stakeholders of the ecotourism projects, providing them an experience of partnership for the environment. Working on the ground to demonstrate how to make a positive impact to conservation.
2. Mobilizing stakeholders to support policy, planning, resource access and tenurial security for communities, impact management, observance of best practices, integrated land and coastal resource use planning, good facility design and construction, etc.
3. Promoting environmental strategies and technologies that were successfully applied to CRMP ecotourism projects.

Sensitivity to Local Environmental Issues

What measures have you taken to address the environmental pressures specific to tourism in the areas where you work?

1. A thorough assessment of the coastal zone was made that fed into the integrated coastal management (ICM) planning involving key stakeholders. The process provided for the validation of information, prioritization of issues and concerns, identification of management goals, strategies, options, and action plans. The planning process, which is still in progress, is intended to provide a more sustainable and comprehensive framework for managing impacts of tourism and other development activities in the area by defining the most appropriate uses for the available resources that will provide better community benefits.
2. Within the integrated coastal management zones, certain protected areas were already delineated. In the case of the Olango coastal zone, there is the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary (a nationally declared protected wetland) and the Gilitungan Marine Sanctuary (locally declared protected area). CRMP assisted public and private agencies and communities to review existing management plans and operations in these areas, and to formulate action plans for developing and managing the same as sustainable ecological (ecotourism) destinations. In the case of the coastal village of Cambuhat, Buenavista town, Bohol province, CRMP was able to move the local government and community to manage the estuarine, river and mangrove areas.

which were previously neglected and heavily exploited. Today about 75 families are actively managing these coastal areas and the municipal government passed a local ordinance protecting the same as part of an estuarine reserve.

3. Sustainable enterprise / ecotourism development played a pivotal role in motivating stakeholders to action in the above areas. CRMP initiated a community based ecotourism project in Suba (one of the gateway communities to the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary) as a strategy to generate alternative / supplemental livelihood to the poorest community in the island. The strategy has secured the strategic cooperation of that community in managing human access to the fragile wildlife sanctuary. The tour contributes to protected area conservation through entrance fees; enhancing community awareness, cooperation and involvement in protection of the resources; providing alternative / supplemental livelihoods to ease fishing pressure; and environmental fund start-up by the community. The same strategy was successfully applied in the village of Cambuhat in Buenavista, Bohol Province.

Cultural Sensitivity and Benefits

Company

How have you minimized negative social impacts and increased local benefits from your work?

1. The community defined their development needs and goals. They were assisted in assessing their economic options. When ecotourism was suggested to them as a possibility they were provided with actual experience (using test tour runs) to understand what it was all about. It was their decision to continue with the development of the venture, and they periodically reviewed this decision as they gained more insights.
2. The community determined the kind of visitors and visitor activities that were acceptable to them. They expressed their approval or criticism of tour policies and procedures that were earlier formulated and made modifications as they saw fit. They expressed conflicting views and sentiments, and worked out their differences.
3. The ecotourism ventures are owned and operated by the community venture participants. All the benefits derived from the business go to them. They define their service fee rates per tour, and manage their finances, with technical advise from the project.
4. The community members learned systems and skills by doing. Tour operation and management systems were gradually learned and implemented by the community. They were assisted in identifying and structuring functions, roles, relationships, membership and leadership. Step by step tutorial on systems and hands-on learning enabled them to assume more complex functions.
5. Tour interpretation and guideship helped to set the tone regarding the role played by the community in the tour. This contributed to conditioning the tourists' about their attitude and behavior toward the place and the people. The spontaneity, warmth and confidence expressed by the community affected the tourists' to regard them highly and with respect.

Individual

How have you worked to increase cultural sensitivity and local benefit within the ecotourism industry in the specific area where you work?

By leading the design and implementation of the CRMP ecotourism projects described above.

Innovation

What makes your project or work innovative?

1. The community ownership, participation and benefit are experience authentically and to the max. All the tourists (various nationalities, ages, purpose) that went to the tour were swept away by the authenticity of the community experience. The community is fully and spontaneously animated. Their creativity is uninhibited, thus, they are able to innovate. They understand their collective individual objectives for each tour. They feel they are in control and are highly affirmed.
2. The tour products are uniquely packaged, unpretentious, well differentiated and competitive in service, price and overall quality of experience. Learning and enjoyment are optimized because the environment and cultural experiences are well integrated.
3. There is wide ownership of the project by multiple stakeholders.

Leadership

In what way does your work provide a model to other industry participants or individuals?

1. CRMP projects try to concretize the ideal elements regarding community-based ecotourism ventures as well as harness other environmental components of project: state-of-the-art technologies in integrated coastal management, broad stakeholder network, leveraging capability, and wide operating field. Some of the learning themes provided by the ecotourism project are: community ecotourism and protected area management / resource management; ecotourism and sustainable community development; community ecotourism and local governance; sustainable enterprise and environmental management; environmental impact management; ecotourism and multiple stakeholder collaboration for sustainable development, etc.
2. The models are gaining a position as a cross-learning site for other private and public projects with regards to best environmental practices, community involvement and product development.

Vision

What are your long-term goals for furthering your work in ecotourism?

1. Complete modeling of ecotourism in each area by adding to the existing community ecotour venture, formulation of comprehensive destination management plans for the protected area / or costal tourism zone and establishment / activation of management mechanisms.
2. Work on the industry by pioneering with them marketing strategies and mechanisms that support ecotourism products, starting at the regional then the national level.
3. Strengthen technical capability in the country to develop trend-setting ecotourism plans and products with sound environmental management frameworks and adequate community based economic opportunities.



The Olango Birds and Seascape Tour Project
USAID Coastal Resource Management Project, Philippines

A Power Point Presentation
presented to the

WTO/UNEP International Conference on
Sustainable Tourism in the Islands of the Asia-Pacific Region

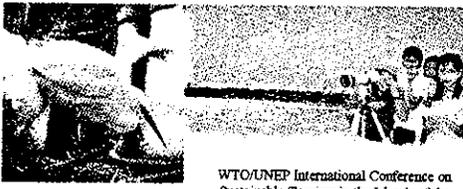
by Maria Monina M. Flores
Enterprise Development Specialist, CRMP

Hainan, China
December 7, 2000

Olango Birds and Seascape Tour Project

The Olango Birds and Seascape Tour Project

USAID Coastal Resource Management Project, Philippines



Ma. Monina M. Flores
Enterprise Development Specialist
CRMP

WTO/UNEP International Conference on Sustainable Tourism in the Islands of the Asia-Pacific Region
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Assisted by the
Coastal Resource Management Project of the
Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Supported by the:
United States Agency for International Development
in cooperation with the:
Department of Tourism
City of Lapu-lapu
Municipality of Cordova



The Coastal Resource Management Project

Goal:
3,000 kilometers of Philippine coastline under improved management by local and national institutions and communities
Policy, capability building, information-education and local implementation

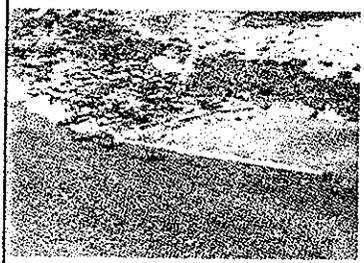


Olango Island

- Wide-fringing coral reefs
- Seagrass beds
- Mangroves
- Six satellite islets



Olango Island



11 barangays (villages)

23,000 people in 1,041 has. of dry land

Olango Island



75% still depend on fishing and related activities

over harvesting of coastal and marine resources forced some people to take up new occupations

Olango island

- shells and starfish for the craft/curio market
- sea cucumbers, sea urchins for restaurants
- tropical fish for aquarium trade exports
- live food fish for local and foreign restaurants
- cyanide and blast fishing prevalent



... key issues

- Over exploitation of fishery resources
- Destruction of coastal habitats
- High population density
- Insufficient basic services



... key issues

- Low education and occupational mobility
- Poor natural resource management
- Marginal involvement in and benefit from tourism development



... key issues

- Project site is one of poorest villages in the island
- Real estate speculation for tourism development

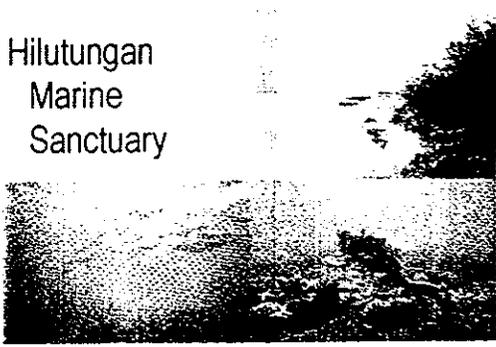


Olango island

- 904 hectares of coastal wetlands
- a RAMSAR site for the East Asian Migratory Flyway
- Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary



Hilutungan Marine Sanctuary



Olango Island's tourism potential

- Proximity to the 2nd largest staging area for tourism in the country
- Endowed with beautiful marine environment and migratory birds
- Increasing visitation as an island hopping and diving destination



Ecotourism as a key strategy for integrated coastal management

- To rationalize resource use
- To catalyze alternative livelihood for fishers
- To provide economic incentive to conservation of protected resources



3 key elements of the ecotourism strategy

1. Model development of a community ecotourism business

3 key elements of the ecotourism strategy

2. Participatory and multi-stakeholder planning for sustainable coastal tourism

3 key elements of the ecotourism strategy

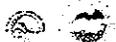
3. Integration of ecotourism development within the framework of coastal resource management

Hop on the OLANGO TOUR

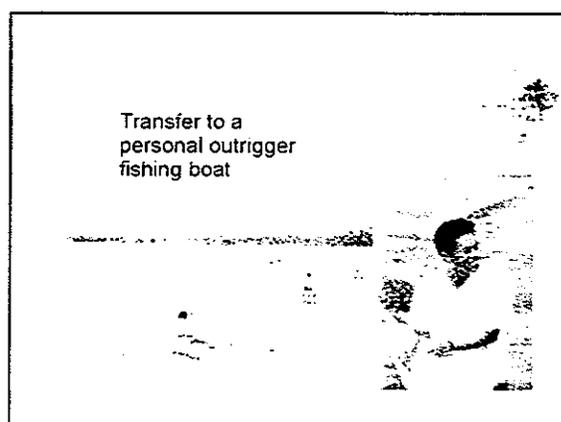
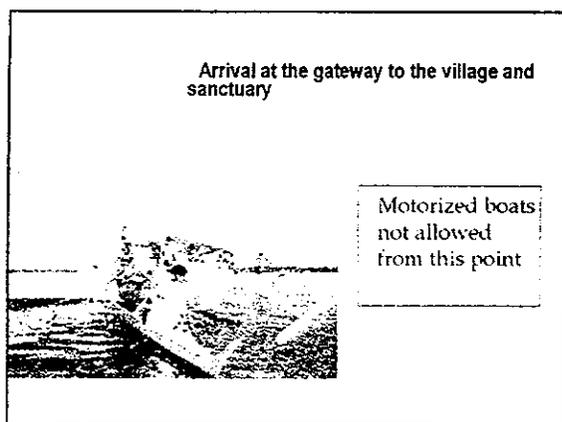
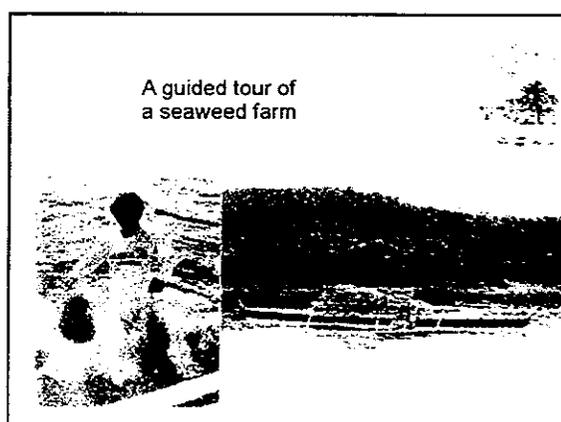
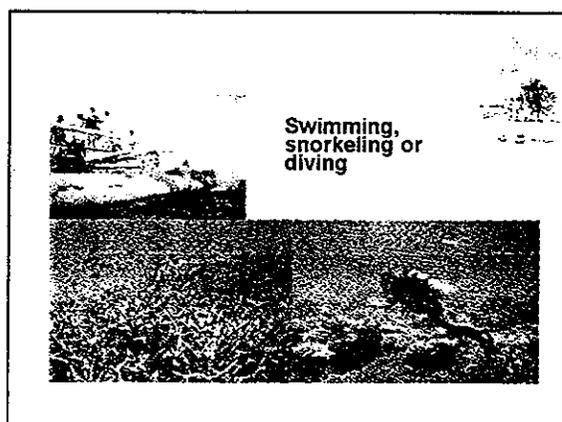
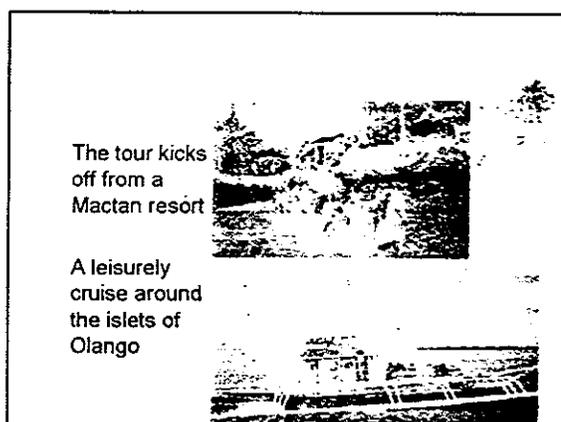
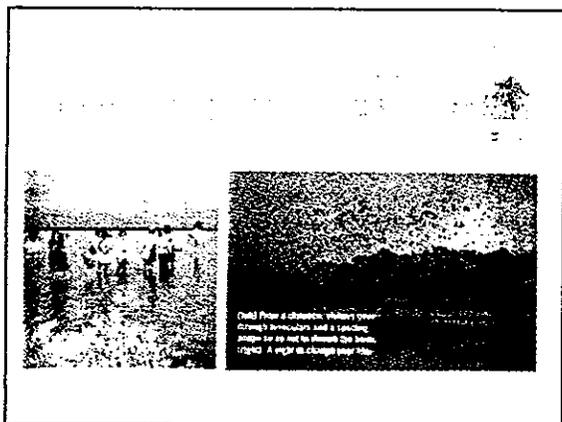
The Tour Project

Community-based ecotourism venture on Olango Island, Cebu, Central Philippines

Owned and operated by a cooperative of fishers, women and youth

Libre Seaman



Olango Birds and Seascape Tour Project

Welcome drink of fresh coconut juice in a tranquil setting



Experience a collage of fishing village activities



Go birdwatching with an expert naturalist guide



Meals prepared the fishing village way
Song & dance



Progress so far



Progress so far

Business profitable
Product highly marketable
Business organization in place



... progress so far



Environmental management

- Integrated Coastal Management
- Buffer zone and shoreline management
- Protected area destination management plan
- Visitor management guidelines (including user fees)
- Community education and activities

... progress so far

Community development

- organization of SOEC
- community development fund
- community representation to government institutions & private sector
- increased self-confidence
- pride of place



... progress so far



A learning area for:

- international and local development agencies
- schools & community organizations
- tour companies and local governments

... progress so far



Awards

- Anvil Merit Award (national)
- Highly Commended Status, CI Excellence in Ecotourism Award 2000 (international)



... socio-cultural strategies

Tour product design oriented around use of local skills, everyday activities, arts and music



... socio-cultural strategies

- Community ownership of tour to optimize participation and economic benefits
- Tenurial rights and security of access and use of resources



... key socio-cultural strategies

Participatory processes and mechanisms

Policy of inclusion of various community stakeholders



... key socio-cultural strategies

Training strategy of "learning by doing"

To operate a tour: Develop and operate an actual tour with the community (conceptualization, implementation & fine-tuning)

To manage organization: On the job training and coaching on appropriate systems and procedures



... key socio-cultural strategies

Ensuring immediate economic returns to encourage participation

familiarization and test tours were operated to at least cover the full cost

development agencies were utilized as initial tourists



... key socio-cultural strategies

Expanding community stakeholdership

spreading benefits through local sourcing

creation of a community development fund



... key socio-cultural strategies

Preservation of local culture and identity

Ownership of tour business by community



... key socio-cultural strategies

Preservation of local culture and identity

Positioning community organization to influence planning and policy development by:

- hi-media profile
- generation of multi institutional support
- endorsements by visitors

... key socio-cultural strategies

Ground coaching on how to deal with threats to the sustainability of the community business



... key socio-cultural strategies

Positioning the community organization to influence planning and policy development

utilizing visitor endorsements leveraging goodwill created by Awards



... key socio-cultural strategies

Coaching and timely strategic interventions by assisting agency

- to strengthen community confidence and position
- to help resolve critical challenges along the way



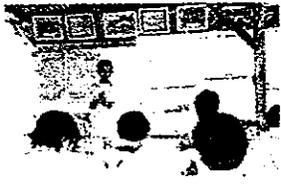
... key socio-cultural strategies

- Control of number, frequency and behavior of visitors
- Control over other community uses of resources
- Control over other development interests within locality



... key socio-cultural strategies

Strengthening local community confidence and position



... key socio-cultural strategies

Targeting the development sector as the primary market to jump-start the tour

Developing a product that would capture tourist segments from resorts and hotels in Cebu City



...key marketing strategies



- Flexibility in product delivery to capture niche markets (corporate incentive and training participants, study tour programs, student and development sector)
- Product differentiation from existing island-hopping tours with front-seat viewing of migratory birds, protected marine sanctuary, interaction with coastal villagers

...key marketing strategies



- Positioning the product as the country's leading community ecotourism product
- Capitalizing on the community's virtual monopoly of prime access to an international bird sanctuary
- Community ownership and management as an attraction by itself
- Twin island package

Key environmental strategies



- Low impact tour itinerary
- Training and accreditation system for boatmen, tour guides and service deliverers
- Participatory resource assessment, integrated coastal management and ecotourism planning

...key environmental strategies



- Preservation of natural landscape
- Minimal use of island resources (freshwater, food, etc.)
- Minimizing wastes
- Resource use zoning and user guidelines
- Promotion of shoreline management among land owners, residents, and public resource managers

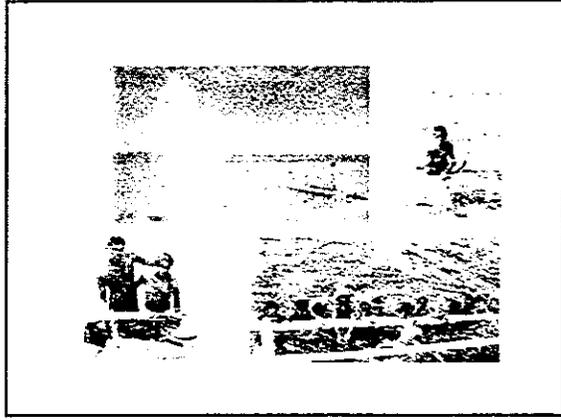
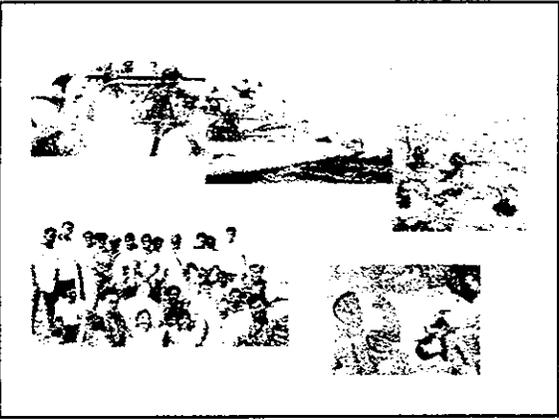
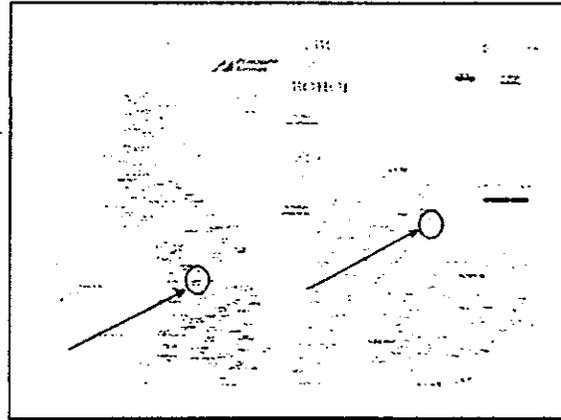
Key stakeholder strategies



- Multiple stakeholder development both vertical and horizontal
- Roles and resources sharing approach promoted throughout the entire tourism development process

key stakeholder strategies

- Areas for stakeholder involvement and support:
 - Policy enactment
 - Planning and enforcement
 - Tenurial and resource access rights
 - Marketing and promotion
 - Community organizing and education
 - Institutional linkages



**CRMP Enterprise
Development Component**

**Power Point Presentation on
Accomplishments & Highlights
May 2001**

**by Maria Monina M. Flores
Enterprise Development Coordinator
USAID/DENR Coastal Resource Management Project**

CRMP Enterprise Development Component

Accomplishments & Highlights May 2001

Maria Monina M. Flores
Enterprise Development Coordinator
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USAID/DENR Coastal Resource Management Project, Philippines

Enterprise Development: A Tool for ICM

- Model sustainable livelihood options - income sources for fishers
- Introduce and sustain coastal wise practices among coastal villagers
- Increase local awareness on benefits of and requirements for good environmental management
- Facilitate local participation and cooperation
- Contribute revenues for protected areas
- Enhance public education on biodiversity and conservation

Key Development Strategies

- Modeling a good (market oriented) and doable concept of "enterprise development-resource management linkage" in each site
- Broad multiple stakeholder involvement
- Diverse options for community benefit and participation; learning by doing opportunities
- Introduction of environmental accountability among economic beneficiaries
- Introduction of area-wide development planning and resource management
- Securing resource use access, tenure for beneficiaries; local policy for management

Major Breakthroughs

- Innovation and application of an **Integrated Enterprise Approach**

Business development framework integrating community development, resource management and multiple stakeholder mobilization.

Breakthroughs with Olango/Gilutungan Projects

- Mobilization of community residents at critical gateways to safeguard protected areas
- Positioning communities to regulate coastal development where public agencies are unable to monitor human activities
- Amidst many global attempts to establish community ecotourism, the CBST was able to achieve full mainstreaming as an enterprise with no subsidy to its operations
- Demonstrated higher rate of success for capacity building in community business-ecotourism development service thru the "coaching and experiential approach" vs traditional training approaches

Breakthroughs with Cambuhat Projects

- Mobilized a broad range of stakeholders from village to national levels
- Demonstrated success of Integrated Enterprise Approach (IEA) with following results:
 - Clean up of river from polluting facilities (spg pens & huts out)
 - Mangrove trees re-grown in re-plantations
 - Illegal fishing in river stopped, fish stock increase
 - Multiple community products and enterprises
 - Resources leveraged from local groups and donor
- Involved a provincial bank in community business development service, and in process guided it to adopt the IEA in Bohol
- Influenced the provincial department for investment promotion and livelihood development to adopt the IEA and prioritize project implementation for coastal areas

Breakthroughs with the Kawasan-Matutinao Project

- Catalyzed among stakeholders a major review of:
 - Status of natural resources and tourism business
 - Relationship between a hydro-electric project and surrounding natural resources and communities
 - Organizations and public policies among small business operators, private property owners and public agencies
- Re-oriented and restructured the tourism development framework according to sustainable development and resource management principles and market trends
- Assisted business and public stakeholders to approach tourism enterprise development from "holistic and complementary perspective"

Ecotourism in Olango Island

- Increased incomes for 90 fishers in 2 villages
- Tourism service delivery, ownership and management of an ecotourism micro-enterprise
- Substantial revenue contributions to a national and local protected area
- Education of international, national and local visitors on biodiversity, conservation strategies, sustainable enterprise development, community development
- Increased protection of coastal environments – reef, shoreline, wetlands, mangroves, birds and marine life
- Global model of a true community ecotourism

Mariculture, crafts and ecotourism in Cambuhat

- Integrated enterprises: oyster culture, ecotourism, coco wood cutlery, improved hand loom, buri fiber extraction, raffia market linkage
- Improved river, river bank and mangrove management by villagers and local government units
- Very broad institutional stakeholder involvement
- Benefits to and organization of 100 villagers
- Education of international and local visitors
- Model of village ICM and ecotourism for Bohol

Mariculture and Mangrove Visitor Program in Candijay

- Mudcrab and oyster culture, mangrove biodiversity interpretive trail and visitor program, integrated agriculture and ecotourism development plan
- Modeling sustainable development and management of CBFM site with broad village to region stakeholder involvement

Cottonii seaweed farming in Siaton, Negros Oriental

- Hi-value commodity model for alternative livelihood; introduction of efficient farming technology; market linkage; business development support thru local NGO
- 100 coastal villagers involved in seaweed farming
- Similar project in Gilutungan Island, Cebu but adversely affected by recent climatic changes

Sardines Processing in San Vicente, Palawan

- Business development assistance funding by LGU to women coastal villagers
- Fish processing business for 20 women
- Product introduced to markets in Puerto Princesa

Alternative tourism planning and business development in Badian

- Major challenges in rehabilitation of Kawasan Falls, tourism facilities, products and businesses thereat
- Management of conflicting economic interests to conservation, weak policy and organization
- Major headway in reorienting on, planning and start-up implementation of alternative tourism development and conservation of Kawasan Falls and Matutinao River
- Catalyzed process toward conflict resolution among tourism facility / business operators

Sustainable Coastal Tourism Planning in Masbate Province

- Orientation on environmental strategies for coastal tourism management
- Coastal tourism resources assessment, zoning and product planning for the province and 11 municipalities
- Training of core staff from the province and municipalities

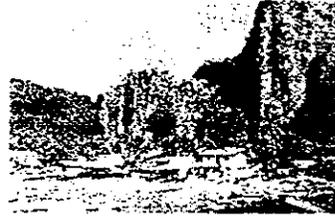
**Power Point Presentation on
Ecotourism**

Ecotourism



Refers to responsible travel to natural destinations to experience nature and culture of a region, while contributing to environmental conservation and to the well being of local people.

The tourist, agent, tour operator, hotelier and everyone involved have a responsibility to seriously consider their impact on the environment



Intended to be active and experiential, not passive

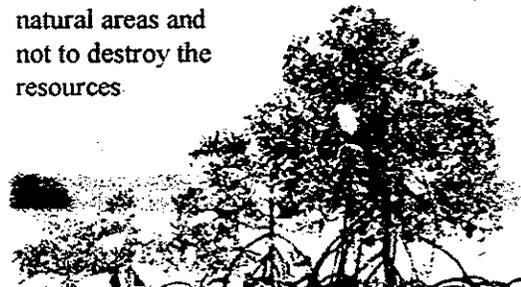


Natural environment is the centerpiece and most critical factor



Culture of the people who live in and around the natural environment is important

Intended to conserve the natural areas and not to destroy the resources





Local communities are involved
in the economic benefits

True Eco



- Conservation of nature and/or culture
- education of tourists and local communities
- economic development of local communities
- experiences which motivate people to conserve
- participatory development

Role of Ecotourism in Coastal Resource Management

- Eco-tourism is a tool for economic development of partner communities
- Eco-tourism is a tool for collaborative management of coastal environment by multiple local stakeholders: LGUs, NGOs, communities, business

Eco-Tourism Development Approach



- Environmentally pro-active
- Socially and culturally sensitive
- Participatory and community-oriented
- Multiple stakeholders collaboration
- Economically viable
- Educational

Program Goals:

To provide economic incentives for local stakeholders to conserve local coastal environments by optimizing the ecotourism potential of certain areas.

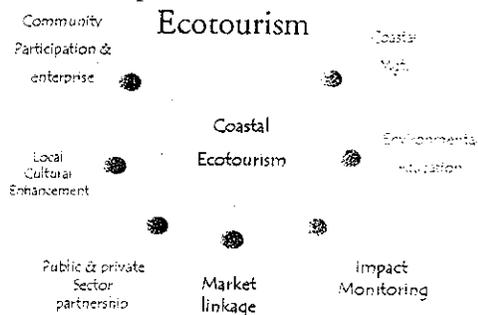
To facilitate collaboration of multiple stakeholders in developing and managing the ecotourism resources of certain coastal environments.

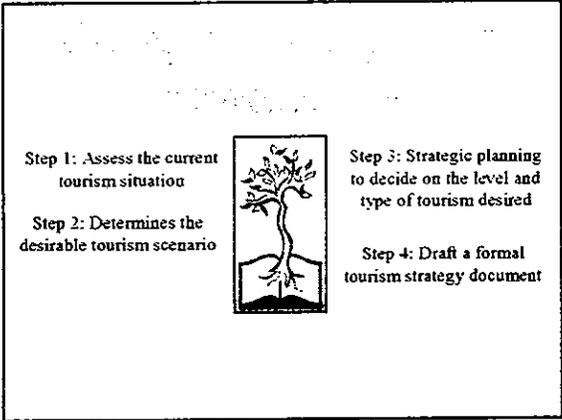
To develop working models of ecotourism projects that contribute to better coastal management and community development.

To develop local capability in ecotourism development and management in order to sustain the ecotourism projects and expand their application in other areas.

To educate tourism players on coastal environmental conservation.

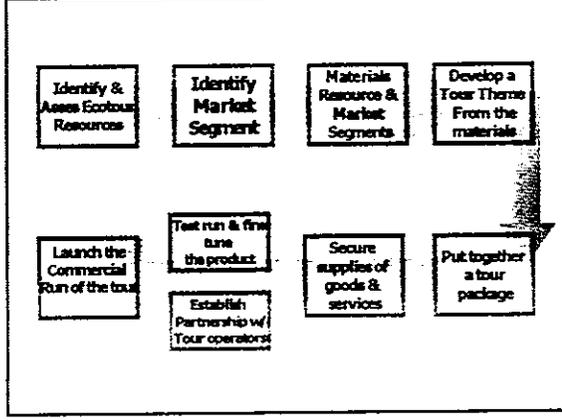
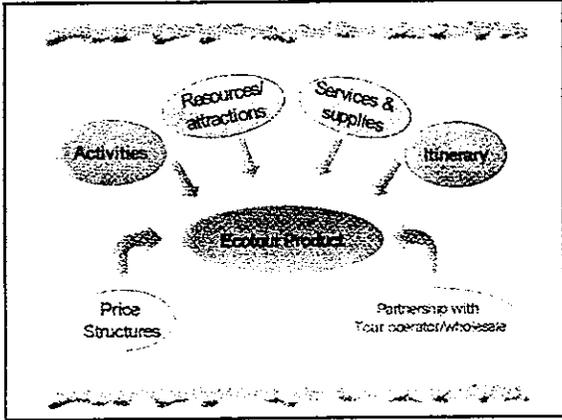
Components of CRMP's





Ecotourism Activities

- strategic planning
- product development
- visitor education and management
- market research
- enterprise development
- tourism stakeholders management
- environmental impact management



5. Good Community Management Strategies: Getting the community committed

Does the community fully understand and control the project?
Does the project help them to achieve their development needs?
Can they participate? Do they get the benefits that they want from tourism?

Some community management strategies:

- tourist awareness program
- participatory planning
- community consultation
- community participation

This holds true for the management of other stakeholders: tourism industry, local governments and national government bodies, non-government organizations.

Components of good business management

- Management research: finding out which tourist, what they are like and what they like
- Marketing strategy: plan on how to get the tourists to come to visit our place
 - Financial management systems: income management and distribution
- Business Plan: shows where the business is now, its goals for the future and how to achieve these: Essential to getting financial for start-up

7. Good Resource Management Strategies: ensuring that the natural environment on which the tourism project depends is maintained and protected

Strategies:

Carrying capacity: how many tourists can come determining the limits of acceptable change to the environment

Zoning: what types of activities can occur in certain areas; controlling tourist access

Monitoring: scientific measurement of changes to the natural environment to determine impacts of tourist visitation; recording number of tourists

Site Hardening: directing tourists to certain areas which can withstand a lot of people—creating boardwalks, fences, etc.

Controlling tourist behavior; interpretation and use of control signs to guide tourist on do's and don'ts

Power Point Presentation on
CRM and Enterprise

CRM Enterprise

C oastal env't. friendly
R ural household base
M arket oriented products

Enterprise = PROFIT

Livelihood =
SUBSISTENCE



Selection Criteria:

"good business in good environment
by healthy communities"

*existing and long term market
demand

*available resources

*good return on investment

*environment friendly

*hi-local benefit



Enterprise components:

•Product

•Market

•Resources

Skill, labor, finance,
technology, raw
materials, energy,
facilities, land, etc.

•Organization

•Development strategy



Enterprise dev't process:

◊ Identify impact areas-
site and beneficiaries

◊ Enterprise feasibility-

Government- public
resources

Private sector- market,
technology

Community- cooperation



•Implementation

>Product dev't / trial

>Production

>Market study / test

>Marketing

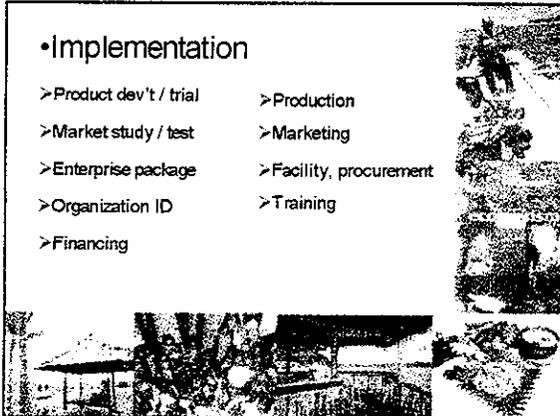
>Enterprise package

>Facility, procurement

>Organization ID

>Training

>Financing



◊ Catalyst to best practices in economic activities of
strategic communities / critical resource users

◊ Bridge between conservation and immediate
economic / food requirements of communities

◊ Revenue generation for coastal
management by public institutions

◊ Marketing blue values to general public and
industries

Catalyzing best practices in community economic activities

- Modeling alternative enterprise and livelihood options to unsustainable fishing and wild harvest

- Focused interventions to improve family incomes and trade practices through:

- product diversification
- improved production
- better marketing
- family equity development
- better wages and prices
- business planning and mgt.
- community organization

Catalyzing best practices in community economic activities

- Linking enterprise beneficiaries to resource management activities / organization

- > prioritized selection of community / household beneficiaries
- > tenurial security arrangement for communities
- > planning / zoning resource use for best value and sustainability
- > monitoring and correcting environmental impacts
- > operating guidelines for economic sectors
- > community management

Strategies for bridging conservation to economic and food security needs of communities



- Protected area perimeter communities to develop enterprise / livelihood opportunities that promote conservation

- PAMB preferential support to community enterprise initiatives that promote conservation of protected areas



- LGU and NGA policies / plans regulating use and economic development of lands and shorelines adjacent to protected areas where blue enterprises are modeled

Strategies for bridging conservation to economic and food security needs of communities



- Fees collection (entrance fee, user fee, license fee) by LGUs from public access to limited areas

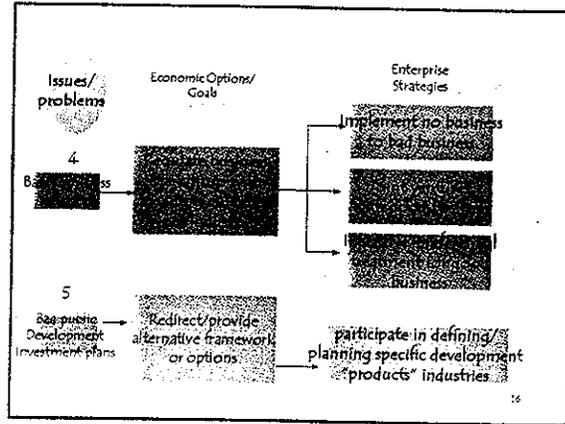
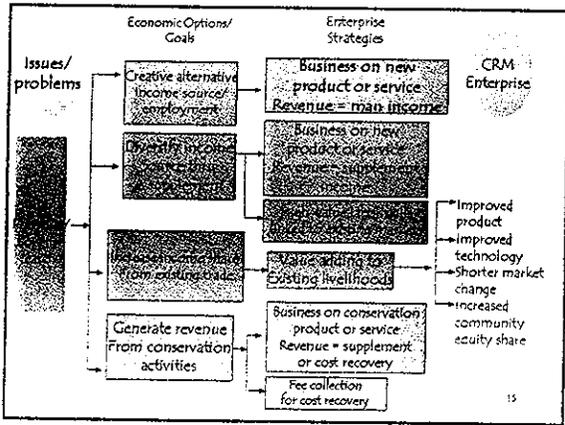
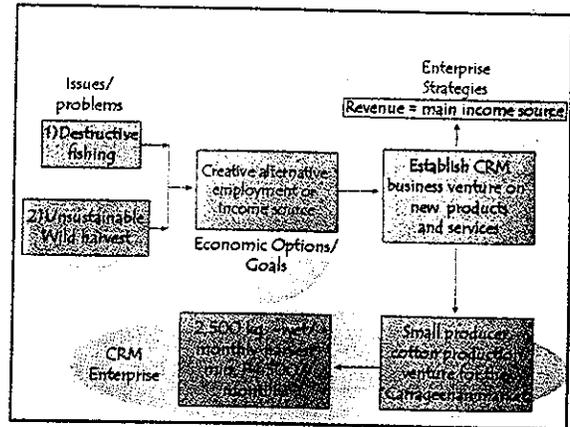
- Joint economic ventures between LGUs/NGAs and communities





- Endorsement of blue products by NGAs/LGUs
- Product labeling and promotions incorporating blue messages
- Selection and education of marketing partners

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The author is an Enterprise and Ecotourism Development Specialist and was the Enterprise Development Coordinator and lead consultant of the USAID Coastal Resource Management Project. She designed and developed the award-winning Olango Birds and Seascape Tour in Cebu and the Cambuhat River and Village Tour in Bohol among other enterprise development projects.

Monette, as friends and colleagues know her, is a member of the Regional Ecotourism Council of Region 7 and the founding Chair and President of the Environment and Community Ventures Foundation, Inc. (ECoVentures). She has worked in other development fields including the arts and culture, popular education, local governance, national and local policy development, community development, communications and biodiversity conservation. She is one of two official representatives of the South East Asia Regional International Year of Ecotourism Conference to the World Ecotourism Summit in Quebec, Canada.

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