

Ecuador's National Ecotourism Strategy

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Stephen Edwards
Conservation International
s.edwards@conservation.org



Context

- Relatively advanced policy environment for ecotourism in Ecuador:
 - Ecotourism “Norm”
 - Regulation for Tourism in Protected Natural Areas
 - National Tourism Law
 - National Biodiversity Strategy
- Need to establish an overall “strategic direction” and umbrella policy
- Tourism very important sector for Ecuador (3rd), and ecotourism is a key segment



Implementation Approach

1. Establish collaborative relationship among the parties developing the strategy
2. Literature review
3. Develop draft strategy
4. Participation and outreach (10 regional meetings)
5. Finalize strategy
6. Prepare document and disseminate (where we are right now)



Major Challenges

- Achieving meaningful stakeholder involvement
- Achieving buy-in by government (high turnover in Ministry of Tourism)
- Poor relationship between Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Environment
- Lack of clarity in terms of long-term implementation (funds, responsibility, priorities, etc)



Key Strategic Directions Identified

1. Promote land use planning for ecotourism
2. Develop efficient and sustainable management for ecotourism
3. Develop an image and country identity
4. Promote and market ecotourism products identified in the strategy



Achievements

- Pioneering effort to develop a National Ecotourism Strategy
- Strategy developed with input from broad range of stakeholders (despite small budget)
- Government identified and driven effort
- Successful interaction among NGOs, consultancy, private sector and Ministry of Tourism
- Clear link with CBD Tourism guidelines
- “Process” document being prepared



Lessons Learned

- Policies and regulations are useful, but need an overall strategic direction and guide
- It is possible to engage stakeholders, and their contribution is very useful
- It is possible to develop a national policy with relatively little funds (US\$45,000)
- Lack of such policies in the Andes region in general
- Need for “focus” (ecotourism vs. sustainable tourism vs. community tourism)



Conclusion

Developing an “umbrella” strategy is critical to set the strategic directions for a country’s policy and regulatory framework, and if possible, should be developed early in the policy development process

