



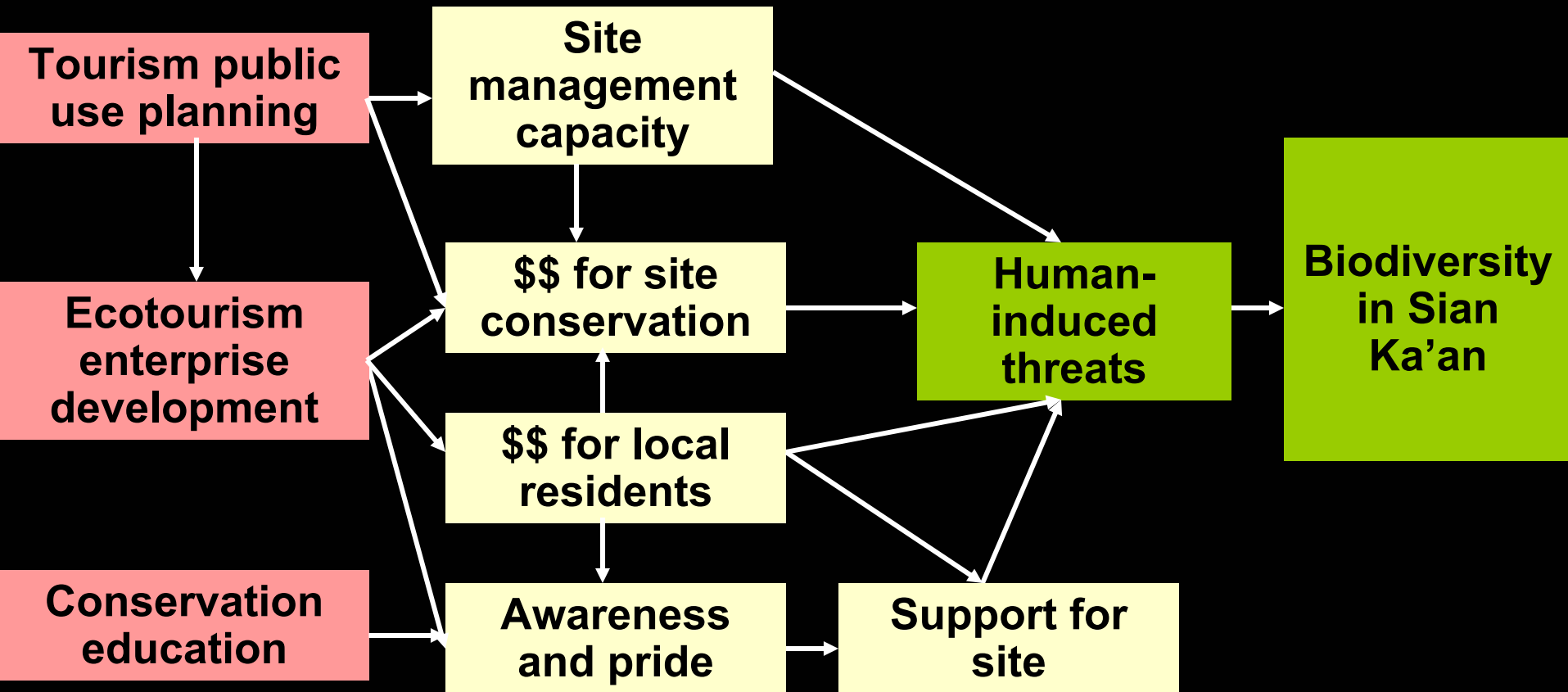
**Ecotourism for communities and conservation
Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, Mexico**

Objective:

A replicable model for community-based ecotourism through skills training, business planning and enterprise development



Our strategy for achieving biodiversity conservation in Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve



What worked

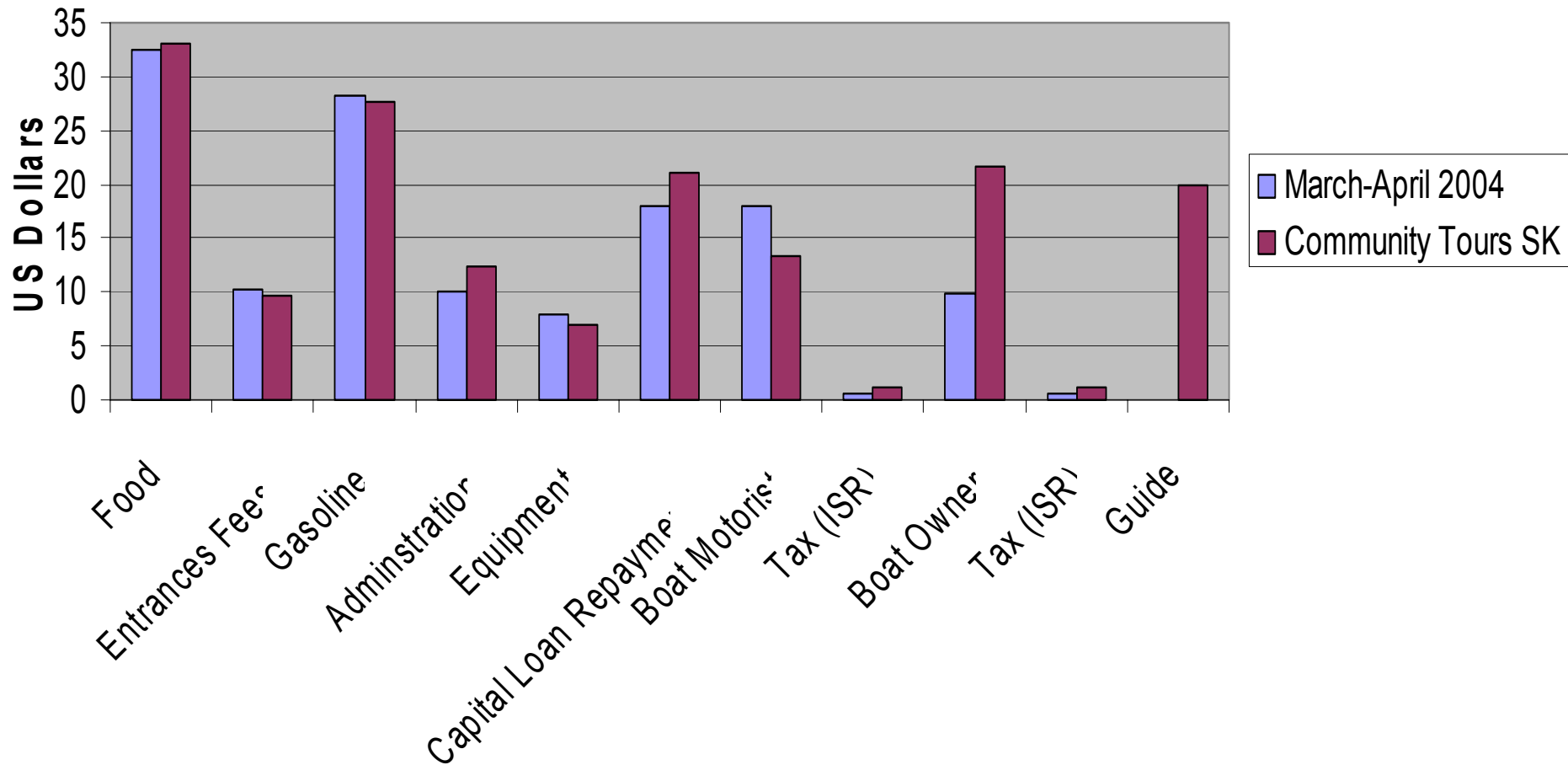
- Revenue generated: \$20,000 in gross sales, \$1,500 profit (100% increase), \$1,000 for conservation fund
- Four cooperatives working together on pricing, tours and operations
- Quality controls that results in satisfied visitors
- Alliances with 23 tour operators along the Riviera Maya
- Diversified tourism products to decrease impacts
- Revenue benefiting 33% of labor force and 75% of families in the communities
- Reserve managers buying in
- New methods in assessment and business planning now being replicated in other sites

Revenue breakdown per Boat Tour

Comparison – Before and after Community Tours Sian Ka'an

Boat tour before = US \$136

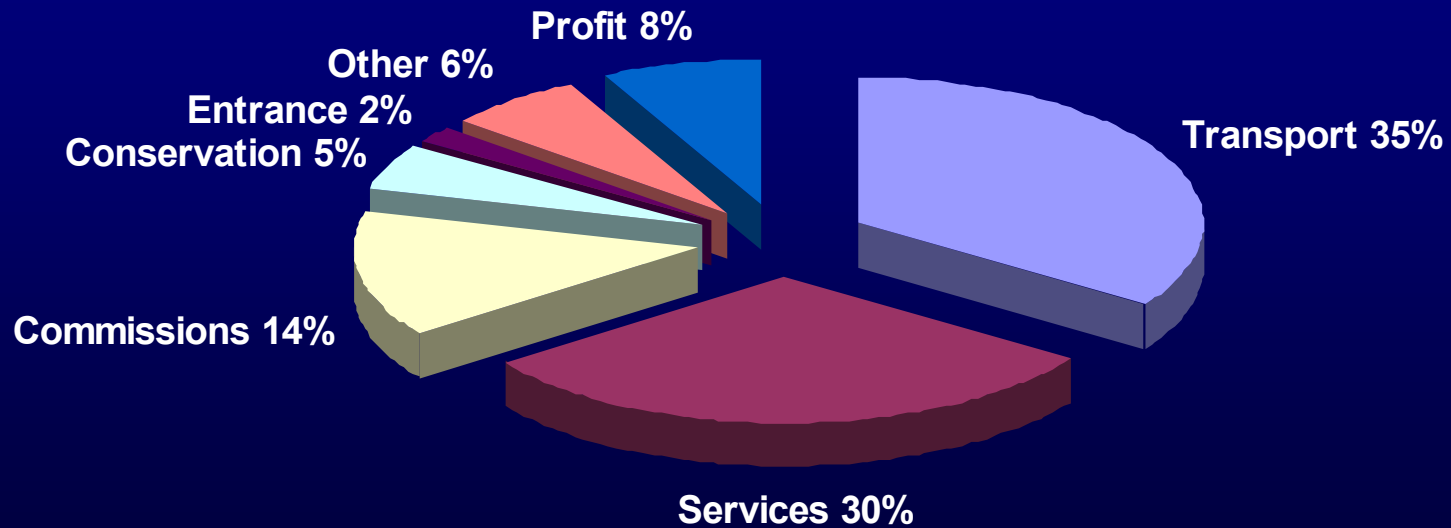
Boat tour after = US\$168



Income breakdown

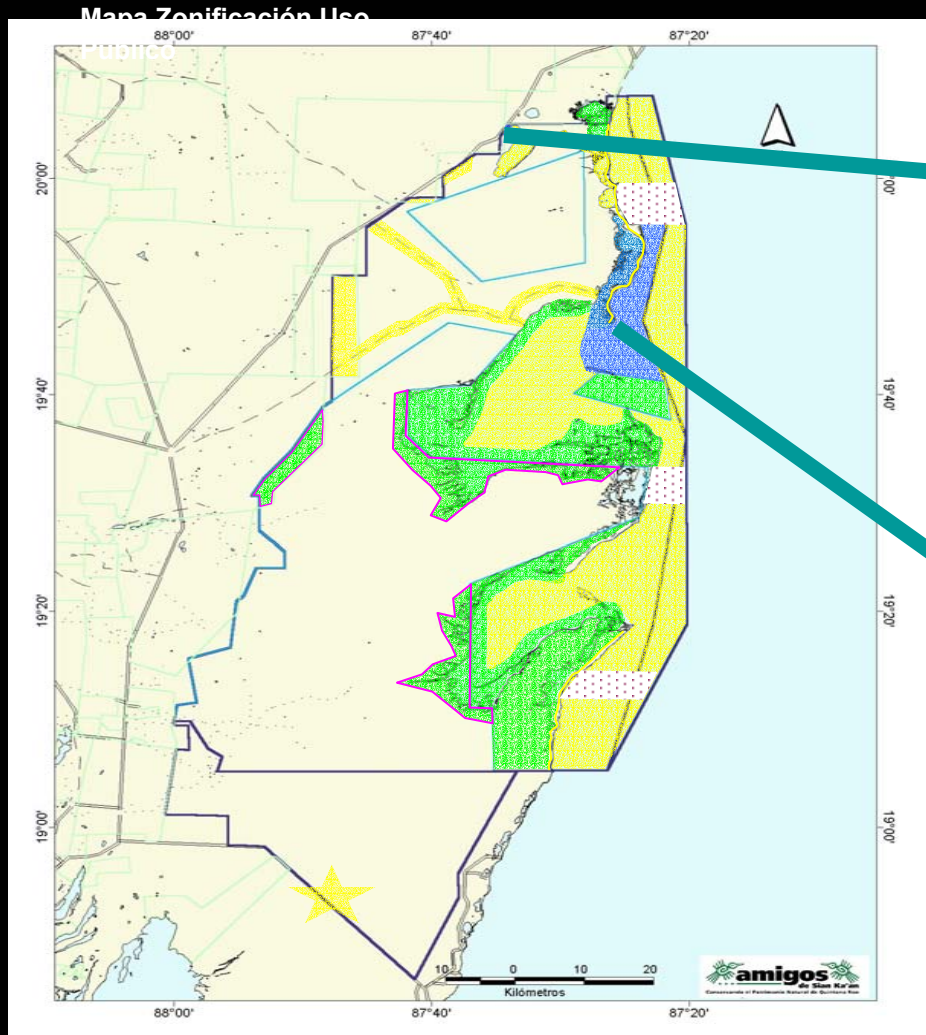
Community Tours Sian Ka'an – Beta Test results

July/August 2004



Site-community links:

Tourism products linked to tourism public use planning



Muyil:

Birdwatching,
archaeological sites,
hiking, swimming in
mangrove canals

Punta Allen:

Snorkeling, snuba,
flyfishing

Intensidades de



Alto



Medio



Baja



Muy
Bajo

Muy
Bajo

público

What didn't work

- Sites were selected before comprehensive site and ecotourism assessment
- Project management challenges related to funding, partnering, administration
- Threat reduction strategy is hard to measure in the short-term
- Some cooperatives did not join alliance; others joined but did not participate in Beta Test
- Reserve staff had to be convinced
- Method did not work in all of the pilot sites
- Rare is highly dependent on skills of our staff, which is not replicable

Lessons learned

Site selection and analysis: Understand market first

Business planning: Business model so entrepreneurs find work

Operations: Make local enterprise competitive

Training: Adapt training and products to market demand

Threat reduction: Income substitution does not always work

Partnerships: Tourism products and services linked to public use regulations and sold through partnerships with private sector

Community engagement: Importance of cooperation among cooperatives

Our new model for building ecotourism enterprises

Site selection: site and ecotourism analysis

Business planning

Operations

Training

- Inventory of attractions
- Infrastructure
- Porter's Five Forces
- Distribution channels
- Community capacities
- Partners

- Determine business model
- Define market
- Create marketing strategy
- Price, product, promotion, placement
- Marketing and sales

- Sales strategy
- Product development
- Staffing
- Promotion
- Product mix
- Beta Test
- Financial management
- Quality control
- FAM trips

- Guides
- Entrepreneurs
- Capital investment
- Trail development
- Infrastructure development