

Bolivia: Community-based Tourism and its Market Approach

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Introduction - Bolivia

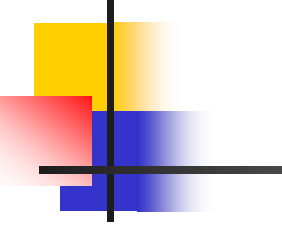
- Bolivia:
 - Located at the Centre of South America
 - 1.098.581 Km²
 - Double size of France
 - 26 times the size of Netherlands
 - 8 millions inhabitants





Introduction – Tourism in Bolivia

- Known as an Andean destinations, its main tourism destinations are:
 - Titikaka Lake – Sun Island (Isla del Sol)
 - Andean Mountain Range
 - Uyuni – Red Lagoon
 - Sucre - Potosí
 - Rainforest and Low lands – Rurrenabaque
- 390.000 Foreign visitors per year
- Length of stay (average): 10 days
- Expenditures: US\$ 50,00 per day
- Main motivation: Vacations
- 90% Foreign Independent Travellers





Community Based Tourism - CBT

- What is CBT
 - Business
 - Communities have a relevant role:
 - Ownership
 - Management
 - Benefits
- Aims of CBT
 - Improvement of local livelihood
 - Biodiversity conservation



Community-Based Tourism (CBT)

- Success Factors
 - Community commitment
 - Long term investment
 - Entrepreneur culture
 - Technical and financial support available
 - Understanding of local community
 - Financial and commercial viability



Market Approach (MA) for CBT

- The MA gives information to identify market opportunities and assess the potential benefits.
- The communities could decide to engage or not to engage in a project and where they can orientate their efforts to get benefits



Market Approach for CBT

- Market analysis
 - Market potential
 - Market access
 - Competitiveness
- Market opportunities
 - Potential market segments
 - Potential products for the identified segments
 - Potential costs and benefits



CBT in Bolivia

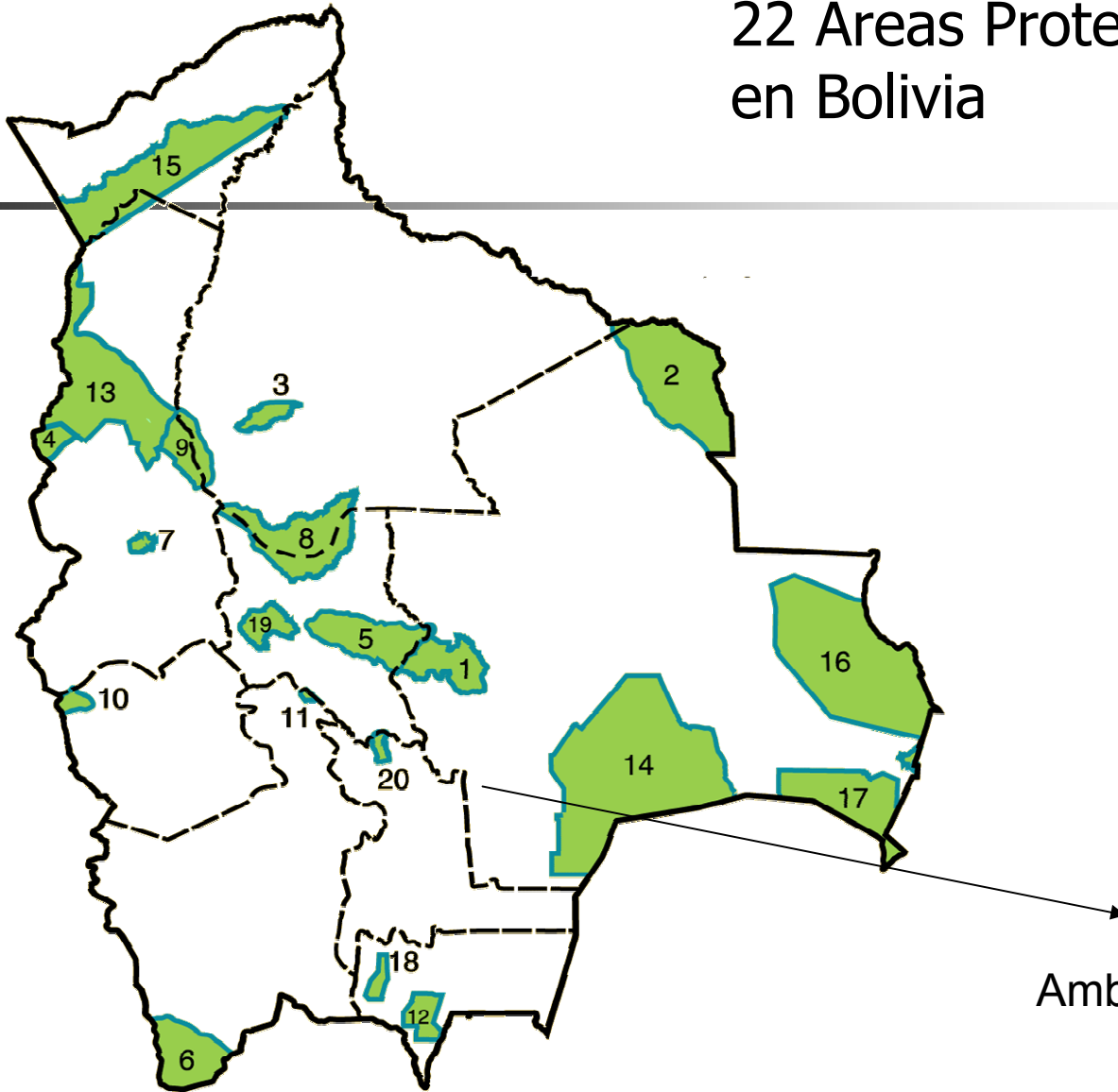
- More than 80 CBT projects
- A CBT enterprise profile is:
 - A lodge + ...
 - Near or in to a protected area
 - Offers an “ecotourism” product
 - Offers all inclusive products
 - Only some members of the community are part of the business
 - The original idea comes from a NGO
 - It was developed within 3 up to 12 months
 - The investment ranges from US\$ 30.000 up to US\$ 100.000
 - Its market target are foreign ecotourists
 - Do not have market alliances – sold itself the products
 - Do not have an administrative framework

Amboró National Park

- 6.376 km²
- From 300 m up to 3300 m over sea level
- 9 Municipalities
- 93 communities
- 30.000 inhabitants
- 6.000 visitors
- 12 CBT projects

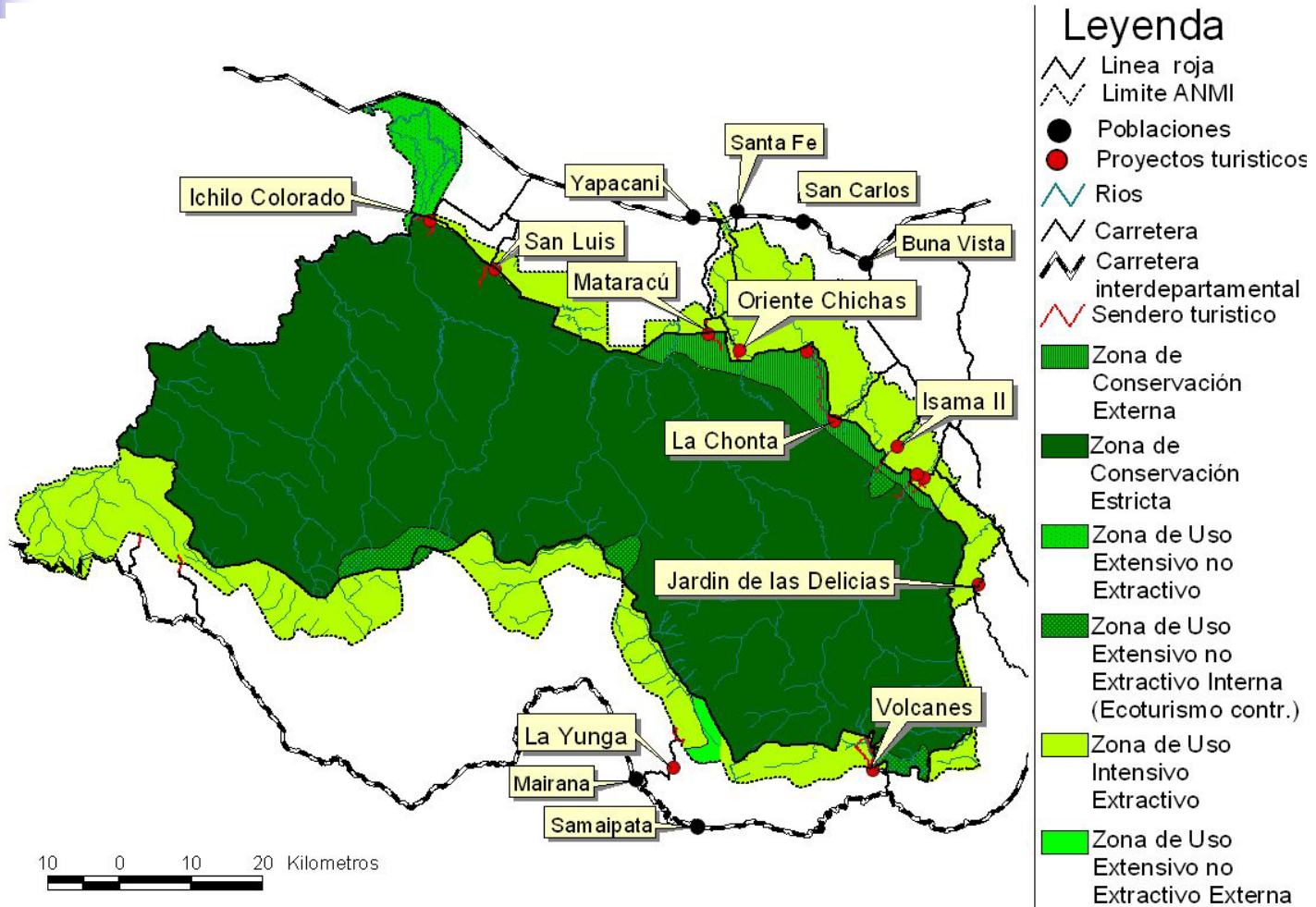


22 Areas Protegidas en Bolivia



Amboró National Park

CBT at Amboro National Park





QUIS DEL SENDERO
LOS HELECHOS





Amboró - CBT projects and its problems

- The visitors flow is low and it is not sufficient for all CBT projects
- All Projects are looking for the same market
- Bad quality of services and infrastructure
- Difficulties of access at rainy season
- Misunderstanding of tourism business

Benefits do not come in the quantity
and the expected time



Amboró CBT projects – Market Approach

- The visitors flow is low and it is not sufficient for all the CBT projects
 - Market potential was not evaluated
 - The information of visitor flow and growing trends in the region and the ecotourism market was not analysed, so they do not have an idea of the potential flow they could expect or draw.
 - Competitiveness of the destination was not evaluated
 - The market potential was assessed looking at natural resources, it was supposed that there will be a increasing demand because of the attraction magnetism.
 - Marketing efforts and cost were not assessed
 - The distance and cost of access for international travellers was not analysed, but despite not knowing they decided to address their offer to this market .
 - The role of tour operators and travel agencies have not been analysed, so they do not have commercial agreements with tour operators.
 - It was assumed that informative and promotional material would be enough to get the market, they did not consider the costs and needed efforts to reach the the market



Amboró - CBT projects – Market Approach

- CBT Projects are looking for the same market
 - Market potential was not evaluated
 - The market of each CBT project has been selected based on general assumptions, not of how each region could fulfill their interest and needs.
 - The market analysis selected the adventure tourist as standard tourist in order to design the offer, they did not look for market segments like interests and activities.
 - The market target was the international ecotourism traveller – adventurer, low budget. They did not look for local or national market.
 - Competitors were wrong evaluated
 - Projects in other communities were not considered as competitors but as a reference of what to do or not to do.
 - The difference among projects was in the natural resources, not in the kind of experiences.
 - They assumed that the number of visitors would be sufficient for every project, nobody realized that they were building an environment of price competitiveness.



Amboró CBT projects - MA

- Bad quality of services and infrastructure
 - Market needs were not evaluated
 - The market assessment did not look for information about market needs and interest, they used the adventure travel behaviour as a reference. As the tourists used tents, any change was considered as an improvement.
 - Other products were not evaluated
 - The market assessment did not look for information of similar products, so they did not have reference of quality.



Amboró CBT project - MA

- Benefits do not come in the volume and the expected time because – Market Approach:
 - They did not choose a market segment
 - Their product was developed for no one
 - The cost and the time to get benefits were not measured



Lessons Learned

- In order to have clarity in the possible benefits, the costs and the time necessary to achieve this goal in a CBT project, the market information plays a decisive role.
- Considering only the attraction magnetism without comparing it with other resources, can lead to an over estimation of the benefits or an under calculation of the time to reach this goal in a CBT project.



Lessons Learned

- Information on the flow and the growth trend is essential to estimate the investments worth to do in CBT in a region.
- The selection of an international market should consider the costs of promotion (international fairs, bilingual webpages).



Lessons Learned

- Taking a general, average or common market profile to design the product could lead to a general offer, and as a consequence, to have a lot of competitors.
- High expectation of benefits leads to a „misleading“ of the competitive analysis of a CBT project.
- The difference of CBT products can not be only based on the resources but on the type of experience that is offered.



Lessons Learned

- To copy successful products is not a warranty of success.
- It's necessary to consider the needs and interests of the market and the capacity of the communities to fulfill all these aspects – unique products.