


What is Ecotourism?

- According World Tourism Organization, ecotourism activities can be summarized in the following:
 - All nature-based forms of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas.
 - It contains educational and interpretation features
 - It is generally, but not exclusively organized for small groups by specialized and small, locally owned businesses. Foreign operators of varying sizes also organize, operate and/or market ecotourism tours, generally for small groups.
 - It minimizes negative impacts upon the natural and socio-cultural environment
 - It supports the protection of natural areas by
 - generating economic benefits for host communities, organizations and authorities managing natural areas with conservation purposes,
 - providing alternative employment and income opportunities for local communities,
 - increasing awareness towards the conservation of natural and cultural assets, both among locals and tourists.




Does Galapagos Tourism Model Agrees with eco-tourism definition?

- Agrees with 1 and 2, and fairly with 3.
- To state that the model agrees with 4 and 5 requires further analysis.
- The report of tourism monitoring (M. Cifuentes, 2001) concludes that the most significant impact found were:
 - Increasing of the path width
 - Erosion
 - Alternative paths, and.
 - Introduced plants



Does Galapagos Tourism Model Agrees with eco-tourism definition? (2)

- In the economic aspects the tourism provokes positive impacts but at the same time negative impacts. E. Mulder (2004) describes some of these positive and negative impacts:
 - In 2001 tourism foreign exchange earnings was the third largest source of income in the country with \$ 430 million dollars, just after petroleum and banana. From these revenues one third originated from the Galapagos tourism (Galapagos Report 200-2001, in E. Mulder 2004). Even though, there is a leakage effect that leaves just 19% of total revenues in the Galapagos economy, the rest goes to mainland-based or foreign-based airline companies or tour operators.



Does Galapagos Tourism Model Agrees with eco-tourism definition? (3)


- In Santa Cruz, the biggest employers are tourism and commerce (44%), while on San Cristobal tourism employs 21% of the economic population and in Isabela (20%) (Galapagos Report 2000-2001, in E. Mulder 2004). Even tough, benefits for local employment could be higher if cruises avoid hiring people out of Galapagos.
- The direct benefits of tourism are distributed among different local business in the islands. For example, hotels demand good and services from local producers. This extra demand produces a price increasing making Galapagos prices higher than those in the mainland.



Challenges



- Increasing of local-based tourism activities.
- Increasing demand of local labor from the tourism industry.
- Increasing demand of local goods from the tourism industry.
- Increasing accountability of tourism industry in regard tourism practices.
- Institutional strengthen (Participatory Management system) and policy making.



On-going initiatives

- The Alliance is promoting a certification process of tourism best practices. Among the criteria to certify a tourism operation is included social aspects such as: percentage of local employees, percentage of local goods and services demanded, etc.
- The Alliance is implementing a training process to local fishermen on business administration and management, in order to local fishermen will be able to set up their own small business on activities focused to provide services to tourism industry (i.e. engines maintenance and repair, oil collection and recycling, laundry, bakery, etc.)



On-going initiatives (2)

- The Alliance is facilitating a dialogue process between tourism industry and local fishermen to find out alternatives for fishermen outside the fishery sector, this dialogue is promoted within the framework of the PMB. As first result, CAPTURGAL and the Cooperatives of Fishermen are developing a study to analyze the feasibility that local cooperatives become whitefish suppliers to tourism industry.



**Thank you for
your attention**