

Ministry of Tourism
Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
The Dominican Republic

The Study on the National Strategic Plan for Ecotourism Development in the Dominican Republic

Final Report Summary

March 2010

JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY
PADECO CO., Ltd. In association with PACET CORP.

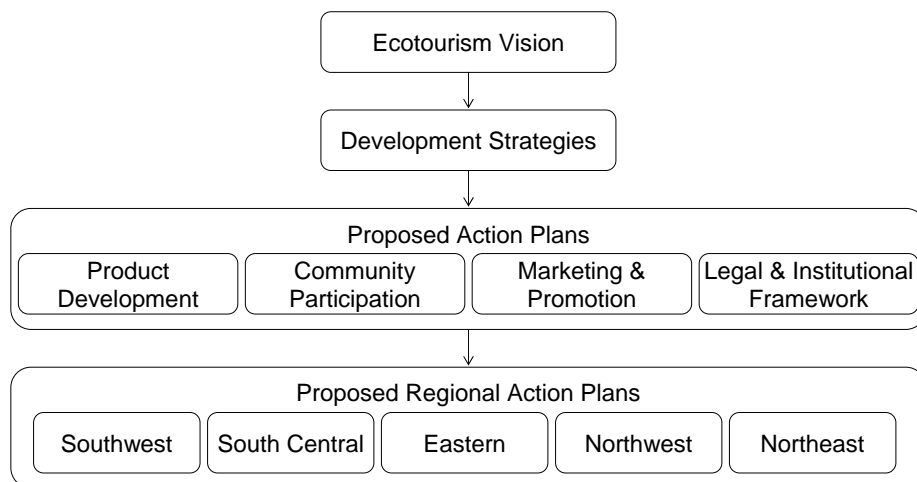


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Final Report Executive Summary

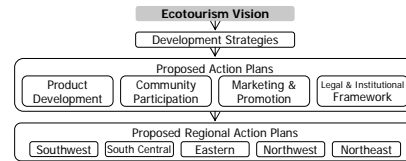


Structure of Proposals





Ecotourism Vision



- As seen from the outside, the image of the Dominican Republic will become a destination offering diverse experiences in beach resorts with many activities inside and outside, and in beautiful and interesting natural and cultural settings that are well preserved and with opportunities to interact with friendly local people;
- Within the Dominican Republic everybody associated with the expanded tourism scene complements each other for mutual benefit, including those in the hinterlands taking care of ecotourism, who contribute to make tourism sustainable.



Development Strategies



- Short-Term (until Year 2014)
 - Implement efficient ecotourism development initiatives by enhancing existing ecotourism activities
- Medium/Long-Term (until Year 2020)
 - Improve the total quality of ecotourism for the increased economic and environmental benefits



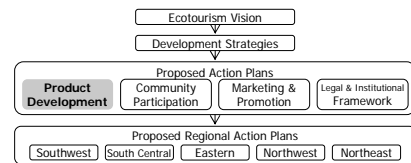
Development Components



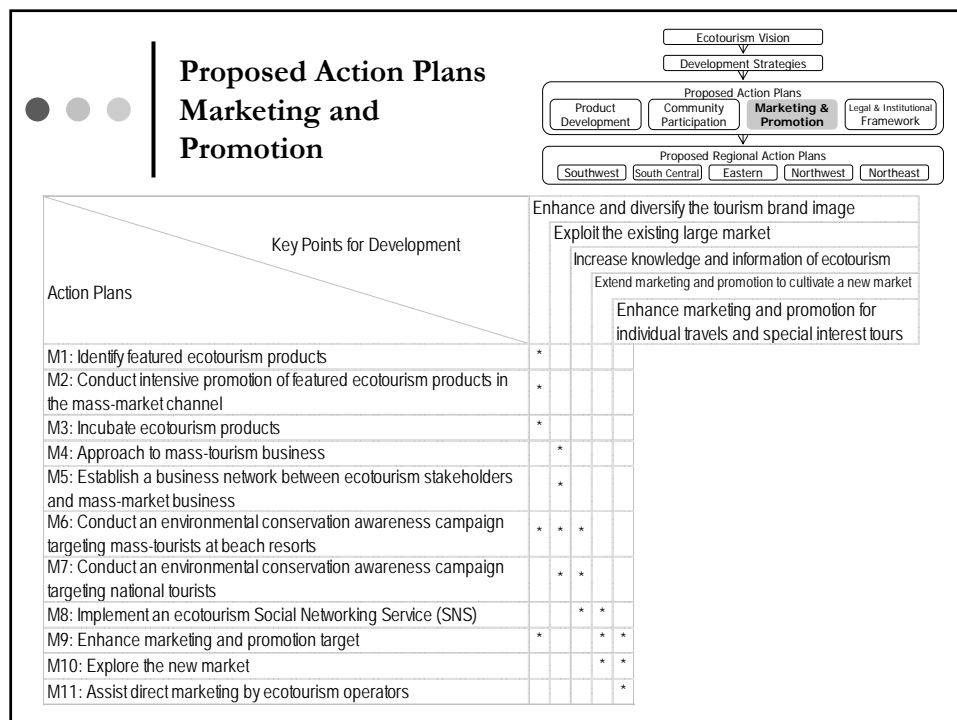
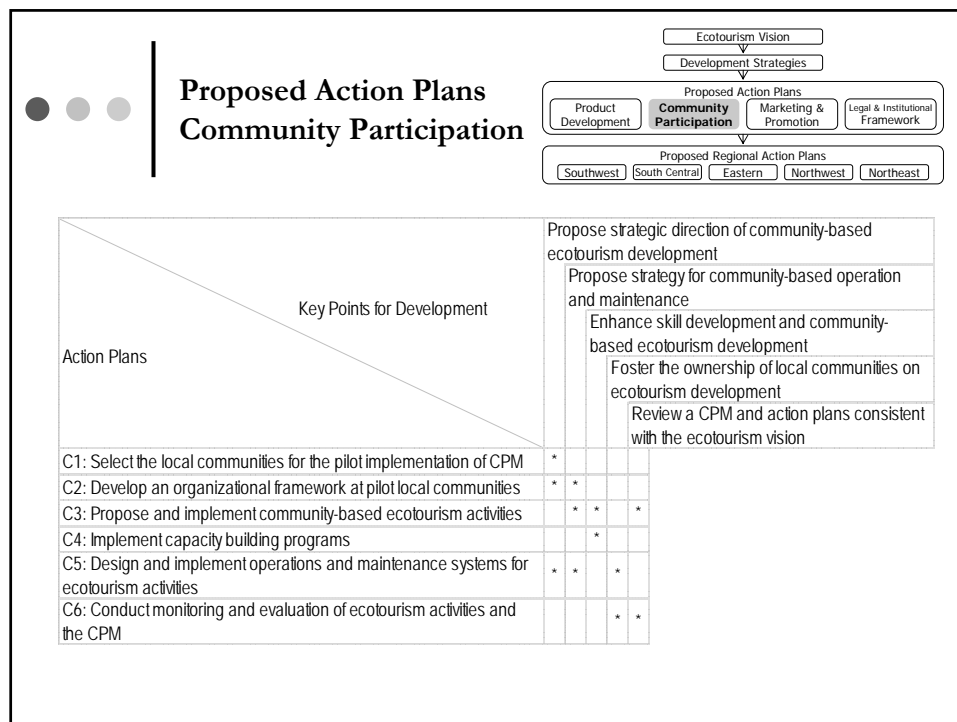
1. Product Development
 - For sustainable use of tourism resources
2. Community Participation
 - For increased benefit for local people and economy
3. Marketing and Promotion
 - For stimulation of tourists and economy
4. Legal and Institutional Framework
 - For support of other development components



Proposed Action Plans Product Development



Action Plans	Key Points for Development				
	Develop natural, cultural and geographical resources	Improve infrastructure and systems	Curb undesirable activities	Conserve environment at ecotourism sites	Mitigate inappropriate usage of tourism resources
PN1: Study and design ecotourism attractions and services	*				
PN2: Improve physical infrastructures and security systems		*			
PN3: Propose an itinerary model					*
PN4: Design and produce printed materials		*			
PN5: Develop and promote Special Interest Tours	*				
PN6: Develop a tourist management system		*	*	*	*
PC1: Formulate programs for the conservation of historic urban landscapes	*	*			
PC2: Conduct a clean-up campaign		*			
PC3: Formulate a guideline for the conservation of historic urban landscapes		*	*		
PC4: Construct an eco-museum				*	*
PC5: Enact regulations to rehabilitate and conserve historical buildings	*				
CC1: Promote eco-lodging development	*				
CC2: Develop various facilities to improve the convenience of tourists				*	



Proposed Action Plans Legal and Institutional Framework



Action Plans	Key Points for Development							
L1: Establish coordination mechanism for collaborative and harmonized implementation of PENDE	*							
L2: Harmonize approaches and administrative procedures for ecotourism development	*	*						
L3: Review and improve human resources development programs	*							
L4: Develop framework for sustainable ecotourism development at selected Protected Areas	*	*						
L5: Resolve the land issues at selected Protected Areas		*						
L6: Enhance co-management agreements		*	*					
L7: Enhance monitoring and evaluation activities at Protected Areas		*						
L8: Improve capacity of officials at provincial and local levels	*	*	*	*				
L9: Disseminate incentives information about ecotourism development		*	*					
L10: Increase the number of internationally competitive ecotourism guides				*				
L11: Introduce ecotourism certification and eco-labeling systems				*				



Regional Action Plans Southwest

- Provinces: Barahona; Baoruco; Independencia; Pedernales; Azua; Elías Piña; San Juan
- Vision: "The Last Nature Paradise"
- Action Plans
 - SW1 Provide lookouts and maps at selected scenic spots to promote ecotourism products for photo hunting
 - SW2: Improve ecotourism activities at Lago Enriquillo e Isla Catoritos National Park
 - SW3 Improve ecotourism activities at Laguna de Rincón o de Cabral
 - SW4 Improve ecotourism activities at Jaragua National Park and Lago Oviedo
 - SW5 Improve ecotourism activities at Sierra de Bahoruco National Park
 - SW6 Develop community-based ecotourism at Polo
 - SW7 Improve community-based ecotourism at Cachote
 - SW8 Promote special interest tours in Jaragua National Park
 - SW9 Promote special interest tours in Bahoruco National Park
 - SW10 Promote special interest tours in Neiba National Park
 - SW11 Promote special interest tours in Cabo Rojo - Bahía de las Águilas
 - SW12 Establish cultural town at Barahona
 - SW13 Establish cultural town at Azua
 - SW14 Establish cultural town at San Juan



Regional Action Plans South Central



- Provinces: Distrito Nacional; Santo Domingo; San Cristóbal; Monseñor Nouel; Monte Plata; Peravia; Sánchez Ramírez; San José de Ocoa
- Vision: "Historic and Modern"
- Action Plans
 - SC1 Conserve historic urban landscape in Colonial Zone
 - SC2 Create traditional townscape of Bayaguana, Yamasa and San Jose de Ocoa
 - SC3 Use "the Congos in Villa Mella" for cultural tourism
 - SC4 Develop Monte Plata ecotourism routes along Santo Domingo - Samaná new highway
 - SC5 Develop ecotourism activities at landward side of Los Haitises National Park
 - SC6 Develop ecotourism activities in green belts on Rio Isabela and Rio Haina in Santo Domingo
 - SC7 Develop lakeside recreational sites at artificial lakes in the suburban areas of Santo Domingo
 - SC8 Develop community-based ecotourism at Los Cacaos
 - SC9 Promote Colonial Zone eco-museum with visitor management system
 - SC10 Establish cultural town at Bani



Regional Action Plans Eastern



- Provinces: El Seibo; Hato Mayor; La Romana; San Pedro de Macorís; La Altagracia
- Vision: "Grand Confluence"
- Action Plans
 - E1 Improve ecotourism activities at Lagunas Redonda y Limón
 - E2 Develop ecotourism activities for mangrove observation at the Jina Bay
 - E3 Develop observatories on the coastal area at the Jina Bay
 - E4 Develop observatories at the Miches Bay
 - E5 Diversify ecotourism activities in Los Haitises National Park with promotion of community participation
 - E6 Diversify ecotourism activities in Del Este National Park with promotion of community participation
 - E7 Promote organic cacao route in Hato Mayor
 - E8 Improve visitor management at Los Haitises National Park
 - E9 Improve visitor management at Del Este National Park
 - E10 Promote special interest tours in Los Haitises National Park
 - E11 Promote special interest tours in Del Este National Park
 - E12 Diverse ecotourism activities in Isla Catalina
 - E13 Diverse ecotourism activities in Rio Cumayasa y Cuevas Las Maravillas
 - E14 Establish cultural town at San Pedro de Macorís



Regional Action Plans Northwest



- Provinces: La Vega; Santiago; Santiago Rodríguez; Valverde; Espaillet; Puerto Plata; Monte Cristi; Dajabón
- Vision: "Amazing Showcase"
- Action Plans
 - NW1 Improve nature observation activities in Armand Bermudez National Park
 - NW2 Improve nature observation activities in Valle Nuevo National Park
 - NW3 Improve community-based ecotourism at Ebano Verde Scientific Reserve
 - NW4 Improve community-based ecotourism at Pico Diego de Ocampo National Monument
 - NW5 Improve ecotourism activities at El Morro National Park
 - NW6 Improve ecotourism activities at Estero Hondo National Park and Monte Cristi Marine National Park
 - NW7 Promote special interest tours in Villa Elisa Scientific Reserve
 - NW8 Promote special interest tours in Pico Diego de Ocampo National Monument
 - NW9 Develop nature observation activities in Cayos Siete Hermanos Wildlife Protected Area
 - NW10 Develop nature observation activities in Mangares del Estero Balsa National Park
 - NW11 Establish cultural town at Puerto Plata
 - NW12 Establish cultural town at Santiago
 - NW13 Establish cultural town at La Vega



Regional Action Plans Northeast



- Provinces: Hermanas Mirabal; Duarte; María Trinidad Sánchez; Samaná
- Vision: "Cradle of Biodiversity"
- Action Plans
 - NE1 Provide observation sites for the sceneries of Samaná Bay and the forests of Samaná Peninsula
 - NE2 Provide observatories on the Caretera Nagua-Sánchez
 - NE3 Develop ecotourism activities at mangrove forest in Mangles de Bajo Yuna National Park
 - NE4 Improve ecotourism activities in Los Haitises
 - NE5 Improve community-based ecotourism in Loma Guaconejo
 - NE6 Improve community-based ecotourism in Loma Quita Espuela
 - NE7 Improve visitor management system for whale watching (Bancos de la Playa y de la Navidad)
 - NE8 Improve visitor management system for Los Haitises
 - NE9 Promote special interest tours in Samaná Peninsula
 - NE10 Develop ecotourism activities in Samaná Peninsula: Cabrón cape, Cabo Samaná National Monument
 - NE11 Develop ecotourism activities on the Atlantic coast: Cabo Francés Viejo, Bosque Húmedo de Río San Juan, Mirador del Atlántico Panoramic Route
 - NE12 Establish cultural towns at Samaná and Sanchez

	<u>Vision</u> - As seen from the outside, the image of the DR will become a destination offering diverse experience in beach resorts with many activities inside and outside, and in beautiful and interesting natural and cultural settings that are well preserved and with opportunities to interact with friendly local people; and - Within the DR everybody associated with the expanded tourism scene complements each other for mutual benefit, including those in the hinterland taking care of ecotourism, who contribute to make tourism sustainable			
	Major Issues based on Situation Analysis And Lessons Learnt from Pilot Projects	Key Points for Development	<u>Short-Term Strategy</u> Implement an efficient ecotourism development initiative by enhancing existing ecotourism activities	<u>Medium/Long-Term Strategy</u> Improve the total quality of ecotourism for increased economic and environmental benefits
Product Development	-Improve infrastructure and business environment -Mitigate congestion at the ecotourism sites -Raise motivation for ecotourism development -Secure sufficient resources for ecotourism product development -Maintain and improve the product value of tourism resources -Develop attractions and diversify tourism products -Consider accessibility by a diverse tourist base -Develop infrastructure and tourist facilities in consideration of tourist safety → -Enhance and detail guide training -Raise awareness about risks and controls of ecotourism activities -Set up a common access point	-Develop, natural, cultural and geographical resources -Improve infrastructure and systems -Curb undesirable activities -Conserve environment at ecotourism sites -Mitigate inappropriate usage of tourism resources -Increase tourists satisfaction -Develop ecotourism circuits and corridors	<u>Short-Term Strategy and Action Plans: Product Development</u> Enhance and strengthen the existing ecotourism activities for ecotourism site development -PN1 Study and design ecotourism attractions and services -PN2 Improve physical infrastructures and security systems -PN3 Develop and distribute an itinerary model -PN4 Design and produce printed materials → -PC1 Formulate conservation programs of historic urban landscapes -PC2 Conduct a clean-up campaign -PC3 Develop a conservation guideline of historic urban landscapes	<u>Medium/Long-Term Strategy and Action Plans: Product Development</u> Develop more attractive and quality tourism products for the increased economic and environmental benefits -PN5 Develop and promote Special Interest Tours -PN6 Develop and implement a tourist management system -PC4 Construct an eco-museum -PC5 Enact regulations to rehabilitate and conserve historical buildings -CC1 Promote eco-lodging development -CC2 Develop various facilities for convenience of tourists
Community Participation	-Raise awareness of local residents about value of ecotourism resources -Improve organizational capacity of local communities -Develop Community Participation Model (CPM) -Need a certain period of ecotourism guide training -Develop an ecotourism guide training standard -Develop an organizational framework at the community level -Introduce practical skills in a training course for ecotourism business management → -Understand the sense of value of the target local communities	-Propose strategic direction of community-based ecotourism development -Propose strategy for community-based operation and maintenance -Enhance skill development and community-based ecotourism development -Foster the ownership of local communities on ecotourism development -Review a CPM and action plans consistent with the ecotourism vision→	<u>Short-Term Strategy and Action Plans: Community Participation</u> Introduce a Community Participation Model at pilot local communities -C1 Select the local communities for the pilot implementation of CPM -C2 Develop an organizational framework at pilot local communities -C3 Propose and implement community-based ecotourism activities -C4 Implement capacity building programs	<u>Medium/Long-Term Strategy and Action Plans: Community Participation</u> Improve and penetrate the Community Participation Model -C5 Design and implement operations and maintenance systems for ecotourism activities -C6 Conduct monitoring and evaluation of ecotourism activities
Marketing and Promotion	-Mitigate lack of knowledge and information on the tourism market and products -Expand means of ecotourism marketing and promotion -Utilize available promotion channel for ecotourism promotion -Promote ecotourism products according to the positioning in the market -Expand market for field trip and summer-camps by youth groups and schools → -Introduce SNS for small-scale stakeholders in remote areas	-Enhance and diversify the tourism brand image -Exploit the existing large market -Increase knowledge and information of ecotourism -Extend marketing and promotion to cultivate a new market -Enhance marketing and promotion for individual travels and special interest tours	<u>Short-Term Strategy and Action Plans: Marketing and Promotion</u> Exploit the existing marketing and promotion channels according to the quality levels -M1 Identify featured ecotourism products -M2 Conduct intensive promotion of featured ecotourism products in the mass-market channel -M3 Incubate ecotourism products -M4 Approach to mass-tourism business → -M5 Establish a business network between ecotourism stakeholders and mass-market business -M6 Conduct an environmental conservation awareness campaign targeting mass-tourists -M7 Conduct an environmental conservation awareness campaign targeting national tourists -M8 Implement an ecotourism Social Networking Service (SNS)	<u>Medium/Long-Term Strategy and Action Plans: Marketing and Promotion</u> Enhance the marketing and promotion to establish the position as an ecotourism center in the Caribbean region -M9 Enhance marketing and promotion target -M10 Explore the new market -M11 Assist direct marketing by ecotourism operators
Legal and Institutional Framework	-Mitigate lack of knowledge and information on the tourism market and products -Expand a means of ecotourism marketing and promotion -Utilize available promotion channel for ecotourism promotion -Promote ecotourism products according to the positioning in the market -Expand market for field trip and summer-camps by youth groups and schools -Introduce SNS for small-scale stakeholders in remote areas →	-Enhance and diversify the tourism brand image -Exploit the existing large market -Increase knowledge and information of ecotourism -Extend marketing and promotion to cultivate a new market -Enhance marketing and promotion for individual travelers and special interest tours	<u>Short-Term Strategy and Action Plans: Legal and Institutional Framework</u> Improve institutional framework for ecotourism administration -L1 Establish coordination mechanism for collaborative and harmonized implementation of PENDE -L2 Harmonize approaches and administrative procedures for ecotourism development -L3 Review and improve human resources development programs -L4 Develop framework for sustainable ecotourism development at selected Protected Areas → -L5 Resolve the land issues at selected Protected Areas -L6 Enhance co-management agreements -L7 Enhance monitoring and evaluation activities at Protected Areas -L8 Improve capacity of officials at provincial and local levels -L9 Disseminate information about the incentives of ecotourism development -L10 Increase the number of internationally competitive ecotourism guides -L11 Introduce ecotourism certification and eco-labeling systems	<u>Medium/Long-Term Strategy and Action Plans: Legal and Institutional Framework</u> Enhance the high standard of ecotourism industry (The following action plans to be continued) -L6 Enhance co-management agreements -L7 Enhance monitoring and evaluation activities at Protected Areas -L8 Improve the capacity of officials at provincial and local levels -L9 Disseminate information about the incentives of ecotourism development -L10 Increase the number of internationally competitive ecotourism guides -L11 Introduce ecotourism certification and eco-labeling systems

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Acronyms

ACESAL	Community Ecotourism Association of Salto del Limón
ACS	Association of Caribbean States
ADAVIT	Dominican Association of Travel Agents
ADEDES	Ecotourism Development Association of La Descubierta
ADEMI	Association for the Development of Small Businesses, Inc.
ADOTUR	Dominican Association of Tour Operators, Inc.
AGELE	Association of Ecotourism Guides of Lake Enriquillo
ASONAHORES	National Hotel and Restaurant Association
BBS	Bulletin Board Service
BNVP	National Development Bank of Housing and Production
BRICs	Brazil, Russia, India, and China
CAFTA	Central American Free Trade Agreement
CANARI	Caribbean Natural Resources Institute
CARIFORUM	Caribbean Forum of African, Caribbean and Pacific States
CAST	Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism
CBO	Community-based Organization
CEA	Community Ecotourism Association
CEBCE	Center for the Conversion and Eco-development of Samana Bay
CEIZTUR	Infrastructure Executing Committee in Tourism Zones
CHA	Caribbean Hotel Association
CIELO	Committee of the Initiatives for Local Ecotourism
CNC	National Competitiveness Council
CONDESPI	Council for the Sustainable Development and Promotion of the Dominican Republic
CORPHOTELS	Development Corporation of the Hotel and Tourism Development Industry
CPM	Community Participation Model
CPT	Tourism Promotion Council
CRS	Computer Reservation System
CTO	Caribbean Tourism Organization
DATE	Dominican Annual Tourism Exchange
DED	Deutschen Entwicklungsdienstes / German Development Service
DEFINPRO	Department of Development and Project Financing
DGAP	Protected Areas Management Department
DOP	Dominican Peso
DR	Dominican Republic
DSTA	Dominican Sustainable Tourism Alliance
EPENDE	Study on the National Strategic Plan for Ecotourism Development
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FIPA	Investment Fund for Environmental Protection
FITUR	International Tourism Trade Fair
FLQE	Fundación Loma Quita Espuela

FOROAP	National forum of Protected Areas
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDS	Global Distribution System
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HDI	Human Development Index
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDAC	Dominican Institute of Civil Aviation
IDDI	Dominican Institute of Integral Development
IDEAC	Institute of Associative Economic Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INDECOOP	Institute of Cooperative Development
INFOTEP	National Institute of Professional Technical Training
INFRATUR	National Tourism Development Trust Fund
ITB	Internationale Tourismus-Börse
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
JATA	Japan Association of Travel Agents
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JIS	Joint Implementation Structure
JST	Japanese Study Team
JWTF	JATA World Tourism Congress & Travel Fair
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIGA	Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
ODTS	Dominican Organization of Sustainable Tourism
ONAPLAN	National Planning Office
OPETUR	Tour Operators Association of the Dominican Republic
OPT	Overseas Tourism Promotion Office
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PEDTURD	Strategic Plan for Tourism Development of the Dominican Republic
PENDE	National Strategic Plan for Ecotourism Development
PMT	Transfrontier Environmental Program
PNCS	National Systemic Competitiveness Plan
POLITUR	Tourist Police
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PROMIPYME	Program for the Assistance of Small and Medium Enterprises
REDEC	Enriquillo Network of Community Ecotourism Initiatives

REDOTUR	Dominican Network for Rural Tourism
SEC	Ministry of Culture
SECTUR	Ministry of Tourism
SEEPYD	Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Development
SEMARENA	Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources
SEOPC	Ministry of Public Works
SGP	Small Grants Program
SINAP	National System of Protected Areas
SIT	Special Interest Tour
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SNS	Social Networking Services
SODIN	Society for the Integral Development of the Northeast
SOECI	Ecological Society of Cibao
SOEPA	Ecological Society of Paraíso
SOPDE	Society of Planning and Development
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
TIA	Travel Industry Association of America
TIES	The International Ecotourism Society
TOI	Tour Operators Initiative
UGAM	Municipal Environmental Management Unit
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WEF	World Economic Forum
WTM	World Travel Market

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Objectives

The Dominican Republic (DR) has successfully become the largest international tourist destination in the Caribbean region through numerous public-private initiatives for tourism development focusing on large-scale beach resorts since the 1960s. However, sustainable tourism development and tourism product diversification have become the priority issues of concern in response to the increasing negative impacts of the tourism development, namely, i) adverse environmental impacts due to less eco-friendly development at many large-scale beach resorts, ii) declining competitiveness in the international tourism market due to lack of promotion of the tourism products other than the beach resorts, and iii) limited opportunities for the local communities because most of the beach resorts are all-inclusive where few tourists opt to venture outside of the compound for a short excursion. His Excellency President Dr. Leonel Fernandez Reyna stated in his third term inauguration ceremony in August 2008, about the direction of national tourism development as follows:

“In the tourism sector we must aim to overcome, without claiming to dismiss, the pattern of all-inclusive packages in order to attract tourists willing to pay higher prices for quality services. We must diversify tourism. Instead of beach, sun and sand, in which we already have competitors, we can develop mountain tourism, adventure tourism, cruise, sports tourism, etc., as I know we are doing.”

Ecotourism has attracted a great deal of interest from many national stakeholders as a means of alternative tourism development, and a wide variety of ecotourism development projects have been implemented nationwide since the 1980s. In order to support the ecotourism development initiatives, the Government has embarked upon formulating “the National Strategic Plan for Ecotourism Development” (hereinafter referred to as “PENDE” by its Spanish acronym). In December 2006, the Ministry of Tourism (SECTUR) and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARENA) agreed on joint ecotourism development and finalized an official inter-ministerial document paving the way to formulate PENDE supported by JICA. Consequently, in July 2007, “The Study on National Strategic Plan for Ecotourism Development in the Dominican Republic” (hereinafter referred to as “the Study”) was launched.

Aiming at tourism product diversification, natural resources conservation, and improved quality of life in the local communities, the Study has assisted in formulating PENDE as well as personnel and institutional capacity building at the organizations including SECTUR and SEMARENA, the local communities and the private sector, so as to attain nationwide ecotourism development jointly leveraged by public-private sectors and NGOs.

1.2 Scope of Work

While ecotourism is defined in various ways, the perspectives of ecotourism development are classified into two types. One is “Ecotourism development for sustainable tourism” whereby natural and cultural resources are developed in a sustainable way with an appropriate environmental consideration to cater for mass tourists. The other is “Ecotourism development for environmental studies and local communities” whereby natural and cultural resources provide eco-conscious tourists with a profound opportunity for environment studies and benefit the local communities at the same time. Many ecotourism activities are influenced by both perspectives, and a wide variety of ecotourism practices are covered in the Study.

The Study assumed three ecotourism factors comprising of “Tourism Resources and Environment”, “Communities and Local Residents” and “Tourists and Economy”. The President’s inauguration speech referred to these factors as issues of consideration for tourism development:

“We must integrate the tourism development of communities, so that the benefits of tourism are more widespread. We must continue to expand all kinds of infrastructure necessary for the consolidation of the different poles and have proper land use planning. We must continue our current levels of promotion and develop the country for disseminating the image of the Dominican Republic.”

Furthermore, the Study assumed four development components to improve these ecotourism factors. The development components were applied at each stage of the Study, i.e., the situation analysis, the pilot projects, identifying the key points for development, and proposing development strategies and action plans.

- “Product Development”: in relation to utilization/conservation of “Tourism Resources and Environment”
- “Community Participation”: in relation to capacity building of “Communities and Local Residents”
- “Marketing and Promotion”: in relation to stimulation of “Tourists and Economy”
- “Legal and Institutional Framework”: in relation to sustain the three ecotourism elements

Figure 1.1 illustrates the relationship among the ecotourism factors and the development components.

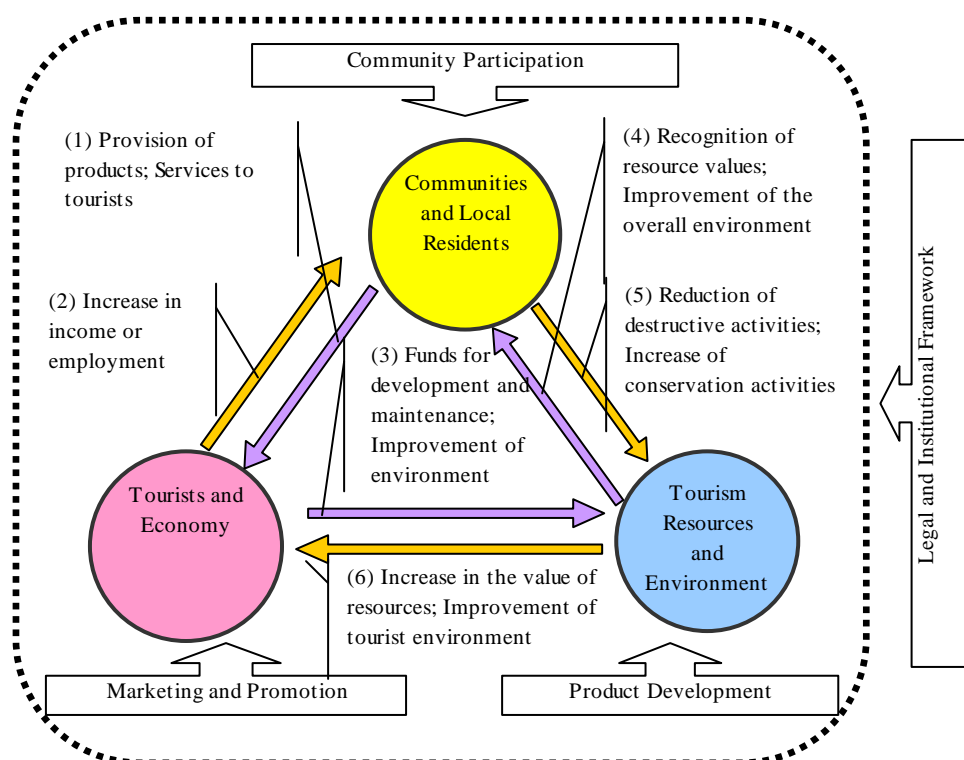


Figure 1.1 Ecotourism Factors and Development Components

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Study Team

A counterpart team was formed by the officials chosen from SECTUR and SEMARENA, while a consultant team consisted of experts dispatched by JICA. A joint JICA Study Team was formed by the two teams to discuss the issues arisen during the Study.

1.3.2 Study Approach

The Study consisted of the following tasks: i) the situation analysis and the pilot projects implementation to identify the key points for development, ii) proposals for ecotourism vision and development strategies, and iii) proposals for action plans necessary to realize the ecotourism vision.

In the beginning, the situation analysis was conducted to depict the current status of ecotourism at the field level. Three stages of regional workshops, two national conferences and a roundtable discussion were held, followed by a SWOT analysis to understand the collective views of the diverse base of nationwide stakeholders and identify the major issues classified by the development components. In addition, an empirical study was conducted in the form of pilot projects, which provided the lessons learned from practice. The key points for development were then identified based on the major issues and the lessons. See Chapter 2 for more details.

Subsequently, the ecotourism vision was proposed to depict the ideal state of national ecotourism in the future. The ecotourism development strategies were proposed to attain the ecotourism vision, and two types of strategies were formulated in consideration of the feasibility and they are the short-term strategies towards the year 2014 and the medium/long-term strategies towards the year 2020. See Chapter 3 for more details.

Finally, the action plans were proposed to identify the specific ecotourism development activities necessary to realize the ecotourism vision. See Chapter 4 for more details.

2 Situation Analysis, Pilot Projects and Key Points for Development

This Chapter describes the major issues based on the situation analysis, the lessons learnt from the pilot projects, and the key points for development derived from the major issues and the lessons.

2.1 Situation Analysis and Major Issues

2.1.1 Product Development

Situation Analysis

Despite a topographically small island-state, the DR is endowed with complex and diverse natural resources, represented by three mountain ranges and the largest lake in the Caribbean region. The nation's attractive sceneries are formed by panoramic views of mountains, bodies of water, sea coasts, coves, sylvan sceneries and limestone outcrops, while a number of endemic flora and fauna are found in the Protected Areas throughout the nation. A unique and diverse culture is created by a variety of cultural resources such as traditional indigenous cultural resources mostly seen as the ruins, European-oriented cultural resources such as the Colonial Zone in Santo Domingo, and African-oriented cultural resources.

These endemic and diverse national ecotourism resources have a great potential of further product development, and a number of small-scale ecotourism development projects have been launched accordingly. Along with the product development, appropriate conservation measures should be implemented because many of these natural and cultural resources are prone to irreparable environmental damages.

Major Issues

First, there is a need to improve the infrastructure and business environment for the ecotourism development, and various needs were reported in the regional workshops such as access roads, public transportation and public security. There is a greater needs in the Northwest and Southwest regions where there is a need to improve sewage treatment systems, tourism centers, accessibility to travel agencies and financial services, which would be necessary for development as an ecotourism center.

Second, there is a need to mitigate the congestion at the ecotourism sites overcrowded by a number of tourists, particularly in the regions where ecotourism has been relatively developed. In the Eastern region, a high concentration of tourists at a few destinations such as Los Haitises and Saona Island raised concerns of insufficient capacity of tourist facilities and tourist dissatisfactions.

Third, in contrast, in the regions where ecotourism infrastructure and business environment are less-developed there is a need for initiatives to motivate ecotourism development. It was pointed out that in the Northwest and Southwest regional workshops that not having a tradition of developing ecotourism products was a weakness of ecotourism development in the respective region.

Fourth, there is a need to allocate sufficient resources for the effective product development. There is a lack of human resources of the ecotourism operators and support framework for the small-scale ecotourism businesses, as indicated in the regional workshops. The small-scale enterprises also have difficulty of funding.

Finally, there is a need to maintain and improve the value of the ecotourism resources. For this purpose, conservation measures should be implemented in cooperation with the local communities.

2.1.2 Community Participation

Situation Analysis

The local communities will play a critical role in the national ecotourism development because they are often situated nearby many natural and cultural resources. In practice, some local communities participate in a co-management operation program at the Protected Areas.

A diverse base of organizations in many local communities generally have weak relationships with each other. Most community members have difficulty in seeking financial and technical assistance from the capital market due to low private investment in ecotourism development projects. Instead, the local communities tend to depend on financial and technical assistance from some international donor organizations which support proactive participation of the local communities in ecotourism development.

Major Issues

First, there is a need to raise awareness of local residents about the value of ecotourism resources. Some adverse environmental impacts caused by the local residents were reported in the regional workshops, such as slash-and-burn agriculture and consequent forest fires, solid waste and pesticides contamination of water, and coral damage caused by anchoring. The local residents should be more acquainted with the economic value of ecotourism resources and the conservation activities.

Second, there is a need to improve the capacity of organizations at the community level. A weakness in administration and communication of the organizations at the community level was indicated in the regional workshops. The capacity building of the organizations at the community level is highly required, because they are expected to play an important role to raise awareness of the local residents for the ecotourism development.

Finally, there is a need to develop a Community Participation Model (CPM) presenting the ideal model of local community participation in the ecotourism development. The Study proposed a CPM to implement in the local communities nationwide. The proposed CPM advocates the entrepreneurship and effective use of available resources in the local communities, and the institutional framework and implementation process can be flexibly designed according to their institutional structure and key needs.

2.1.3 Marketing and Promotion

Situation Analysis

The DR has become one of the most successful international tourism destinations with an established brand image of “sun and beach” resort in the popular tourism region of the Caribbean Sea. The strong marketing channels have been extended to major international tourism markets, while a number of well-equipped hotels and well-established product distribution systems have been developed in the coastal areas. The national population, including national residents and immigrants to the United States, is enough to generate a certain level of demand for the domestic tourism.

However, there is a growing concern on the possibility of declining national competitiveness in the international tourism market, as it is evident that many tourists have shifted their preference to natural and cultural attractions. A priority should be given to refurbish and implement a brand new strategy in response to rapidly changing market demand so as to strengthen the national competitiveness in the international tourism market. In particular, ecotourism will require further initiatives for marketing and promotion to raise its position in the international tourism market and overcome its underrated status in comparison with the mainstream tourism product of beach resorts.

Major Issues

First, ecotourism operators need assistance to mitigate a lack of their knowledge and information on the tourism market and products. Many ecotourism operators have limited contact with the tour

operators and the tourists of other forms of tourism, as they are small and medium enterprises based in remote areas. The extended marketing and promotion channel is desirable for them, such as participation in an established mass-marketing channel and an ICT-leveraged channel.

Second, there is a need to expand the means of ecotourism marketing and promotion. In addition to plain brochures and an ecotourism website which are currently available, more sophisticated technology and tools should be utilized to stimulate the market demand.

2.1.4 Legal and Institutional Framework

Situation Analysis

A number of local communities nationwide are interested in launching ecotourism activities. Some experienced and acquainted experts are deployed at SECTUR and SEMARENA, who may introduce development opportunities suitable to the local communities as well as ecotourism operators, as the ministries in charge of the ecotourism development. Some international donors are also cooperative with the ministries in supporting the local communities. The existing support framework of the ministries and the donors should be effectively utilized to facilitate CPM implementation and capacity building of the local communities.

There is a diverse base of ecotourism stakeholders including ecotourism operators, tourists, local communities and donors. Similarly, in the central government, an ecotourism department is established respectively at SECTUR, SEMARENA, and the Ministry of Culture (SEC) which participated as an observer in formulating PENDE. It is therefore important to coordinate among the ministries and the ecotourism stakeholders effectively in terms of roles assignment, decision making and budget allocation to facilitate the ecotourism development.

Major Issues

First, there was a need to propose an explicit and detailed ecotourism policy. The documented ecotourism policy will facilitate fiscal arrangements like subsidiaries as well as an institutional arrangement to support the community-based ecotourism development. The proposed ecotourism policy should also provide the measures for the improved effectiveness of existing support functions. In the Study, PENDE has been proposed and documented, and thereafter its actions plans will be implemented.

Second, there is a need to strengthen measures against illegal activities and a lack of awareness on laws and guidelines. Some case studies were introduced in the regional workshops, such as illegal logging and less regulatory compliance by whale-watching operators. The illegal activities are also unintentionally caused by the ecotourism operators and the community members who are not acquainted with the laws and guidelines.

2.2 Pilot Projects

The pilot projects were implemented as a means of empirical study to examine the major issues based on the situation analysis and to obtain lessons. At the selection stage, twenty projects were nominated and they were rated according to the administrative and technical criteria. The administrative criteria consisted of appropriateness of the project duration, feasibility in terms of budgetary constraints and available human resources, sustainability of the pilot project, environmental impacts, and relevance to capacity building of stakeholders, whilst the technical criteria consisted of consistency with the major issues and technical feasibility in view of the four development components. The three highest rated projects were selected for the pilot implementation.

2.2.1 Enhance and Diversify Ecotourism Products in Bayahibe

The first pilot project was “Enhance and Diversify Ecotourism Products in Bayahibe”. There is a need to maintain and improve the value of tourism products as indicated in the major issues of “Product Development”. Despite a well-developed beach resort destination, Bayahibe needs further development to meet the changing demand in the international tourism market. The pilot project aimed to implement the ecotourism attractions and services in order to examine empirically the feasibility of a value-added tourism package enhanced and diversified by the ecotourism products.

For the integrated and competitive ecotourism attractions, the pilot project proposed the connection between the Padre Nuestro trail of Parque Nacional del Este and La Punta Cultural Route. The tasks comprised: i) situation analysis of the institutional coordination in the tourism sector, ii) proposals for ecotourism marketing, iii) capacity building of the Guide Association of Padre Nuestro, and iv) proposals for basic tourism infrastructure.

It was found out at the implementation stage that strong leadership like the central government was desirable to coordinate among a number of project stakeholders. The situation analysis clarified that local people constituted about 50% of all tourists to Bayahibe and that the tourism destinations should be developed to meet a variety of needs of the diverse base of tourists. The ecotourism guide training was implemented as a part of the capacity building activities of the Guide Association, and the laborious training process may be streamlined in the future by preparing a basic guide standard so that more qualified ecotourism guides would be trained. For the development of basic tourism infrastructure, safety measures should be carefully considered.

2.2.2 Improve Ecotourism Activities in La Descubierta

The second pilot project was “Improve Ecotourism Activities in La Descubierta”. This area is suitable to examine the feasibility of CPM implementation which is one of the major issues in “Community Participation”, because there are a number of organizations at the community level. The pilot project was conducted to empirically examine the feasibility of community participation for the improved ecotourism activities and efficient operation and maintenance.

The pilot project was implemented at Lago Enriquillo and La Descubierta. The tasks consisted of: i) coordination with the target local community, ii) institutionalization of Community Ecotourism Association (CEA), iii) survey and mapping of tourism resources, iv) security systems, v) invitation tour for national tourism operators, vi) printed materials, and vii) frontier markers.

In the beginning, a lot of time and effort was required to understand the community characteristics such as structure and roles of the organizations in the target community. It was found out that the common value at the target community should be properly understood before implementing the initiatives for the improved community ownership, which would be essential for sustainable community-based ecotourism operations.

It was important at the implementation stage to coordinate among the organizations in the target community and prepare training contents to meet the educational level of the community members. The survey and mapping of tourism resources proved that the potential targets were youth groups and schools in the domestic tourism market. While an invitation tour was highly rated by the participants, the printing materials yielded limited results and it was confirmed that the objectives of the printed materials should have been understood among the stakeholders. On the whole, the stakeholders evaluated that the pilot project had provided an opportunity to raise awareness and expertise and that they were motivated about ecotourism development.

2.2.3 Introduce Social Networking Services (SNS)

The third pilot project was “Introduce Social Networking Services (SNS)”. An ecotourism SNS is considered as a tool to mitigate the lack of knowledge and information of ecotourism operators about tourism market and products, which is referred to as one of the major issues in the “Marketing and

Promotion”. The pilot project empirically evaluated the feasibility and effectiveness of the national ecotourism SNS.

The SNS membership was initially given to the ecotourism stakeholders, and they were urged to use the SNS functions, such as: i) forum for information sharing among the SNS members pursuing success in the ecotourism business, ii) government information board to disseminate laws amendment, strategy papers and ecotourism events, iii) link to the website of SECTUR and SEC to provide a channel between potential tourists and SNS members, and iv) general information on national ecotourism activities.

In the beginning, it was inevitable for the two ministries to reconcile their differences in SNS administration policy, because SECTUR emphasized the commercial viability of SNS whereas SEMARENA advocated the community participation. In particular, it took a long time to determine the initial SNS membership. Some more challenges were met after SNS became operational, such as malfunction of networking equipment, existence of competing website, lack of understanding of SNS members about the SNS objectives, and slowdown in membership growth. On the other hand, some SNS members affirmatively evaluated the SNS on the basis of prospect for rapid ICT improvement in the next few years and effectiveness of SNS functions for product development and marketing. With 1,161 hits from 41 countries during two months and a half of the pilot project period, SNS proved to be effective in ecotourism promotion. In addition, the two ministries have gradually nurtured cooperative spirits through the joint working group towards successful pilot implementation, and it has provided a good example for the future institutional framework to facilitate the joint implementation of the action plans.

2.2.4 Lessons Learnt from Pilot Projects

The lessons learned from the pilot projects were classified into four development components as listed below:

Product Development

- There is a need to develop new attractions and diversify tourism products at an ecotourism site.
- The product development requires the consideration for accessibility by a diverse base of tourists including elderly and physically handicapped persons.
- There is a need to develop infrastructure and tourist facilities for tourists’ safety.
- The guide training needs to be enhanced and detailed to enable the ecotourism stakeholders to introduce the value of local tourism resources to tourists and tourism operators.
- A measure is required to raise awareness among ecotourism stakeholders about risks and controls of ecotourism activities as well as safety issues.
- There is a need to set up a common access point to facilitate use of tools such as SNS.

Community Participation

- It takes a long time for training to foster a professional guide who will have a certain level of income.
- SECTUR and SEMARENA should jointly develop an ecotourism guide training standard for the accelerated training process to train more competent guides.
- The organization framework should be developed at a community level with deliberate coordination and strong leadership.
- The training course for ecotourism business management should introduce practical skills so that ecotourism stakeholders may realize the potential of ecotourism for the local communities.
- There is a need to understand the common value at the target local communities before CPM implementation.

Marketing and Promotion

- The existing promotion channel should be effectively utilized for ecotourism promotion to the established market.
- The stakeholders at ecotourism sites should promote their ecotourism products to the tourism operators in a suitable way according to its positioning in the market.
- There is a potential of market expansion for field trips and summer camps to be conducted by youth groups and schools.
- SNS will be an effective marketing and promotion tool for small-scale stakeholders in remote areas.

Legal and Institutional Framework

- The steering committee established at the community level for ecotourism development will need support of the central government leadership in order to coordinate with the ministries and tourism operators.
- The continuing training should be provided not only to the community members but also to the local government staff, who may play a role as a facilitator and promote community participation in ecotourism development.
- A joint institutional framework for ecotourism development should be developed between SECTUR and SEMARENA to foster a cooperative spirit for mutual interests.
- It is desirable that SNS be operated by a neutral organization which understands the future direction of national ecotourism in a broad view.

The duration of pilot projects was limited to about three months, and it was too short to attain effective tangible outcomes. It is learnt that action plans should be formulated with sufficient period and budget. Also, it is observed that the scope of work of short-period action plans should be limited to specific contents such as training and workshop in order to obtain effective results.

2.3 Key Points for Development

This section describes the key points for development identified from the major issues based on the situation analysis and the lessons learnt from the pilot projects in the four development components of “Product Development”, “Community Participation”, “Marketing and Promotion” and “Legal and Institutional Framework”.

2.3.1 Product Development

In order to utilize the diverse and endemic national tourism resources for ecotourism development and thereby attain tourism product diversification, product development initiatives should respond to the aforementioned major issues and lessons such as development of infrastructure and business environment, improvement of the value of tourism resources. The key points for development are listed as follows:

- **Develop natural, cultural and geographical resources;**
- **Improve infrastructure and systems;**
- **Curb undesirable activities;**
- **Conserve the environment at ecotourism sites;**
- **Mitigate inappropriate usage of tourism resources;**
- **Improve tourists’ satisfaction;**
- **Develop ecotourism circuits and corridors;**

2.3.2 Community Participation

A nationwide ecotourism development at the community level should start from the development of a community model of organization, coordination and leadership in the form of CPM, followed by on-site ecotourism activities such as situation analysis, capacity building, orientation and skill development training. The CPM should be implemented at selected local communities in the short-term while it should effectively improve the value of ecotourism products and sustainability of ecotourism development in the medium/long-term. The key points for development are listed as follows:

- **Propose strategic direction of community-based ecotourism development;**
- **Propose strategy for community-based operation and maintenance;**
- **Enhance skill development and community-based ecotourism development;**
- **Foster the ownership of local communities on ecotourism development;**
- **Review if CPM and action plans are consistent with the ecotourism vision;**

2.3.3 Marketing and Promotion

In the short-term, along with quality improvement of the ecotourism products, marketing and promotion should be based on the national tourism brand image of “sun and beach” and emphasize tourism product diversification. It is anticipated the medium/long-term that tourism products will be fully diversified to attain the sustainable and diversified tourism development from beach tourism for mass tourists to pure ecotourism for niche tourists. In order to support the transformation of national tourism development, the key points for development are listed as follows.

- **Enhance and diversify the tourism brand image**
- **Exploit the existing large market**
- **Increase knowledge and information of ecotourism**
- **Extend marketing and promotion to cultivate a new market**
- **Enhance marketing and promotion for individual travels and special interest tours**

2.3.4 Legal and Institutional Framework

The legal and institutional framework should support the steady development of the tourism sector. In the short-term the Government should provide leadership for public-private partnerships in ecotourism development while the legal and institutional framework should leverage the quality development of ecotourism industry in the medium/long-term. The key points for development are listed as follows:

- **Improve organizational capacity and raise motivation**
- **Increase sustainable use of protected areas for ecotourism development**
- **Support local communities and SMEs related to ecotourism development**
- **Provide incentives for quality services**

Major Issues / Lessons Key Points for Development	Major Issues					Lessons					
	Improve infrastructure and business environment	Mitigate congestion at the ecotourism sites	Raise motivation for ecotourism development	Secure sufficient resources for ecotourism product development	Maintain and improve the product value of tourism resources	Develop attractions and diversify tourism products	Consider accessibility by a diverse tourist base	Develop infrastructure and tourist facilities in consideration of tourist' safety	Enhance and detail guide training	Raise awareness about risks and controls of ecotourism activities	Set up a common access point
Develop, natural, cultural and geographical resources			*	*		*			*		
Improve infrastructure and systems	*	*	*	*			*	*			*
Curb undesirable activities			*		*					*	
Conserve environment at ecotourism sites	*	*						*			*
Mitigate inappropriate usage of tourism resources			*		*					*	
Increase tourists satisfaction		*		*		*	*		*		
Develop ecotourism circuits and corridors	*	*				*					

Figure 2.1 Key Points for Development: Product Development

Major Issues / Lessons Key Points for Development	Major Issues			Lessons				
	Raise awareness of local residents about value of ecotourism resources	Improve organizational capacity of local communities	Develop Community Participation Model(CPM)	Need certain period of ecotourism guild training	Develop an ecotourism guide training standard	Develop organizational framework at a community level	Introduce practical skills on training course for ecotourism business management	Understand the sense of value of the target local communities
Propose strategic direction of community-based ecotourism development			*					*
Propose strategy for community-based operation and maintenance		*	*		*	*		
Enhance skill development and community-based ecotourism development			*	*	*		*	
Foster the ownership of local communities on ecotourism development	*	*	*			*		*
Review a CPM and action plans consistent with the ecotourism vision		*	*			*		

Figure 2.2 Key Points for Development: Community Participation

Major Issues / Lessons Key Points for Development	Major Issues		Lessons			
	Mitigate lack of knowledge and information on the tourism market and products	Expand a means of ecotourism marketing and promotion	Utilize available promotion channel for ecotourism promotion	Promote ecotourism products according to the positioning in the market	Expand market for field trip and summer-camps by youth groups and schools	Introduce SNS for small-scale stakeholders in remote areas
Enhance and diversify the tourism brand image	*		*	*		
Exploit the existing large market			*			*
Increase knowledge and information of ecotourism	*					*
Extend marketing and promotion to cultivate a new market		*		*		
Enhance marketing and promotion for individual travels and special interest tours		*			*	

Figure 2.3 Key Points for Development: Marketing and Promotion

Major Issues / Lessons Key Points for Development	Major Issues		Lessons			
	Propose an explicit and detailed ecotourism policy	Strengthen measures against illegal activities	Support the steering committee at a community level	Extend the continuing training to local government staff	Develop a joint institutional framework for ecotourism development	Operate SNS by a neutral organization
Improve organizational capacity and raise motivation	*		*	*	*	*
Increase sustainable use of protected areas for ecotourism development	*	*				
Support local communities and SMEs related to ecotourism development	*		*			
Provide incentives for quality services	*	*				

Figure 2.4 Key Points for Development: Legal and Institutional Framework

3 Ecotourism Vision and Development Strategies

This chapter describes the ecotourism vision depicting the ideal state of national ecotourism in the future and the proposed development strategies to realize the vision.

3.1 Ecotourism Vision

It is remarkable that the national stakeholders are proactive in the ecotourism development utilizing a variety of tourism resources. With eco-diverse natural resources influenced by geographical and climate conditions and cultural resources attracting historical and anthropological interests, the DR has the potential to transform itself into an internationally competitive ecotourism destination by a joint public-private effort for the ecotourism development. The popular large-scale beach resorts may create an opportunity for mass-tourists to extend their visit to the ecotourism sites. There are a number of ecotourism development projects at many ecotourism sites, though most of them are small-scale. It is anticipated that the ecotourism development will extend the benefits to the areas such as hinterlands where the current mainstream tourism of “sun and beach” fails to reach.

The national ecotourism vision is proposed as follows:

- **As seen from the outside, the image of the DR will become a destination offering diverse experiences in beach resorts with many activities inside and outside, and in beautiful and interesting natural and cultural settings that are well preserved and with opportunities to interact with friendly local people; and**
- **Within the DR everybody associated with the expanded tourism scene complements each other for mutual benefit, including those in the hinterlands taking care of ecotourism, who contribute to make tourism sustainable.**

3.2 Proposed Development Strategies

3.2.1 Principles in Formulating Development Strategies

The development strategies and action plans are proposed based on the following principles.

- **Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the government sector in ecotourism development**

It is expected that the government sector will play an important role in incubating an emerging industry like ecotourism, as it will disseminate necessary information, develop physical and institutional infrastructure for sustainable growth of private business, and formulate laws and regulations with regard to the social and environmental issues. The environmental conservation and improved quality of rural life may require government interventions to supplement the market failures. The proposed development strategies and action plans should clarify the roles and responsibilities of the government sector in ecotourism development.

- **Harmonize all stakeholders consisting of public and private sectors and civil society**

Since many ecotourism stakeholders are weak and small, they will need assistance to mitigate their lack of expertise and information on ecotourism development. It is essential to harmonize the efforts among the ecotourism stakeholders and the government institutions for sustainable growth of ecotourism.

- **Apply quick action plans before implementing extensive physical and institutional**

reforms

The ecotourism development is prioritized to transform national direction of tourism development from development of large-scale beach resorts to sustainable development and tourism products diversification in conformity with environmental conservation and changing market needs. Therefore, some quick action plans should be launched before implementing extensive physical and institutional reforms.

- **Implement action plans in phases**

It is envisaged that a small budget will be allocated for ecotourism development at the initial stage, and the PENDE action plans should be implemented in phases. In the Study, the action plans have been proposed respectively for the short-term towards year 2014 and the medium/long-term towards year 2020.

3.2.2 Short-Term Strategies

Short-Term Strategy

- **Implement efficient ecotourism development initiatives by enhancing existing ecotourism activities**

While the beach resort tourism for mass-tourists is expected to remain the mainstream tourism product, there is an urgent need to transform the direction of national tourism development from all-inclusive beach resorts into diversified tourism development with value-added ecotourism products so as to create an attractive, sustainable and eco-friendly image of the national tourism in the international tourism market and increase the beneficiaries from tourism. Since various ecotourism activities have been launched, short-term ecotourism development should focus on enhancing and strengthening these activities, for example, development and improvement of natural and cultural attractions, and conservation of the environment and cultural heritages. In addition, capacity building initiatives should be undertaken for the key players of ecotourism development including the government sector at the central, provincial and municipal levels as well as local communities.

Along with the ecotourism development at the site level, there is a need to develop an effective linkage among the ecotourism sites to attain a higher value of ecotourism products throughout the nation as a whole. In the short-term, it is proposed that a linkage be developed among the ecotourism sites so they are easily accessible to beach resorts and urban areas. The proposed short-term spatial structure of ecotourism sites is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

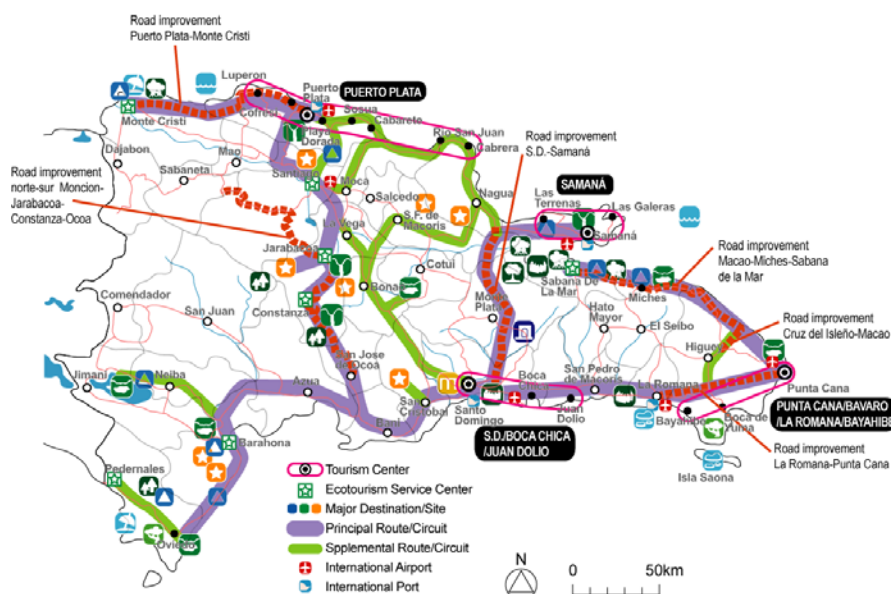


Figure 3.1 Proposed Short-term Spatial Structure

Short-Term Strategy: Product Development

- **Enhance and strengthen the existing ecotourism activities for ecotourism site development**

Most of the existing ecotourism activities are offered by tour operators in the form of an add-on excursion from beach resorts and urban areas where mass-tourists are based. The short-term strategy for the product development should aim to enhance the existing ecotourism activities, facilitate efficient ecotourism development near the existing mass-tourism sites, and improve infrastructure and quality of services at the ecotourism sites nationwide.

Short-Term Strategy: Community Participation

- **Introduce a Community Participation Model at pilot local communities**

The local communities will play a vital role in cooperating and participating in ecotourism projects for the improved quality of ecotourism products and services. In the short-term, a Community Participation Model (CPM) should be introduced at pilot local communities, where an ecotourism development project has already been conducted by a substantial organization, for the improved quality of ecotourism and the increased benefit for the local communities. The CPM is expected to facilitate an independent operation at the local communities to coordinate with the stakeholders, develop innovative products and services, and formulate development strategies at the site level. It is anticipated that the national ecotourism will be recognized by the stakeholders such as tourists, tour operators, local travel agents and others, as more local communities participate in developing quality products.

Short-Term Strategy: Marketing and Promotion

- **Exploit the existing marketing and promotion channels according to the quality levels**

Since there are different quality levels among ecotourism products and services offered in the nation, it is recommended that marketing and promotion channels be selected in accordance with the quality level of each product or service. The high quality products should be promoted in the international tourism marketing channels established by the mass-tourism so as to realize a synergy with the prevailing mass-tourism and transform the image of national tourism from “sun and beach” to diversified tourism products. Meanwhile, the tourism products and services at the developing stage should be promoted in the existing ecotourism market such as domestic tourism and a short excursion from mass-tourism destinations like beach resorts.

Short-Term Strategy: Legal and Institutional Framework

- **Improve institutional framework for ecotourism administration**

The legal and institutional framework will play a vital role to support the ecotourism development. In the short-term, there is a need to improve the institutional framework for ecotourism administration at each level of the government sector to attract more investment into ecotourism development and increase the socioeconomic and environmental benefits. The key players are the departments in charge of ecotourism development established at SECTUR and SEMARENA as well as other stakeholders. The capacity building should be extended to the regional, provincial and local levels.

3.2.3 Medium/Long-Term Strategies

Medium/Long-Term Strategy

- **Improve the total quality of ecotourism for the increased economic and environmental benefits**

In the medium/long term, there is a need to continue to improve physical and institutional infrastructures necessary for sustainable ecotourism development and provide a high level of guide training. In addition, it is recommended that national ecotourism be fully promoted in the international tourism market to transform the image of national tourism from “sun and beach” to the diversified tourism products. It is anticipated that the refreshed and diversified image will attract not only the tourists whose main purpose is ecotourism but also those who prefer to enjoy a variety of tourism events. In a sense, ecotourism has the potential to constitute a core product in the national tourism sector.

It is anticipated in the medium/long-term that a number of ecotourism sites throughout the nation will attain the international quality standards for services and products and that national corridors and local routes will be developed to link among the ecotourism sites. The proposed medium/long-term spatial structure is illustrated in Figure 3.2.

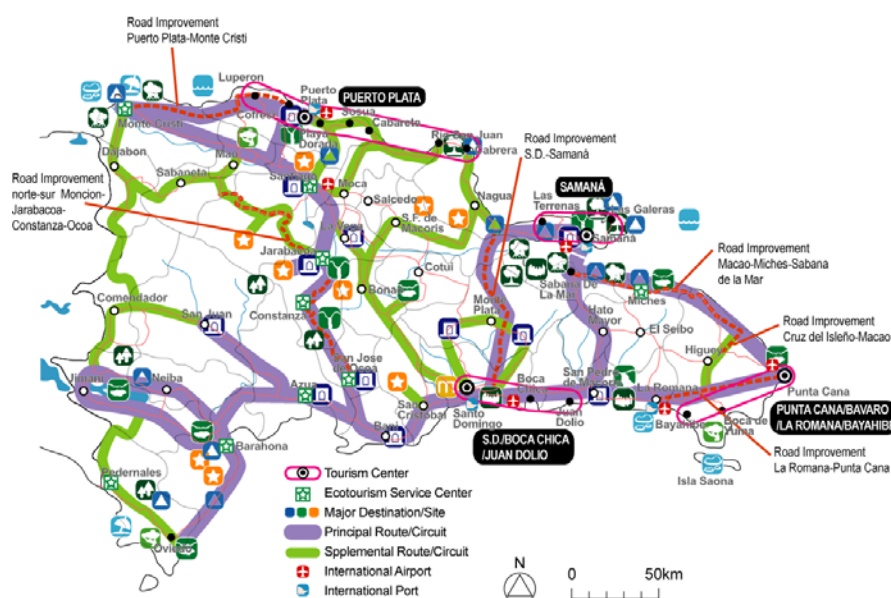


Figure 3.2 Proposed Medium/Long-term Spatial Structure

It is worth developing ecotourism corridors and circuits in view of promotion of ecotourism products in the international tourism market. It is recommended that service infrastructures be developed at the points of the ecotourism corridors and circuits to support a long stay of tourists, such as lodgings, restaurants, shops, entertainment facilities, and information facilities. The lodgings should be designed

and constructed in harmony with natural and cultural surroundings to attract more tourists. The proposed ecotourism corridors and circuits are illustrated in Figure 3.3.

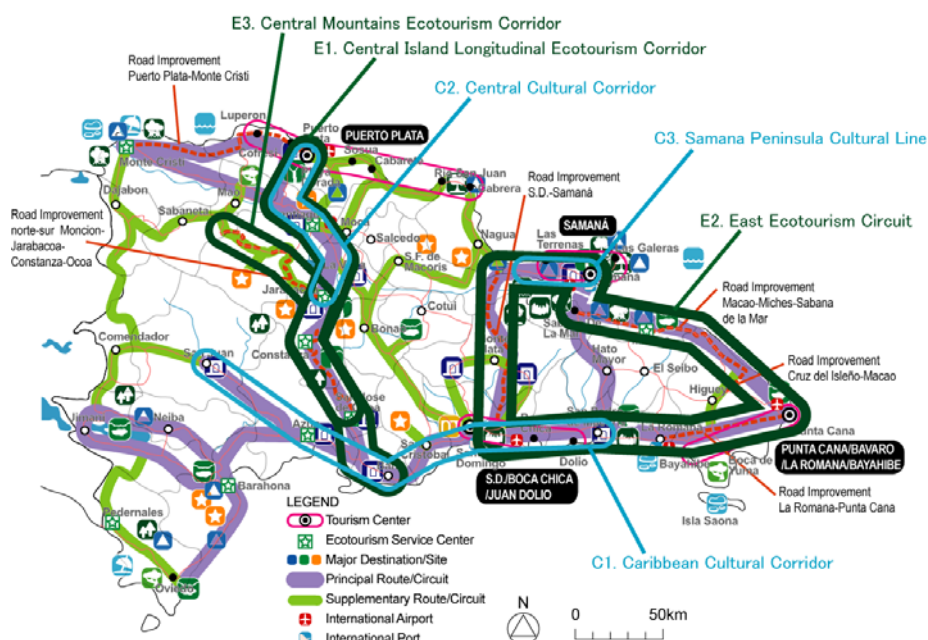


Figure 3.3 Proposed Ecotourism Corridors/Circuits

Medium/Long-Term Strategy: Product Development

- **Develop more attractive and quality tourism products for the increased economic and environmental benefits**

After implementation of the short-term initiatives on developing and improving the ecotourism sites, the medium/long term strategy should focus on the increased benefit for the local economy and the environmental conservation. The improved services and environmental conservation measures should improve the total quality of ecotourism. Along with the continuous expansion of excursion tours from beach resorts and urban areas where mass-tourists are based, there is a need to develop ecotourism products to target high-income tourists in the niche segment to realize the higher profits in the future.

Medium/Long-Term Strategy: Community Participation

- **Improve and penetrate the Community Participation Model**

In the medium/long-term, the CPM should be improved and extended so that more local communities will participate in the ecotourism development. For example, it is anticipated that the community members and enterprises will directly provide tourists with ecotourism products and services such as ecotourism guides, small-scale lodgings, crafts, and that tourists will realize an opportunity to interact with friendly, local people, as mentioned in the ecotourism vision. Also, the lessons learnt from the pilot implementation of CPM should be incorporated into the improved CPM, which will be introduced at all local communities related to ecotourism activities throughout the nation.

Medium/Long-Term Strategy: Marketing and Promotion

- **Enhance the marketing and promotion to establish the position as an ecotourism center in the Caribbean region**

While the tourism demand is predicted uncertain depending on the future socioeconomic situation, it is anticipated that the increased number of tourists will be achieved by a comprehensive promotion of diversified ecotourism products and services to meet the changing demand in the international tourism market, as indicated in the PENDE action plans. While continuing the short-term action plans for marketing and promotion, the medium/long-term action plans should cultivate a new market which has been under-explored by the beach resort tourism, such as BRICs and Eastern Europe.

Medium/Long-Term Strategy: Legal and Institutional Framework

- **Enhance the high standard of ecotourism industry**

In the medium/long-term, high standard of ecotourism industry should be developed from the best practices and enhanced at the organizations at the community level, municipalities and SMEs. It is expected to obtain important expertise from the best practices at each stage of ecotourism projects such as project design, fundraising and implementation. The medium/long-term strategies for legal and institutional framework should also facilitate the implementation of more sophisticated projects and the expansion to special interest segments.

4 Proposed Action Plans

This chapter describes the proposed PENDE action plans.

4.1 Product Development

4.1.1 Short-Term Action Plans

The proposed short-term action plans for the product development are classified into two categories: one aims to utilize the natural and cultural resources for the improved and diversified ecotourism activities, and the other aims to conserve historic urban landscapes of cultural resources. The four short-term action plans are proposed to utilize the natural and cultural resources for the improved and diversified ecotourism activities as follows:

- **ACTION-PN1: Study and design ecotourism attractions and services**

For the community-based ecotourism development, it is recommended that the ecotourism attractions and services be studied and designed by the local communities with technical assistance from ecotourism experts. It is anticipated that the community members participating in the study and design will acquire basic knowledge on ecotourism products development and recognize the value and ownership of tourism resources. In the short-term, a variety of excursion tours from beach resorts and urban areas should be developed to cater for the diverse needs of mass-tourists.

- **ACTION-PN2: Improve physical infrastructures and security systems**

Following the study and design of ecotourism attractions and services, basic physical infrastructures should be constructed at the site level with the eco-friendly technology for construction, operation and maintenance. Security systems should also be implemented not only to provide various services in case of emergency but also to support vulnerable groups of tourists such as families with small children, elderly people, and physically-handicapped people.

- **ACTION-PN3: Develop and distribute an itinerary model**

It is recommended that an itinerary model be developed at the site level and distributed to the tourists and the tour operators. It is expected that the itinerary model will also improve the knowledge of local community members on ecotourism management.

- **ACTION-PN4: Design and produce printed materials**

It is recommended that printed materials be designed and produced for the public relations activities at the site level. The local community members should participate in designing and producing the printed materials such as brochures so that they will be able to recognize the value of ecotourism resources through the process. The produced materials should be distributed to the tourists and the tour operators for promotion purposes.

Three short-term action plans are proposed to conserve historic urban landscapes of cultural resources as follows:

- **ACTION-PC1: Formulate conservation programs of historic urban landscapes**

It is recommended that the conservation programs be formulated to maintain the value of historic urban landscapes such as the Colonial Zone in Santo Domingo, unique and colorful architecture of traditional houses. It is expected that more tourists will be fascinated by the atmosphere of the improved historic urban landscapes. The municipalities and local residents should participate in formulating the conservation programs because the existing historic landscapes are closely related to their daily lives.

- **ACTION-PC2: Conduct a clean-up campaign**

A clean-up campaign should be conducted promptly to maintain the value of ecotourism products at the site level. It is observed that the household wastes are easily scattered in the city streets particularly at the Colonial Zone and its surrounding areas and that there is a growing concern on environmental damages against the precious cultural resources. It is anticipated that the local residents at the campaign sites will be aware of the environmental conservation and change their behaviors in their daily lives.

- **ACTION-PC3: Develop a conservation guideline of historic urban landscapes**

It is true that regulatory laws and landscape codes will be effective in preventing unplanned and disorderly development and conserving historic urban landscapes. However, it will take a long time to enact laws and codes, and therefore a conservation guideline of historic urban landscapes should be developed and disseminated as a short-term, alternative measure. Despite less legal forces, the conservation guide will be effective in enlightening the ecotourism stakeholders on the conservation issues. For the same purpose, a design manual of urban landscapes may be utilized for the instruction to the local residents on conservation activities of historic urban landscapes.

4.1.2 Medium/Long-Term Action Plans

The proposed medium/long-term action plans for the product development are classified into three categories. In addition to the two categories as specified in the short-term action plans, there are action plans to improve the extended travelling environment. The two short-term action plans proposed to utilize the natural and cultural resources for the improved and diversified ecotourism activities are as follows:

- **ACTION-PN5: Develop and promote Special Interest Tours**

It is recommended that in the medium/long-term that the Special Interest Tours (SIT) be developed to meet specific requirements of the tourists to explore scientific and traditional values of tourism resources. Since unique ideas and inspirations will be required in formulating the SIT, the SIT developers should have advanced knowledge on the tourism resources and broader perspectives on ecotourism product development.

- **ACTION-PN6: Develop and implement a tourist management system**

It is proposed that in the medium/long-term that a tourist management system be developed and implemented to facilitate sustainable tourism resources management. The tourist management system will monitor the overall movement of travelers and give an alert of congestion at the site level, so as to facilitate the environmental conservation, increased tourists' satisfaction and improved security.

Two short-term action plans are proposed to conserve historic urban landscapes of cultural resources as follows:

- **ACTION-PC4: Construct an eco-museum**

An eco-museum should be constructed as a network center of tourism resources consisting of tangible resources such as cultural, historical, natural and industrial buildings and landscapes as well as intangible resources such as festivals and lifestyles. It is desirable that the eco-museum be constructed and operated with the participation of the local community members, who will hand down traditions from their ancestors to their descendants.

- **ACTION-PC5: Enact regulations to rehabilitate and conserve historical buildings**

In addition to the conservation guidelines and the design manuals of historic urban landscapes as specified in the short-term action plans, it is recommended in the medium/long-term that enforceable regulations such as the landscape codes and the building regulations be enacted to facilitate and expand the rehabilitation and conservation of historical buildings.

Two short-term action plans are proposed to improve the extended traveling environment as follows:

- **ACTION-CC1: Promote eco-lodging development**

An eco-lodging is defined as a small-scale accommodation facility surrounded by natural and cultural environments, and it is recognized as an attractive ecotourism product. There are two types of eco-lodgings; while luxurious eco-lodgings for the high-income tourists will be developed mainly by external investors, eco-lodgings at a reasonable rate mainly for SIT and younger generations will be developed by local stakeholders, including the local communities.

- **ACTION-CC2: Develop various facilities for convenience of tourists**

It is recommended to develop various facilities for the convenience of tourists. For example, ecotourism circuits and corridors with information centers will facilitate longer stays of tourists. The information and transport facilities will improve the convenience of individual tourists, such as direction boards, frontier markers, maps, and printed materials.

Figure 4.1 illustrates the key points for development, development strategies and proposed action plans for the product development.

<div>Development Strategies/ Key Points for Development</div> <div>Action Plans</div>	Development Strategies	Key Points for Development						
	Short-Term: Enhance and strengthen the existing ecotourism activities for ecotourism site development Medium/Long-Term: Develop more attractive and quality tourism products for the increased economic and environmental benefits	Develop natural, cultural and geographical resources	Improve infrastructure and systems	Curb undesirable activities	Conserve environment at ecotourism sites	Mitigate inappropriate usage of tourism resources	Improve tourists satisfaction	Develop ecotourism circuits and corridors
Utilize the natural and cultural resources for the improved and diversified ecotourism activities								
PN1: Study and design ecotourism attractions and services	Short Term	*						
PN2: Improve physical infrastructures and security systems	Short Term		*					
PN3: Propose an itinerary model	Short Term							*
PN4: Design and produce printed materials	Short Term			*				
PN5: Develop and promote Special Interest Tours	Medium/Long Term	*						
PN6: Develop a tourist management system	Medium/Long Term			*		*	*	
Conserve historic urban landscapes of cultural resources								
PC1: Formulate programs for the conservation of historic urban landscapes	Short Term	*		*				
PC2: Conduct a clean-up campaign	Short Term				*			
PC3: Formulate a guideline for the conservation of historic urban landscapes	Short Term			*	*			
PC4: Construct an eco-museum	Medium/Long Term					*	*	*
PC5: Enact regulations to rehabilitate and conserve historical buildings	Medium/Long Term		*					
Improve the extended travelling environment								
CC1: Promote eco-lodging development	Medium/Long Term		*					
CC2: Develop various facilities to improve the convenience of tourists	Medium/Long Term						*	

Figure 4.1 Action Plans: Product Development

4.2 Community Participation

4.2.1 Short-Term Action Plans

The four short-term action plans for community participation are proposed as follows:

- **ACTION-C1: Select the local communities for the pilot implementation of CPM**

In the beginning, the local communities throughout the nation should be evaluated for the pilot implementation of CPM according to the criteria such as proximity to large markets, accessibility of highways and roads, potentiality of local products, estimated profitability for ecotourism development, leadership of the local communities, and commitment and willingness to ecotourism development. It is recommended that five local communities be selected for the pilot implementation of CPM.

- **ACTION-C2: Develop an organizational framework at pilot local communities**

After the selection of the pilot local communities, there is a need to develop an organizational framework at the community level. Since each local community has different internal and external conditions for ecotourism development, it is recommended that community members develop their own organizational framework according to the baseline analysis about environment, society, economy and culture. A Steering Committee should be established within the pilot local communities to supervise their ecotourism development activities.

- **ACTION-C3: Propose and implement community-based ecotourism activities**

It is recommended that the pilot local communities formulate the community-based ecotourism activities at the community level. The proposed activities should specify a detailed timetable, allocation plan of human and financial resources, and monitoring mechanism.

- **ACTION-C4: Implement capacity building programs**

Along with proposing and implementing community-based ecotourism activities, capacity building programs should be conducted at the pilot local communities. It is anticipated that the capacity building programs will not only improve the knowledge and skills of the local community members for ecotourism development but also cultivate their leadership and ownership.

4.2.2 Medium/Long-Term Action Plans

The two medium/long-term action plans for the community participation proposed are as follows:

- **ACTION-C5: Design and implement operations and maintenance systems for ecotourism activities**

It is recommended that operations and maintenance (O&M) systems be designed and implemented for the ecotourism activities in order to attain sustainable community-based ecotourism development. An efficient and effective O&M system should be designed and implemented to meet the specific needs and conditions of each local community.

- **ACTION-C6: Conduct monitoring and evaluation of ecotourism activities**

There is a need to conduct monitoring and evaluation of the ecotourism activities initiated by the local communities to ensure the successful implementation of community-based ecotourism activities. The monitoring and evaluation should focus on various aspects such as biodiversity and environmental conservation, rural development, social and economic impact, performance of local municipalities, and institutional capacity of the local communities.

Figure 4.2 illustrates the key points for development, development strategies and the proposed action plans for the community participation.

<div>Development Strategies/ Key Points for Development</div> <div>Action Plans</div>	Development Strategies	Key Points for Development				
	Short-Term: Introduce a Community Participation Model at pilot local communities Medium/Long-Term: Improve and penetrate the Community Participation Model	Propose strategic direction of community-based ecotourism development	Propose strategy for community-based operation and maintenance	Enhance skill development and community-based ecotourism development	Foster the ownership of local communities on ecotourism development	Review a CPM and action plans consistent with the ecotourism vision
C1: Select the local communities for the pilot implementation of CPM	Short Term	*				
C2: Develop an organizational framework at pilot local communities	Short Term	*	*			
C3: Propose and implement community-based ecotourism activities	Short Term		*	*		*
C4: Implement capacity building programs	Short Term			*		
C5: Design and implement operations and maintenance systems for ecotourism activities	Medium/Long Term	*	*		*	
C6: Conduct monitoring and evaluation of ecotourism activities and the CPM	Medium/Long Term				*	*

Figure 4.2 Action Plans: Community Participation

4.3 Marketing and Promotion

4.3.1 Short-Term Action Plans

The proposed short-term action plans for marketing and promotion are classified into three categories: one aims to enhance the national brand image to diversified tourism products, another aims to exploit the existing large market, and the other aims to increase the knowledge and information about ecotourism development. Three short-term action plans are proposed to enhance the national brand image to diversified tourism products as follows:

- **ACTION-M1: Select featured ecotourism products**

It is recommended that featured ecotourism products be selected among the national ecotourism resources at the central government level. The featured ecotourism products will facilitate effective marketing and promotion to the potential tourists and the tour operators as a symbolic image of national ecotourism.

- **ACTION-M2: Conduct intensive promotion of featured ecotourism products in the mass-market channel**

In the short-term, it will be realistic to exploit the existing marketing and promotion channel established by beach resorts and urban areas tourism for the ecotourism promotion. It is thus recommended that the existing channels be utilized for intensive marketing and promotion of the featured ecotourism products so as to expect the synergy with the existing mass-tourism.

- **ACTION-M3: Incubate ecotourism products**

Along with the ecotourism products development, there is a need to implement a marketing and promotion initiative to incubate potential ecotourism products. For example, it is proposed that ecotourism competitions and/or awards be organized to provide motivation for improved quality of ecotourism products.

The four short-term action plans proposed to exploit the existing large market are as follows:

- **ACTION-M4: Approach to mass-tourism business**

In the short-term, ecotourism marketing and promotion should be expected to collaborate with the existing mass-tourism. It is thus recommended that SECTUR introduce a promotion campaign to advocate the advantages of ecotourism to the mass-tourism business and encourage tour operators and travel agents to participate in ecotourism promotion.

- **ACTION-M5: Establish a business network between ecotourism stakeholders and mass-market business**

It is recommended that SECTUR establish a network to increase the business opportunities between ecotourism stakeholders and mass-market businesses. In this regard, SNS is considered as a measure to establish a business network and mitigate the geographical disadvantages of many ecotourism stakeholders at remote sites.

- **ACTION-M6: Conduct an environmental conservation awareness campaign targeting mass-tourists at beach resorts in the Protected Areas**

It is recommended to conduct an environmental conservation awareness campaign targeting mass-tourists at beach resorts in the Protected Areas. It is anticipated that the awareness campaigns will not only improve the environmental conservation awareness but also promote the ecotourism products to the mass-tourists.

- **ACTION-M7: Conduct an environmental conservation awareness campaign targeting national tourists in the Protected Areas**

An environmental conservation awareness campaign should be conducted to target the national tourists as well. In addition to the expected results of an awareness campaign targeting the mass-tourists, the national tourists will be able to realize the ownership of national natural resources through the campaign.

- **ACTION-M8: Implement an ecotourism Social Networking Service (SNS)**

An ecotourism SNS of the pilot project should be wholly implemented in the short-term to share the knowledge and information about the ecotourism development among the ecotourism stakeholders. It is proposed that the SNS include various contents such as Bulletin Board Service (BBS), electrical directory of ecotourism stakeholders, information board from public sector, and statistics on ecotourism development.

4.3.2 Medium/Long-Term Action Plans

The proposed medium/long-term action plans for marketing and promotion are classified into two categories: one aims to enhance target segments of marketing and promotion, and the other aims to promote for special needs. The two short-term action plans proposed to enhance target segments of marketing and promotion are as follows:

- **ACTION-M9: Enhance marketing and promotion target**

It is anticipated in the medium/long-term that a variety of ecotourism products will be available to cater for the different needs of diverse base of tourists. Accordingly, ecotourism marketing and promotion in the international tourism market should be wholly enhanced to target the diversified base of tourists, such as Special Interest Tours (SIT) like bird-watching.

- **ACTION-M10: Explore the new market**

Along with the mass-tourism marketing and promotion, the ecotourism marketing and promotion should explore the new markets in addition to the seven countries of current major source of tourists. In addition to BRICs and Eastern Europe, Latin American countries are the potential market in terms of the proximity and the language spoken.

- **ACTION-M11: Assist direct marketing by ecotourism operators**

While the existing mass-marketing channels should be exploited for the ecotourism promotion, it is also proposed to assist the ecotourism operators in expanding direct marketing to approach the potential tourists. In particular, the direct marketing will be effective to capture the niche market, which will have the potential to become a profitable market segment.

Figure 4.3 illustrates the key points for development, development strategies, and proposed action plans for the marketing and promotion.

Development Strategies/ Key Points for Development Action Plans	Development Strategies	Key Points for Development				
	Short-Term: Exploit the existing marketing and promotion channels according to the quality levels Medium/Long-Term: Enhance the marketing and promotion to establish the position as an ecotourism center in the Caribbean region	Enhance and diversify the tourism brand image	Exploit the existing large market	Increase knowledge and information of ecotourism	Extend marketing and promotion to cultivate a new market	Enhance marketing and promotion for individual travels and special interest tours
M1: Identify featured ecotourism products	Short Term	*				
M2: Conduct intensive promotion of featured ecotourism products in the mass-market channel	Short Term	*				
M3: Incubate ecotourism products	Short Term	*				
M4: Approach to mass-tourism business	Short Term		*			
M5: Establish a business network between ecotourism stakeholders and mass-market business	Short Term		*			
M6: Conduct an environmental conservation awareness campaign targeting mass-tourists at beach resorts	Short Term	*	*	*		
M7: Conduct an environmental conservation awareness campaign targeting national tourists	Short Term		*	*		
M8: Implement an ecotourism Social Networking Service (SNS)	Short Term			*	*	
M9: Enhance marketing and promotion target	Medium/Long Term	*			*	*
M10: Explore the new market	Medium/Long Term				*	*
M11: Assist direct marketing by ecotourism operators	Medium/Long Term					*

Figure 4.3 Action Plans: Marketing and Promotion

4.4 Legal and Institutional Framework

4.4.1 Short Term Action Plans

The eleven short-term action plans for the legal and institutional framework proposed are as follows:

- **ACTION-L1: Establish coordination mechanism for collaborative and harmonized implementation of PENDE**

It is inevitable that SECTUR and SEMARENA will cooperate with each other for successful implementation of PENDE action plans. In the beginning, it is recommended that the two ministries establish a Joint Implementation Structure (JIS) to facilitate the collaborative and harmonized implementation.

- **ACTION-L2: Harmonize approaches and administrative procedures for ecotourism development**

It is desirable that the two ministries harmonize their approaches and administrative procedures for efficient implementation of PENDE action plans. Common approaches should be adapted between the two ministries for guide training, licensing, concessions, co-management and other issues so that ecotourism stakeholders may efficiently benefit from the support from the government sector.

- **ACTION-L3: Review and improve human resources development programs**

The departments in charge of human resources development in the two ministries should regularly review and improve their training programs for the internal staff as well as the ecotourism stakeholders including the community members. In the review process, it is necessary to consider the external factors in accordance with the socioeconomic and environmental transformation and changing market needs.

- **ACTION-L4: Develop framework for sustainable ecotourism development at selected Protected Areas**

It is proposed that five priority Protected Areas be selected across the nation in the beginning and that a development and conservation plan be detailed to ensure sustainable ecotourism development. The two ministries should develop a disciplined framework to be used for the development and conservation plan.

- **ACTION-L5: Resolve the land issues at selected Protected Areas**

Some land issues exist at the Protected Areas and they must be resolved prior to the ecotourism development. At a later stage, this action plan will accelerate resolving land-related problems in order to spur investment in new attractions in additional Protected Areas.

- **ACTION-L6: Enhance co-management agreements**

The co-management in the Protected Areas is an example of community participation in ecotourism development. If applicable, the co-management agreements should be proposed at the Protected Areas to facilitate the community-based ecotourism development. The two ministries should provide comprehensive guidance to the local communities when considering the co-management agreements.

- **ACTION-L7: Enhance monitoring and evaluation activities at Protected Areas**

The existing monitoring and evaluation activities at the Protected Areas should be enhanced by use of more sophisticated tools. The socioeconomic and environmental parameters will be measured more accurately and widely by use of information technology so that SEMARENA will be able to address various issues more adequately.

- **ACTION-L8: Improve capacity of officials at provincial and local levels**

The officials at the provincial and local levels will need to have knowledge on opportunities and risks of ecotourism development. It is recommended that the JIS assist regional organizations such as REDEC, SOECI and SOEBA in strengthening their capacities to implement their programs.

- **ACTION L9: Disseminate incentives information about ecotourism development**

It is expected that various incentives will be provided for ecotourism development such as tax exemptions and reductions, lowered interest rates, provision of loan guarantees, procurement subsidies, grants, and streamlined procedures for application. The JIS should disseminate such incentives' information about the ecotourism development to the ecotourism stakeholders through various media.

- **ACTION-L10: Increase the number of internationally competitive ecotourism guides**

Along with the product development, the quality of ecotourism guides should be improved to increase the tourists' satisfaction. It is proposed that a skill standard for ecotourism guides as well as a high level guide training system be introduced to increase the number of internationally competitive ecotourism guides.

- **ACTION-L11: Introduce ecotourism certification and eco-labeling systems**

It is recommended that the ecotourism certification and eco-labeling systems be introduced. While the tourists will be able to understand the quality of ecotourism products, it is anticipated that the ecotourism certification and eco-labeling systems will facilitate the ecotourism development activities in terms of quality control.

4.4.2 Medium/Long-Term Action Plans

In the medium/long-term, it is proposed to focus on facilitating high standard ecotourism industry, while the framework remains largely the same as the short-term. With respect to the Protected Areas, ACTION-L6 and ACTION-L7 should be expanded in the medium/long-term because it is expected that the number of cases of co-management agreements as well as monitoring and evaluation activities will increase. ACTION-L8 and ACTION-L9 should also be expanded in the medium/long-term in accordance with the increased ecotourism development projects in the future. Also, the quality issues should be more emphasized in the medium/long-term, and it is predicted that ACTION-L10 and ACTION-11 should be enhanced.

Figure 4.4 illustrates the key points for development, development strategies, and proposed action plans for the legal and institutional framework.

Development Strategies/ Key Points for Development Action Plans	Development Strategies	Key Points for Development			
	Short-Term: Improve institutional framework for ecotourism administration Medium/Long-Term: Enhance the high standard of ecotourism industry	Improve organizational capacity and raise motivation	Increase sustainable use of protected areas for ecotourism development	Support local communities and SMEs related to ecotourism development	Provide incentives for quality services
L1: Establish coordination mechanism for collaborative and harmonized implementation of PENDE	Short Term	*			
L2: Harmonize approaches and administrative procedures for ecotourism development	Short Term	*	*		
L3: Review and improve human resources development programs	Short Term	*			
L4: Develop framework for sustainable ecotourism development at selected Protected Areas	Short Term	*	*		
L5: Resolve the land issues at selected Protected Areas	Short Term		*		
L6: Enhance co-management agreements	Short & Medium/Long Term		*	*	
L7: Enhance monitoring and evaluation activities at Protected Areas	Short & Medium/Long Term		*		
L8: Improve capacity of officials at provincial and local levels	Short & Medium/Long Term	*		*	*
L9: Disseminate incentives information about ecotourism development	Short & Medium/Long Term		*	*	
L10: Increase the number of internationally competitive ecotourism guides	Short & Medium/Long Term				*
L11: Introduce ecotourism certification and eco-labeling systems	Short & Medium/Long Term				*

Figure 4.4 Action Plans: Legal and Institutional Framework

5 Implementation Plan

This chapter describes the proposed institutional framework, timetable, funding aspects and environmental consideration.

5.1 Proposed Institutional Framework

It is proposed that a Joint Implementation Structure (JIS) be established for inter-ministerial coordination between SECTUR and SEMARENA. The modus operandi of the JIS should be determined when the two ministries formulate the protocol. It is suggested that JIS collaborate closely with DSTA and the cluster organizations, which has enhanced their roles in the implementation of the tourism development.

At the implementation stage of PENDE, the major stakeholders should play the roles specified in Table 5.1, and their relationship is illustrated in Figure 5.2. They are classified into the entities at national, regional/provincial and local levels.

Table 5.1 PENDE Stakeholders and Their Roles

Entity	Roles
National Level	
Joint Implementation Structure (JIS)	-Implement PENDE action plans; -Coordinate as to the leadership among the institutions and other stakeholders; (See L1 for details)
SECTUR	-Supervise JIS operation; -Work as the main force for the projects involving panoramic routes, corridors and communities (not typically related to heritage, Protected Areas);
SEMARENA	-Supervise JIS operation; -Work as the main force for the projects involving Protected Areas;
SEC	-Join PENDE as an observer (associated ministry); -Work as the main force for the projects involving heritage areas;
Regional / Provincial Level	
DSTA clusters	-Provide funding for private sponsored initiatives; (The target projects of PENDE and DSTA may be consolidated)
Provincial Ecotourism Councils	-Facilitate PENDE action plans at provincial and local levels; -Work with national and local level actors; -Provide funding for PENDE activities if applicable; (Few councils are effectively functioning. See L8)
Ecotourism or business NGOs	-Work as a strategic partner of JIS; -Collect specific information on ecotourism development at a site level;
Regional entities (to be established)	-Coordinate the ecotourism project sponsors at a site level if applicable; (The new entities should be established if all project sponsors may collaborate with each other for ecotourism development)
Community Level	
Steering Committees	-Supervise ecotourism development projects; (They should be established at the local communities where the Community Participation Model (CPM) is implemented. See C1 and C2 for details)
Municipality Environmental Units (UGAM)	-Supervise ecotourism development projects; (They may be included in the CPM. See C2 for details)

Level	Entities			Influencers
National Level	<div>-SECTUR <Tourism> -SEMARENA <Environment> -SEC <Culture> -JIS (to be formulated by SECTUR/SEMARENA)</div>			<div>-PROMIPYME -CNC -ASONAHORES -OPETUR</div>
Institutional/Financial Assistance ↓				
Regional/ Provincial Level	<div>-Domimican Sustainable Tourism Alliance (DSTA) Barahona cluster -Dominican Organization for Sustainable Tourism (ODTS) -Domimican Sustainable Tourism Alliance (DSTA) Jarabacoa cluster -Society for Integrated Development in the Northeast -Center for Ecodevelopment Of Samana bay -others</div>			<div>Field office of:- - PROMIPYME - INFOTEP - Ministries</div>
Institutional/Financial Assisntace ↓				
Community Level	<div>Steering Committee └─Guide Association └─Artisans Association</div>	<div>Steering Committee └─Guide Association └─Women's Group</div>	<div>Steering Committee └─SME <Restaurants> └─SME <Crafts> └─Agricultural Association</div>	<div>-Mayors -NGOs -SMEs -Micro-finance Providers</div>
Projects (Examples)	Heritage Sites	Protected Areas	Others	

Figure 5.1 Relationships among PENDE Stakeholders

5.2 Proposed Timetable of Action Plans

Figures 5.2 and 5.3 illustrate the proposed timetable indicating the responsible organizations, levels and proposed launch period of each action plan. Many of the short-term action plans should continue after the year 2014, while the medium/long-term action plans should be completed by the year 2020.

Action Plan	Entity	Level	Short-term						M/L
			1-6 month	7-12 month	13-18 month	19-24 month	25-30 month	31-36 month	37- month
Product Development									
PN1: Study and design ecotourism attractions and services	JIS	Site		*					
PN2: Improve physical infrastructures and security systems	JIS	Site				*			
PN3: Propose an itinerary model	JIS	Site				*			
PN4: Design and produce printed materials	JIS	Site					*		
PN5: Develop and promote Special Interest Tours	JIS	Site							*
PN6: Develop a tourist management system	JIS	Site							*
PC1: Formulate programs for the conservation of historic urban landscapes	JIS	Site		*					
PC2: Conduct a clean-up campaign	JIS	Site				*			
PC3: Formulate a guideline for the conservation of historic urban landscapes	JIS	Site					*		
PC4: Construct an eco-museum	JIS	Site							*
PC5: Enact regulations to rehabilitate and conserve historical buildings	JIS	Site							*
CC1: Promote eco-lodging development	Ministry	National							*
CC2: Develop various facilities to improve the convenience of tourists	Ministry	National							*
Community Participation									
C1: Select the local communities for the pilot implementation of CPM	JIS	Site	*						
C2: Develop an organizational framework at pilot local communities	JIS	Site		*					
C3: Propose and implement community-based ecotourism activities	JIS	Site			*				
C4: Implement capacity building programs	JIS	Site				*			
C5: Design and implement operations and maintenance systems for ecotourism activities	JIS	Site							*
C6: Conduct monitoring and evaluation of ecotourism activities and the CPM	JIS	Site							*

Figure 5.2 Proposed Timetable of Action Plans (1/2)

Action Plan	Entity	Level	Short-term						M/L
			1-6 month	7-12 month	13-18 month	19-24 month	25-30 month	31-36 month	37- month
Marketing and Promotion									
M1: Identify featured ecotourism products	JIS	National	*						
M2: Conduct intensive promotion of featured ecotourism products in the mass-market channel	Ministry	National		*					
M3: Incubate ecotourism products	Ministry	National	*						
M4: Approach to mass-tourism business	JIS	Site	*						
M5: Establish a business network between ecotourism stakeholders and mass-market business	JIS	Site	*						
M6: Conduct an environmental conservation awareness campaign targeting mass-tourists at beach resorts	JIS	Site						*	
M7: Conduct an environmental conservation awareness campaign targeting national tourists	JIS	Site						*	
M8: Implement an ecotourism Social Networking Service (SNS)	JIS	National	*						
M9: Enhance marketing and promotion target	Ministry	National							*
M10: Explore the new market	Ministry	National							*
M11: Assist direct marketing by ecotourism operators	Ministry	Site							*
Legal and Institutional Framework									
L1: Establish coordination mechanism for collaborative and harmonized implementation of PENDE	Ministry	National	*						
L2: Harmonize approaches and administrative procedures for ecotourism development	Ministry	National	*						
L3: Review and improve human resources development programs	JIS	National		*					
L4: Develop framework for sustainable ecotourism development at selected Protected Areas	JIS	Site	*						
L5: Resolve the land issues at selected Protected Areas	Ministry	Site		*					
L6: Enhance co-management agreements	Ministry	Site		*					
L7: Enhance monitoring and evaluation activities at Protected Areas	Ministry	Site						*	
L8: Improve capacity of officials at provincial and local levels	Ministry	Site		*					
L9: Disseminate incentives information about ecotourism development	JIS	Site		*					
L10: Increase the number of internationally competitive ecotourism guides	Ministry	Site		*					
L11: Introduce ecotourism certification and eco-labeling systems	JIS	Site		*					

Figure 5.3 Proposed Timetable of Action Plans (2/2)

5.3 Funding Aspects

The budget for the proposed action plans should be sought from various sources including for-profit, official and non-profit ones. The major funding sources include the DSTA program of USAID (with four lending windows plus Innovation Grants and Sustainability Grants), PROMIPYME, Banco de la Vivienda y Producción (BNVP), UNDP small subsidies program (PPS), project ASPIRE, Procomunidad, Dominican Presidency small projects fund, Banco Agrícola, and selected commercial banks. The action plans may also depend on a wide range of funding and incentives such as environmental, rural, small scale, and energy efficiency, among other types. The JIS will have a business expert to verify the eligibility conditions for different types of ecotourism projects from many sources and advise the ecotourism stakeholders of the suitable opportunities.

For overall administration and supervision activities of PENDE at SECTUR and SEMARENA, it is envisaged that additional financial arrangement may not be required in the beginning as the existing departments are expected to carry out the overall administration and supervision. However, it is anticipated that additional budgetary arrangement for PENDE administration and supervision will facilitate expansion and acceleration of PENDE implementation.

5.4 Environmental Considerations

PENDE will improve the environmental management in the Protected Areas and the local communities. Some local communities will discontinue their unsustainable activities as they will have access to alternative income sources from PENDE action plans. In order to improve the quality of ecotourism products, some ecotourism stakeholders will seek a certification of good environmental management from a recognized NGO such as Green Globe and ISO. In the realm of natural resources management, it is possible for protected areas, like towns, to obtain certifications for achievements in sustainable management practices involving natural resources and the local communities.