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The impact of Community-Based Ecotourism Projects in Amboró National Park*

by:

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La Paz, March 2008

Abstract:

This research examines selected Community Ecotourism projects in the Amboró National Park in Bolivia, which have been established by local environmental NGOs. The objective is to investigate the impact of these projects on the livelihoods and social relations in the communities. The main question that concerns us is if the projects have been effective in reducing or alleviating poverty and vulnerability, whilst providing environmental sustainability.

The research also provides insight into the impact of the projects on social, cultural and economic structures of the communities. Furthermore, it will show whether the beneficiaries see Community Ecotourism projects as an important income and activity diversification option, and if they see the projects as environmentally sustainable. These issues can determine the final outcome of the project, and thus become decisive to evaluate if such projects can be used as a strategy to improve living conditions and reduce poverty.

The research relies on interviews and data collected during fieldwork in Bolivia in July-August 2007. Four different Community Ecotourism projects in the Amboró National Park were visited, as well as key informants and stakeholders.

Keywords: Ecotourism, poverty, sustainability, Bolivia.

JEL classification: Q26, Q57

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“Climate change as well as poverty alleviation will remain central issues for the world community. Tourism is an important element in both. Governments and the private sector must place increased importance on these factors in tourism development strategies and in climate and poverty strategies. They are interdependent and must be dealt with in a holistic fashion.”

UNWTO Secretary-General Francesco Frangialli, 2007

1. INTRODUCTION

Community Ecotourism has been considered a development opportunity for Bolivia for over a decade, and the new government also recognizes its importance. The government of indigenous president Evo Morales in Bolivia created a National Development Plan (PND) in 2006, which assesses the economic and social state of affairs of the country and outlines the development objectives and policies in different areas. Both environmental sustainability and poverty reduction are among the important goals of the PND as well as the problems of exclusion and inequality (Ministerio de Planificación y Desarrollo Económico, 2006).

The priorities of the government address the issues related to poverty, distribution and exclusion from development opportunities, as well as exclusion from political participation and power exercise. Therefore the PND stresses the need for social inclusion of indigenous people, and calls to initiate a social learning process to include indigenous knowledge in many areas, one of them being natural resource management (Ministerio de Planificación y Desarrollo Económico, 2006). The relation of indigenous people and the natural resources is also clearly identified in the PND, as part of the culture that has to be respected and used to assure sustainable development and poverty reduction.

One of the strategies identified in the new government plan is to use the national parks and reserves to foster Community Ecotourism (CET) (Ministerio de Planificación y Desarrollo Económico, 2006). This type of tourism not only uses natural biodiversity as the centre of attraction for tourism, but also cares for the sustainability of the environment, the respect for local knowledge and the relations of indigenous people and natural resources (Denman, 2001). It provides sources for poverty reduction by including local communities in the management and benefits of tourism. However, the development of CET requires government policies that not only trigger such projects, but also the involvement of NGOs, International Development Agencies, private entrepreneurs, and the communities themselves, that play an important role in developing and sustaining CET activities. Experiences from other countries show that the role of the latter is as important as the public policies that foment such projects (Denman, 2001, Buckley, 2003).

This research will examine selected CET projects in the Amboró National Park in Bolivia (ANP) and Natural Area of Integral Management (NAIM), which have been established by local environmental Non-Government Organizations (NGOs).

The objective is to investigate the impact of these projects in the livelihoods and social relations in the communities. Furthermore, the analysis will also allow policy recommendations some extent. The main question that concerns us is if CET has been effective in reducing or alleviating poverty and vulnerability, while providing environmental sustainability.

The research will also provide insight into the impact of the projects on social, cultural and economic structure of the communities. Furthermore, it will also show whether the beneficiaries see CET projects as an important income and activity diversification option, and if they see the projects as environmentally sustainable. These issues can determine the final outcome of the project, and thus become decisive to evaluate if such projects can be used as a strategy to improve living conditions and reduce poverty.

In this paper, we will establish the most important relations between these institutions and the effects of them on the outcome of the CET projects under analysis. We will also look into the specific characteristics of the communities, such as the location and others, and the effects of the projects on the communities, focusing on poverty reduction.

The present paper is divided in six chapters. Chapter one gives a brief introduction, providing a background on the current economic, political and social landscape of Bolivia. Chapter two provides a brief summary of the relevant literature on ecotourism and community based tourism. This chapter first focuses on the theoretical and general literature on the topic, and later on the community-based ecotourism projects in Bolivia. Chapter three focuses on the methodology that was used for the fieldwork and analysis of the projects, as well as the conceptual framework. Chapter four introduces the four case studies. It begins by providing details of the Amboró National Park regarding details on environment, population characteristics and livelihoods. Next, each CET project is described, as well as the most relevant characteristics of the community, and the perception of the beneficiaries regarding the impact on poverty reduction and environment conservation. Chapter five analyzes the case studies described in the previous chapter, beginning by analyzing the different stakeholders and their interrelations. Finally, chapter six concludes. The conclusions in this case also provide policy recommendations at local and national level, as well as some general recommendations for existing CET projects.

1.1. Background

Bolivia's last decades have been characterized by a series of changes in most aspects, ranging from the economic policy to society, from political swings to culture. Bolivia is the smallest economy in South America, even though extensive macroeconomic reforms have been undertaken in the last decades to boost the economy – many of them influenced by international development agencies. Economic and social policy had little impact on economic growth, income

inequality and poverty reduction, and Bolivia is still struggling to find a way into equality and growth. The new government of president Evo Morales has prioritized the community-based development, and one of the most important areas for the National Development Plan is the promotion of Community Based Tourism in the rural areas. The new focus on the indigenous communities after the social struggle and the increasing importance of social movements during the last years makes the analysis of CET of crucial importance¹.

1.1.1. Key Economic figures²

The average yearly GDP growth for 1990-2006 has been 3,65%, but growth has ranged from 0,43% in 1999 to 5,27% in 1991. Per capita GDP grew at an average of 1,3% yearly between 1990 and 2006. The Open Unemployment Rate for 2003 was 6%, and the Gini coefficient during the last years has fluctuated around 0,6 (UDAPE, 2007b).

Even though since 2005 the international prices have been blooming for some of this products in the international markets (which has meant a boom in the Bolivian exports), the economy is still weak and highly vulnerable to changes in international prices. There has been a decline in the manufacturing and industry sector, commerce and agriculture and forestry. However, tourism has remained as a relevant sector for the economy, and the authorities expect an even more important role in the future (Cox et al., 2006).

1.1.2. Tourism in Bolivia

It is hard to estimate the exact contribution of tourism to GDP, as there are spill-over and multiplying effects of tourism, mainly related to the expenses in which the tourist has to incur on a daily basis: food, transport, hotel, entrance fees and other expenses (such as souvenirs). However, according to the official government estimates, the tourism sector accounted for 4,6% percent of the GDP in 2005, and is the fourth most important sector in exports, generating 7,3% of the foreign currencies during that same year (Cox et al., 2006). These figures show that the tourism industry is very important for the country's economic growth, as well as poverty reduction and income distribution.

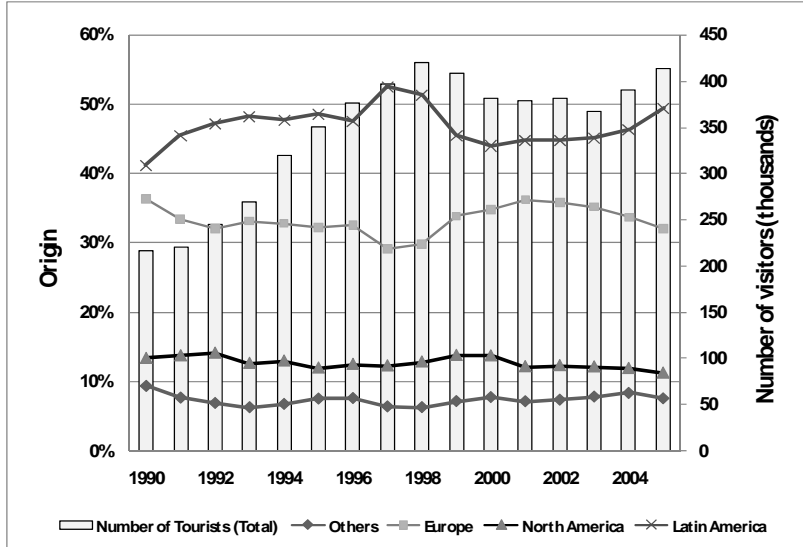
Another important variable to determine the importance of the sector in GDP is the number of tourists that arrive to the country, as an increasing number of tourists will also generate increasing incomes. Latin America accounts for almost 50% of the tourists arrivals in Bolivia, Europe 31,99% and North America 11,14%. Between 2000 and 2005, even though the existing social unrest and political instability, tourism in Bolivia grew in 47,08%. There was a higher increase of international tourists than national tourists, and the government expects that this growing tendency will continue in the future (Cox et al., 2006). Graph 1 gives

¹ Further details on the social movements and political space is given in Annex D.

² Further economic data can be found on Annex A

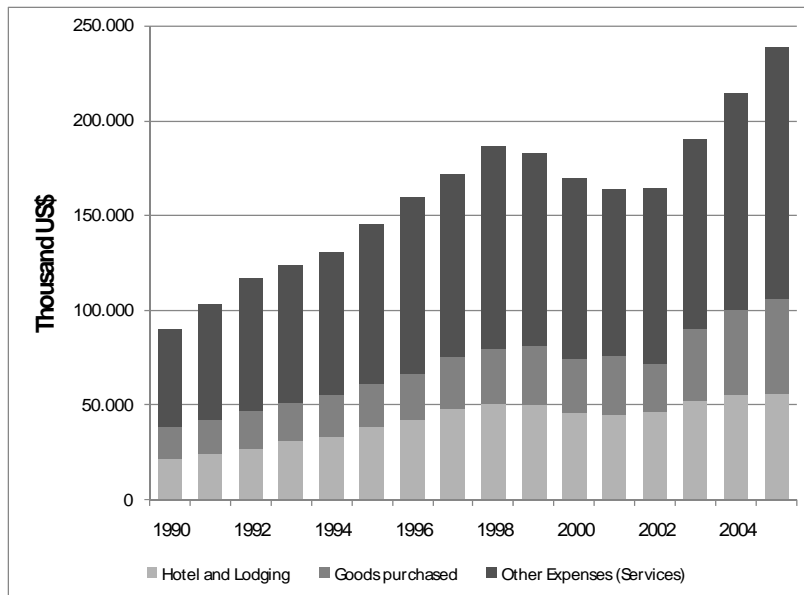
further information on the tourist arrivals and their origin, and Graph 2 shows the incomes generated through tourism during the last years.

Graph 1: Tourist arrivals and origin, 1990-2005



Source: (UDAPE, 2007b)

Graph 2: Income Generated by Tourism, 1990-2005



Note:

Goods purchased refers to souvenirs, handicrafts, clothing, gifts, etc
Other Expenses refers to transportation, food and other services

Source: INE

The competent authority in tourism is the Vice ministry of Tourism, which depends directly from the ministry of Production and Microenterprise. The main objective of this ministry is to *‘Contribute to the integral productive and diversified development, and transform the productive matrix in the country to generate surplus, permanent, dignified employment and equal income; sovereign in trade, participate in community, collective, individual and private organizations according to the productive vocation, in the framework of reducing the regional inequalities in the social and economic areas’* (Ministerio de Producción y Microempresa, 2007a).

However, there’s limited information on the impact of tourism, the number of tourists and the exact destinations they go to. Furthermore, the information on the number of lower-end lodging (aimed mainly at backpackers) is almost non-existent. Within this category, the eco-lodge and community based tourist lodges do not appear within the statistics that the vice ministry provides. This is an important weakness if we take into account that this vice ministry is now promoting community based tourism for the poorest areas and promoting Bolivia as an ecotourism destination (Ministerio de Producción y Microempresa, 2007b).. Some of the most important tourist attractions are related to the country’s ecological and cultural diversity, natural parks and landscapes (Cox et al., 2006).

Currently, the vice-ministry authorities report the existence of over 70 community-based tourism projects in the country. The new policies aim at providing support to these experiences and promote new ones in order to generate new opportunities for income generation for impoverished regions. The vice ministry reports that in 1995 283.977 tourists arrived to the country, and in 2005 the number of tourists almost doubled, reaching 503.671 arrivals. The number of hotels as almost doubled as well (from 691 to 1.050) during this period. Tourists stay on 2.04days in each location, and an average total time of 17 days in the country. International tourism has a slightly higher participation in the GDP than internal tourism (Cox et al., 2006, INE, 2001b).

All these figures have led the tourism authority and other stakeholders to expect a sustained growth in the future. Hence, not only the private companies but also the communities see tourism as a new and growing opportunity for income improvement and (in the case of communities) poverty reduction. The donor agencies, NGOs and government, as we shall see later on, have also seen this opportunity.

1.1.3. Poverty Profile

Even though there seem to be interesting figures in the macroeconomic landscape, poverty reduction not been as effective. Unequal distribution within the country and widespread poverty, together with low social mobility and social exclusion, have prevented those in most need to have access to the incoming economic flows

(Andersen, 2001). Table 1 shows the Foster-Green-Thorbecke poverty measures (FGT) for urban and rural cases in Bolivia, as calculated by UDAPE.

From the information on Table 1 we can see that at urban level there has been little changes during the last years, which means that the situation has not improved in spite the policies aimed at poverty reduction, international aid and NGO projects. However, in the rural area poverty has decreased not only in the incidence, but also the poverty gap and poverty severity. The almost non-existent reduction of poverty incidence in urban centres might be showing the rural-urban migration (Andersen, 2002, Tannuri-Pianto et al., 2004).

Table 1: Urban and Rural Poverty Figures (1999-2003)

Year	Poverty HCR (%)		Poverty Gap (%)		Poverty Severity (%)	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
1999	51,36	84,00	22,43	59,37	12,93	47,43
2000	54,47	87,02	25,60	65,39	15,49	54,62
2001	54,28	77,69	24,60	50,95	10,16	39,10
2002	53,91	78,75	23,79	57,56	13,75	45,80
2003-2004	54,41	77,67	22,20	45,94	11,97	32,79
2005*	51,05	77,60	22,84	54,29	13,05	42,97
2006*	50,27	76,47	21,80	50,55	12,21	38,22

Year	Extreme Poverty HCR (%)		Extreme Poverty Gap (%)		Extreme Poverty Severity (%)	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
1999	23,51	69,94	8,91	45,12	4,98	34,50
2000	27,93	75,01	10,97	52,92	6,19	42,65
2001	26,18	59,71	14,65	36,39	5,94	27,00
2002	25,71	62,12	9,40	43,31	5,12	33,70
2003-2004	22,95	53,72	7,64	29,70	3,76	20,03
2005*	24,30	62,90	8,68	41,03	4,67	30,86
2006*	23,36	62,25	7,94	35,67	4,09	25,23

*Preliminary or estimated data

Source: UDAPE 2007b

Table 2 shows the Gini coefficient for Bolivia. In this case it is interesting to note that the urban areas have lower inequality levels than the rural areas. The data provided by INE also shows that the number of people living in poverty has increased: in 1999 the number of people in extreme poverty was 2.942.514 and 2003, the number of people in extreme poverty was 3.462.536. This means an absolute increase of roughly 520.000 people over 4 years (INE, 2007).

Table 2: Inequality in Bolivia: Gini Coefficient 1999-2006

Year	Gini Coefficient		
	National	Urban	Rural
1999	0,58	0,49	0,64
2000	0,62	0,53	0,69
2001	0,59	0,53	0,64
2002	0,60	0,54	0,63
2003-2004	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
2005*	0,60	0,54	0,66
2006*	0,59	0,53	0,64

*Preliminary or estimated data

Source: UDAPE 2007b

The widespread poverty in Bolivia has led the people in rural areas to look for new opportunities to reduce vulnerability, by engaging in new activities either in their hometowns or by migrating to new areas. One of the strategies in towns that have close contact to national parks and other attractions is tourism, is offering tourism services, such as lodging, guides and food.

1.1.4. Natural Resources in Bolivia

As it was mentioned before, one of the tourist attractions are the landscapes, biodiversity and nature in the country. Being in the center of the continent, Bolivia has a wide variety of ecosystems, from the Altiplano (Andean highlands) in the west to the Amazon basin in the northeast. Bolivia has '14 ecological zones, 190 ecosystems and 19 bio-climates, which in turn contain 1.392 bird species, 263 reptile species, 325 mammals, 18.000 species of superior vegetation, 186 amphibians, 500 fish species and unaccounted insect species' (Plan Estratégico Institucional del Viceministerio de Biodiversidad, Recursos Forestales y Medio Ambiente 2006-2010, Potencialidades de Bolivia pg.4 as cited by Cox et al., 2006). The document also mentions that several of the species are endemic to the region.

The total land surface in Bolivia is 1.084.380 Km², from which, in 2005, 34,2% is agricultural land, 2,8% is arable land and 0,2% is permanently cultivated land (UDAPE, 2007a). Over 48% of the surface is covered by forests (52 million of hectares), which puts Bolivia among the riches countries in forestry resources at a world level (CFB, 2007, CADEFOR, 2003).

1.1.4.1. Protected Areas in Bolivia

From all the available land, approximately 18% belong to the over 60 protected areas (in its different categories), which translates into a surface of over 200.000 Km². The National Service of Protected Areas (SERNAP) is in charge of managing these areas, and 21 of them (accounting for over 15% of the national territory) are National Parks and represent areas of special interest for their biodiversity (FUNDESNAP, 2007b).

There are 21 protected areas, covering a surface of 175.000 Km², and within them are 80% of the endemic species of the region (Cox et al., 2006). Bolivia is among the 15 mega-diverse countries, which means that the natural areas in the country are home to a large variety of plants and animals. In Bolivia there are 14,3% of the world's bird species, 8,98% of the reptiles and 7,5% of the mammals. Bolivia is also among the 10 countries with the largest extension of protected areas in the world³.

According to the Supreme Decree N° 24781, there are 6 different categories of protected areas in Bolivia, each one aimed at different degrees of protection and preservation of the ecosystems (Gobierno de Bolivia, 1997). The complete classification appears on Annex C.

From these areas, Madidi and Amboró National Parks are two of the most important ones. Together they house the world's highest variety of birds and amphibians inside protected areas, and attract a high flow of tourism. ANP is also important for the nearby cities and towns, as it is the source of fresh water⁴ (FUNDESNAP, 2007a).

The development plan from the Organization of American States (OAS) for the Bolivian Amazon basin, together with the Government of Bolivia, identified the ANP & NAIM as the best area for developing an ecotourism strategy (Portugal, 1997) for the following reasons:

1. Amboró region has an above-average accessibility, thanks to the close airport in Santa Cruz, which links the region to national and international regions. As Ribera and Liberman (2006) explain, *'It is considered that the region has privileged accessibility and the communication is comparatively good'*. The park can be reached from this city through the main road network that surrounds the park on the north and south, and connects Santa Cruz to the other main cities, such as Cochabamba and La Paz.
2. Santa Cruz is the second biggest city in the country, and therefore has the characteristics to become a hub for tourist traveling to the Bolivian Amazon area and attracts tourism to the region as well.
3. There is a need to develop a tourism activity type that responds to a participatory and consensual planning logic. This calls for a bigger role of the state to lead the process together with local governments, private entrepreneurs, local communities, and other government and non-government organization at national and international levels.

³ 'La Razón' daily newspaper, issue N°5289 from September 4th, 2005, p. A12

⁴ Ibid.

Furthermore, SERNAP also promotes ecotourism in the region, as it identifies ecotourism as '*a compatible development alternative that promotes and protects conservation efforts and generates community support for protection of the park*' (McLaughlin et al., 2002). Ham et al. (2002) identify some of the important factors that also add to the outstanding potential of the Amboró Park for ecotourism. Amboró offers both natural and cultural attractions, with diverse ecological systems ranging from mountains to cloud forests and rainforests. The accessibility and the existing tourism and ecotourism services in both gateways to the park, namely Samaipata and Buena Vista, also add to the potential of the area.

From the 22 National Parks and Protected Areas, Amboró National Park is the area that has the highest population and highest population density (including the NAIM), even though not having the largest area (see Appendix C).

In Bolivia, ANP is probably the most important natural park in the eastern foothills of the near, close to the city of Santa Cruz, the most dynamic economy and populated city centre of Bolivia. The ANP, also one of the oldest parks (1973) is surrounded by a Natural Area of Integrated Management destined to harmonize the conservation of biological diversity with the sustainable development of the local population and serve as a *buffer zone* for the ANP (Created by Art. 25 - D.S. N° 24,781, 07.31.1997). Migrant peasants ('colonos') have intensively settled and populated the area, mainly in the last decades (Ribera and Liberman, 2006).

Amboró National Park is home to over 26.000 inhabitants (4.000 families) in the park and 41.000 if the Integral Management Area is also considered. The total population in the area is 13.273 inhabitants, of which the total poor population is 9.346, and 2.400 are extremely poor. Poverty Rate: 71,6%% (INE, 2001a). Even though the poverty headcount ratio is not as high as other national parks, it is still well above the national average⁵, and the absolute number of poor people in the area is above the any other national park due to the high population of ANP (See Annex C for further details).

Regarding the environmental impact of human activities in the park, FAN Bolivia has been involved in an assessment of the environmental impact in the ANP and NAIM areas, and the conclusion is that – even though large settlements can be found in the area (Ribera and Liberman, 2006) – the environmental impact is still low and will ensure the sustainability of the park.

Ribera and Liberman mention the existence of illegal logging in both the northern and southern areas of the ANP. However, none of the interviewed identified this as a problem. This does not deny the possibility of the existence of illegal logging. However, taking the assessment of FAN Bolivia into this argument, the extent of the illegal logging may not be a serious threat to the park at this time.

⁵ Poverty using the Unsatisfied Basic Needs in Bolivia for 2001 is 58,6%, and 21,7% are extremely poor according to the National Statistics Institute (INE)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Literature on tourism, ecotourism and community tourism

Several publications provide guidelines and definitions that help to conceptualize Community-based Ecotourism. The Community-based tourism follows the concept of community management, which is applied in several policies and projects (such as community forestry, for example). The community approach is not new, and community tourism is not a new approach either. Murphy (1985) analyzes the effects of community tourism on the social relations and cultural behavior. He identifies some potential threats of tourism to small communities. Even though the work of Murphy appears to be focused on community-based tourism projects at a larger scale than the projects currently found in Bolivia, the main concepts, advantages and disadvantages identified can still be mirrored at a smaller scale (Murphy, 1985).

Butcher (2007) identifies other important disadvantages of Ecotourism, and the roles of NGOs in this area. In his work, Butcher provides important insight to characterize the aim of international NGOs, which have played an important role in the creation of the current landscape of community ecotourism in Bolivia, such as WWF, CI and SNV (Butcher, 2007).

Regarding the specific experiences in Bolivia, literature is scarce. The most important work in this area is the document 'Bolivia Ecotourism Assessment' (McLaughlin et al., 2002). This work concentrates on the main protected areas in Bolivia. However, some important experiences are missing in this document. This limitation probably originates in the focus of this report prepared for USAID, and its areas of interest. Nevertheless, it still provides useful information for protected areas and their potential for ecotourism, the advantages and disadvantages as well as opportunities for ecotourism.

There are also few documents providing an appropriate methodology to carry out an evaluation of community ecotourism project at economic, social, cultural and ecological levels. In this area, there are two important documents. The first one is Methodological guidelines for the analysis of Community Tourism Experiences (Maldonado, 2005). The second one, 'Ecotourism Impact Monitoring: A review of Methodologies and Recommendations for Developing Monitoring Programs in Latin America' (Rome, 1999). Fox (2002) also provides some general guidelines for the research on this issue, suggesting the use of surveys and key informant interviews.

2.2. Literature on community ecotourism projects in Bolivia

There is limited academic research regarding CET specifically. Mostly descriptive documents refer to the Bolivian experiences at Mapajo and Chalalán (Buckley, 2003), but do not analyze other projects such as the ones in ANP & NAIM.

As mentioned before, the 'Bolivia Ecotourism Assessment' (McLaughlin et al., 2002) provides an important review. However, the report does not provide information on specific projects and communities. Rather, it reviews different geographic areas and their potential for ecotourism. Of especial relevance is the work of Alcoba (2006) providing a general description of the aspects that truncated the success of CET projects in the ANP region, hence providing a benchmark base to analyze the projects of PROBIOMA and FAN Bolivia.

3. METHODOLOGY

Community Ecotourism is related to two areas that are central in the development debate. First, the environmental issues are currently one of the most important topics in development. Concerns about the sustainability of development and the uses and misuses of natural resources are common not only in everyday newspapers, but also (and more importantly) in development research and debates.

The current view is that there is a need for new policies to be environmentally sustainable, in order to reach an efficiency that allows economic growth without compromising the future generation's ability to use those resources. The view that supports the need for urgent action against pollution (especially CO₂ emissions) to stop global warming is nowadays present in most development plans and policies. The importance of environmental sustainability is also stated in UN's Millennium Development Goal 7 (ensure environmental sustainability), to '*Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources*' (United Nations, 2000), as well as the United Nation's World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), an institution that brings together several countries around tourism issues.

On the other hand, there is the important issue of poverty reduction. Millennium Development Goal 1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) states that it is needed to 'Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day' and 'Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger'. In a world where millions of people suffer of poverty, developing countries struggle the most to create efficient policies that will allow them to get the people out of poverty and reduce inequality.

These first order global issues are also translated at country level in the Bolivian PND that reflects the public policy of the current Bolivian Government. However, there is an important lack of relevant data and information that could provide the baseline for the preparation of specific strategies and action plans for CET projects. This becomes especially evident in the case of the ANP and could be a factor of significant delay or further disarray for the current incipient CET project efforts.

A policy supporting CET clearly appears as one of the few links between natural resource management and poverty reduction. This alternative economic activity could potentially assure inclusion of local people in the project, with complete control in some cases. There have been many successful experiences in community ecotourism, but there is no guarantee that all community ecotourism projects will be able to reduce poverty and be environmentally sustainable successfully. However, only a good understanding of the CET impacts on poverty

reduction, will allow the identification of the key factors to be considered in the design and implementation of adequate policies and strategies.

3.1. Methodological Framework

The most important reference on the methodology for this study is the work by Maldonado (2005) on the analysis of community tourism experiences. It is important to mention that the suggested methodology is very general, and therefore some adjustments will have to be made to fit to the specific context of the projects in Bolivia. Furthermore, due to the scope and limited time and resources for this research, some aspects in the methodology will have to be left aside. Nonetheless, the work by Maldonado provides a good starting point that will allow us to analyze the different aspects of community ecotourism.

In the methodology, Maldonado differentiates two stages: The first stage is a description of the CET experience, which contains general information on the location, accessibility and so on, information on the tourist product, information on the market segment of the project and information on marketing and commercialization.

The second stage suggested by Maldonado, and which will become the aim of the proposed research, is the analysis of the experience. It starts with a strategic diagnostic, which aims to establish the state of affairs of the community experience (Maldonado, 2005). In this diagnostic, there are four dimensions to assess the sustainability of the project. Such aspects will be analyzed in Chapters 4 and 5 of the present research.

The dimensions suggested by Maldonado for analysis in the strategic diagnostic are:

1. Economic Dimension

This dimension intends to see if the tourism project has been incorporated in the economic activities of the community (if forward and backward linkages of the project to other economic activities are created), and if the project is able to cover the costs and profit is being made.

2. Social Dimension

This dimension analyzes the changes induced by the tourist project into the community institutions and the social practices, and if the project has strengthened (or weakened) the social mechanisms of consultation, representation and social capital.

3. Cultural Dimension

This aspect sees the changes that have occurred related to '*strengthening values, expressions and community cultural expressions*' (Maldonado, 2005). It also identifies if the project provides a new arena for cultural expression, diffusion and consolidation.

4. *Environmental Dimension*

The aim of this dimension is to establish if the community has reached self-management and sustainable use of natural resources and lands, and if the community has generated strategies aimed at preservation and conservation of the environment. It emphasizes activities aimed to inform and educate both the community and the tourists.

3.2. Analytical Framework

This research will analyze changes in the relation of humans and the environment. In the human space, we will analyze the changes in the economic aspect, such as poverty, income, basic needs fulfilment and so on. We shall also look into social changes, such as changes in social cohesion, inequality or empowerment. Regarding the environment, we look into the preventive measures that the community has taken to minimize environmental impact, if proper monitoring is applied as well as other activities directed towards environmental sustainability of the tourism project (Maldonado, 2005). In this way, we will be able to see the different changes that are related to the community ecotourism experience: at an individual level through the economic aspects, at a collective level through the social and cultural aspects. Finally, all of them are immerse in the ecological level, the environment and the interaction of the community and the tourists with it.

3.3. Conceptual Framework

3.3.1. *Community Ecotourism*

In order to understand the meaning of Community Based Ecotourism, we need break down this concept in two parts. First, *Community Based Tourism* and second, *Ecotourism*.

To understand Community Based Tourism, we firstly need to understand *Community Based Resource Management*. As Buchy and Rai explain ‘*Over the last 25 years or so, Common Property Resource Management (CPRM- also called Community Based Resource Management – CBRM) strategies have been promoted by national policies and donors programs alike in many countries as the best possible way out of environmental degradation and poverty. CPRM is largely based on the principle that communities are best placed to manage the resources directly adjacent to them, because they know them, use them and therefore have an interest in maintaining the resource to a certain degree of quality.*’ (Buchy and Rai, 2006).

This approach has come as an alternative for the business and private project approach that in several cases had little effect on the communities where it was implemented, except for a few beneficiaries. The community based approach intends to generate more equality in the distribution by letting the community itself participate actively, and thus allowing the involvement of the community in the project. It also generates higher commitment of the beneficiaries by creating a sense of ownership.

Based on the WWF definition, we can define community tourism as the form of tourism *‘where the local community has substantial control over, and involvement in, its development and management, and a major proportion of the benefits remain within the community’* (Denman, 2001). Maldonado defines community tourism as *‘...any form of entrepreneurial organization sustained on the property and self-management of community assets and resources, with an arrangement of democratic practices and solidarity work and distribution of benefits generated by providing tourist services, in order to foment high quality intercultural meetings with the visitors.’* (Maldonado, 2005).

For this research, we understand community-based tourism as tourism enterprises where the local communities take active and central roles and also obtain most of the benefits. However, the initial idea (or motivation) for the project can either come from the inside (from the community itself) or from the outside (NGO or other).

The second concept that is important to understand is *Ecotourism*, which is *‘a form of tourism where the motivation of visitors, and the sales pitch to them, centres on the observation of nature [and that] seeks to mitigate the negative and enhance the positive impacts’* (Denman, 2001). Ecotourism refers to a new form of tourism that currently taking place, where the main interest is the nature, and the visitors are willing to enjoy natural environments and minimize the impact of their visit.

The concept of *Community Ecotourism* brings together ‘Community Based Tourism’ and ‘Ecotourism’. It is important to differentiate both: community based tourism does not imply low environmental impact, and ecotourism does not necessarily involve the communities.

In fact, there are several projects in the ANP area that are private and do not involve the whole community. Such is the case of Laguna Verde, on the Southern side of the park, which involves only one family that looked for support from FAN Bolivia. In this case, the project can be classified as ecotourism, but not as community-based. Other projects, most of them in the outer areas of the NAIM, do not prioritize environmental sustainability and minimizing ecological impact, even though this tourist projects do involve the community.

Community ecotourism is defined by PROBIOMA as *‘a business proposal that [...] rescues the organization and cultural characteristics of the community, and*

pretends to go beyond, becoming, more than a profit-oriented enterprise, an initiative that pretends community development without leaving natural resource conservation and preservation aside' (PROBIOMA, 2007). One of the important advantages of community ecotourism is that *'ecotourism provides funds for preserving land and water resources and the biodiversity they support'* (TNC, 2004).

Community based resource management relies heavily on the idea that traditional communities know better, through centuries of experience and traditional relation with the environment, how the ecosystem is managed best, and how to use the resources in a sustainable way. One of the assumptions is that communities will distribute incomes in a fair and even way, assuming that there are no underlying inequalities within the communities.

But Buchy and Rai (2006) identify some of the limitations of the community based resource management, questioning the extent to which this approach accomplishes the goals of social justice and equality. As they explain, *'Central to the belief that community forestry can contribute to social justice are a number of assumptions [...] Unfortunately an increasing number of empirical works clearly demonstrate these assumptions to be erroneous [...]'* (Buchy and Rai, 2006).

The authors explain that assumptions underlying the community based resource management approach (see *ibid*):

- They are all inclusive
- The committees or representatives represent all the various interests groups in the community
- All users are equally affected by the rules and the regulations
- All users will have an equal share to the benefits of the forests

Thus, community-based ecotourism does not guarantee equitable distribution of the resources, appropriate management of the project or poverty reduction. Furthermore, the generation-long pre-existing relation with the environment which justifies the knowledge of sustainable use of the environment in some cases is missing. Such is the case of ANP, where a vast majority of the population consists of migrants from different parts of the country, and almost in all cases where the natural environment was different than in the ANP.

3.3.2. Poverty

The analysis of poverty for this paper will go beyond the standard measures, by approaching the quality of life and other characteristics of the beneficiaries of the CET projects in the ANP area. The analysis of poverty measures, though important, can be misleading unless it is used in a wider analysis.

The lack of data for the region regarding poverty makes the analysis more subjective, and more research on this issue would be needed to establish a more

appropriate poverty profile for the ANP. However, this research tries to give some characteristics and, more importantly, identifies some of the sources of poverty and vulnerability in the area.

For this research, two different approaches will be used to understand poverty in the area and its causes and consequences. On the one hand, we have already seen in Chapter 1 some of the figures regarding poverty by using three important indicators, namely headcount ratio (poverty incidence), poverty gap and poverty severity. This data relies heavily on the assumptions of monetary poverty, and leaves aside other forms of poverty. The disadvantages of such measures are well known, but the simplicity of calculation and interpretation make up so some extent for the weaknesses of the Foster-Green-Thorbecke indicators (Ray, 1998, Ravallion, 2003, Morris, 1979, Sen, 1992). The data presented before is based on the household surveys carried out by the National Statistics Institute (INE). However, it is impossible to obtain such data at the community level from the available figures. Data from the 2001 census provides information at municipal level, but higher desegregation levels are not available. This limits to some extent the possibilities to measure poverty using survey data or official statistics. The lack of baseline studies for the projects means that the impact of the projects on poverty reduction is hard to measure.

The second approach intends to use a broader definition of poverty, by including the capacity to participate in social life, the power relations and social exclusion. Approaches such as social exclusion, Sen's capabilities approach, relative poverty lines and participatory approach try to make up for some of the problems of the monetary indicators, and focus on a broader definition of poverty that tries to take into account some of the aspects that are left aside by the monetary approach (Wuyts, 2004, Ravallion, 2003).

In this study we will try to overcome the lack of quantitative data and the limitations of the monetary approach by taking into account other aspects such as gender equality, social exclusion, empowerment and vulnerability on top of an assessment of living conditions. Poverty, in this study, is understood as a process rather than a state of affairs (Wuyts, 2004). By using both approaches, the outcome will be an objective analysis of poverty that goes beyond income-based measures.

3.4. Fieldwork

The fieldwork took place during July-August 2007, and consisted on visits to four different ecotourism projects in the ANP area plus interviews with the most important stakeholders. Table 3 shows the summary of the interviews, and Annex B gives further details on the interviews, visit, dates and so on.

3.4.1. Limitations of the Fieldwork

During the fieldwork the aim was to try to gather as much information as possible. However, it was impossible to find all the people available. In some cases

local authorities were available and willing to be interviewed, in other cases not. Government officials sometimes did not have enough time for a proper interview, and thus in some cases some information was missing. In some (seldom) cases, the decision of who should be interviewed was based more on the availability than other criteria. Still, the fieldwork did provide enough information for the research.

Table 3: Summary of Interviews

Villa Amboró(*)	ANP-North	President of the Community's Ecotourism Association, Guide, Craftsman and Guide, Cook
Isama(*)	ANP-North	President of the Community's Ecotourism Association, Guide, 2 local (community) authorities
Volcanes(*)	ANP-South	2 Guides, Cook
La Yunga(**)	ANP-South	Guide, Lodge Administrator
<u>NGO's</u>		
FAN Bolivia	Santa Cruz	Environmental Economist, Head of Territorial Management
PROBIOMA	Santa Cruz	Ecotourism Coordinator, Ecotourism Promotion
<u>Public Institutions</u>		
SERNAP	Santa Cruz, La Paz	Tourism Coordinator (Santa Cruz), Planning Director (La Paz), Planning and Conflict Management Technician (La Paz)
Local Government	Santa Cruz	Tourism Expert
Tourism Vice-ministry	La Paz	Tourism Strategy and Policy Coordinator
UDAPE	La Paz	Tourism Analyst
Planning and Development Ministry	La Paz	Productive Area Sectorialist
FONDESIF	La Paz	Coordinator Sub-Program 2(***)
<u>Donor/Development Agencies</u>		
IADB	La Paz	Sectorial Specialist on Tourism , Coordinator Sub-Program 2(***)
GTZ(****)	La Paz	Main Counsellor, Responsible for Local Management
UNDP	La Paz	HDI Coordinator
SNV	La Paz	Sustainable Tourism Counsellor
KfW	La Paz	Coordinator of BIAP Program(****)
<u>Tourism Operators</u>		
Forest Tour Operator	Santa Cruz	Commercial Manager
N/A	La Paz	Freelance Tourism Operator

Notes: (*) Project of PROBIOMA (**) Project of FAN Bolivia (***) Sub-Program 2 is part of the 'Program for Support to Sustainable Tourism Development in Bolivia BID 1098/SF-BO', which uses funding from IADB (mainly) as well as state funds (****) GTZ and KfW support SERNAP through funding as well as expert advisors who work within SERNAP. Source: Self-Elaboration

4. THE FOUR CASE-STUDIES⁶

Alcoba (2006) identified 12 community based tourism projects in the Amboró region. However, some CET projects do not appear identified, others are in the process of being implemented, but not yet opened to the public. The lack of coordination and the existence of some small projects with little expertise has also lead to a lack of available information, a fact also recognized by McLaughling et al. (2002) who evidenced little information on ecotourism in Amboró National Park, other than at Buena Vista or Samaipata, and requiring some insider information. SERNAP reports the existence of 11 CET projects in ANP, from which 3 belong to PROBIOMA and 1 belongs to and FAN Bolivia.

Ribera and Liberman (2006) explain that *‘In the last 8 years, several projects were promoted in order to support productive activities, most of them directed at reaching sustainability, especially to favour, directly or indirectly, the process of conservation of the Protected Area. Among the organizations that had a sustained and systematic action it is important to mention ASEO, FAN, CARE, CARITAS, CIAT, SERAPI, PROBIOMA, PRECONAT and NATURA’*.

PROBIOMA and FAN Bolivia are local NGOs focusing their activities on environmental sustainability and ecological conservation. They both have important experience and are also developing activities in the ANP & NAIM region. Besides their work on environmental issues, they have now implemented CET projects as a way of improving the income of communities in the areas while maintaining a low environmental impact in the ANP. It appears that CET projects seemed a necessary extension of the objectives of these NGOs looking for an approach that addresses both the issues of environmental sustainability and poverty in the Park and surrounding area.

Portugal (1997) identifies FAN and PROBIOMA as the most important NGOs in the Amboró National Park for the OAS ecotourism strategy for Bolivia. In his words, *‘Friends of Nature Foundation (FAN) stands out, which is supported by Nature Conservancy, and whose objective is to preserve the Biodiversity in Bolivia. FAN has been active in the southern part of Amboró National Park since 1989 [...]’*. About PROBIOMA, the author explains that their role is also important, even though they had not yet started activities in ecotourism at the time the document was elaborated.

Regarding the CET projects, these two organizations carry out an important number of projects at the same time in several areas, one of them being ANP.

⁶ This section, unless otherwise indicated, is based on the interviews carried out during the fieldwork during July-August 2007. Details names of the persons interviewed in each case are in Chapter 2, and the details of the interview place and date are in Annex B.

Hence, it is important to establish the extent of the effects on the local livelihoods. By analyzing the specific cases of FAN and PROBIOMA, the research intends to gain insight on the link between poverty reduction and community ecotourism in the Amboró area.

Even though Bolivia has community ecotourism experiences outside national parks, the most important experiences can be found in the protected areas. There is yet another advantage of focusing on the protected areas, which is environmental sustainability. Besides the use of the environment as a tourist attraction, CET projects in protected areas appear to ensure a higher level of environmental sustainability. OAS (Organization of American States) promotes the development of ecotourism activities inside established protected areas as a priority for tourism and as a strength in the case of Bolivia (Portugal, 1997). However, the issue of environmental sustainability or impact assessment of CET activities is not covered in the scope of this research and will have to be taken as a given.

Ribera and Liberman (2006) explain that the Amboró region attracted a high number of new settlers for the last two decades, thanks to the productive possibilities of the region. This has also exerted high pressure on the resources, and thus the deterioration of the environment. The authors question whether such population density is consistent with the category of ‘Integral Management Area’. The park is surrounded by important populations in transition to become intermediate cities, and every weekend between 6.000 and 7.000 people reach the park. McLaughlin, et al. (2002) report that during 2000, visitor number reached 5.000 registered visitors plus 5.000 unregistered visitors.

In summary, CET is an alternative economic activity currently being developed in the ANP & NAIM, with the potential of providing an option for reconciling the environmental sustainability of the ANP and much needed poverty reduction objectives in the communities settled in these areas. Both these objectives are first order goals in the PND, as well as in major international aid organizations (World Bank, USAID, IADB and others).

4.1. Description of Amboró National Park

Amboró National Park was created in 1973 under the name ‘Natural Reserve Tcnl. German Buch’, and was later transformed into ‘National Park’⁷ in 1984 with an extension of 180.000 hectares. In 1991 the area was expanded to 637 hectares, and later, in 1995, the area was reduced to 442.500 hectares, ranging in altitude from 300 to 3300 meters above sea level. The area within the old and new limits has acquired the status of the NAIM, which creates a buffer zone that surrounds the ANP (FUNDESNAP, 2007a).

⁷ National Parks and Natural Reserves have different characteristics and legal status according to Bolivian legislation. The different types of protected areas are described in Table C1: Characteristics of Protected Areas in Bolivia.

The ANP has a wide variety of animal, insects and plants. Among the estimated 3.500 plants (from which only 2659 are registered so far), one of the outstanding species is the giant fern. The giant fern⁸ forest is the main attraction in the mist-forest area of La Yunga. There are also several different species of orchids in the park⁹ (FUNDESNAP, 2007a). Some precious wood types can be found in the forests, which generate incentives for illegal logging, since this activity is prohibited in the National Parks. However, FAN Bolivia and SERNAP estimate that the extent of this is not considerable, and does not present any risk for the park's environmental sustainability.

Regarding the animal species, there are 1.236 registered. The most outstanding are the Andean bear ('*jucumari*' or spectacled bear¹⁰) and jaguars¹¹, among other important endemic animal and bird species (SERNAP, 2004, FUNDESNAP, 2007a).

The most important rivers are Ichilo, Yapacaní, Surutú and San Mateo. The ANP is exceptional geographically, because it is an area where different ecosystems join: humid forests, rainforests and mountain mist-forest can be found within ANP (FUNDESNAP, 2007a, SERNAP, 2004), and the characteristics of each ecosystem can be very different from the other ones, even when if relatively short distances separate them.

The park authorities have identified eight areas in the ANP that offer lodges, guides, and other services for the visitors. These are Mataracú, La Chonta, Laguna Verde¹², Isama, Villa Amboró, Jardín de las Delicias, Volcanes and La Yunga. From these, four projects are part of the present study.

The population in the ANP and NAIM areas is mainly composed by migrants from other parts of the country (FUNDESNAP, 2007a, Ribera and Liberman, 2006, SERNAP, 2004). The main towns within the NAIM are Yapacaní (4.029 inhabitants), San Carlos (3.223 inhabitants), Buenavista (2.873 inhabitants), Porongo (1.134 inhabitants), El Torno (6.332 inhabitants), Samaipata (2.735 inhabitants), Mairana (3.060 inhabitants), Pampa Grande (558 inhabitants) and Comarapa (3.221 inhabitants)(FUNDESNAP, 2007a). The population in the area has been generating increased pressure on the ANP due to the growing demand for

⁸ Scientific name: *Cyathea sp.*, *Alsophila sp.*

⁹ Scientific Names: *Pleurothallis spp.*, *Epidendrum spp.*, *Zigopetalum maculatum*, *Notylia sp.*, *Xylobium sp.*, *Cyrtopodium sp.*, *Encyclia pflanzii*, *Lockhartia spp.*, *Oncidium heterantum*, *Brassia sp.*

¹⁰ Scientific Name: *Tremarctos ornatus*

¹¹ Scientific Name: *Panthera onca*

¹² It is important to clarify that there are two different ecotourism projects under the same name (Laguna Verde). The one mentioned here refers to the project on the northern side of the ANP. The second project is near Comarapa, on the Southwest end of the park, and was implemented with the support of FAN Bolivia.

agricultural land, slash-and-burn agriculture, logging, unrestrained grazing, illegal hunting and uncontrolled tourism (FUNDESNA, 2007a).

4.2. General Characteristics of the Projects

Table 4 below summarizes some of the most relevant characteristics of the projects. Further details and characteristics are provided later in this chapter.

Table 4: General Characteristics of the CET Projects

	Probioma			FAN Bolivia
	Villa Amboró	Isama	Volcanes	La Yunga
Main Activity	Agriculture (main), Livestock (secondary)		Livestock (main), Agriculture (secondary)	Agriculture (main), Livestock (secondary)
Water Source	Nearby River			
Consumption of Carbohydrates	Most important food staple, daily consumption (rice, potatoes, noodles, manioc)			
Consumption of Vegetables and Fruit	Regular consumption			
Consumption of Chicken and Lamb	1 to 3 times a week			
Consumption of cow meat	Seldom			
Distance to Santa Cruz de la Sierra and to closest town(s)	150 Km from Santa Cruz, 2 ½ hours from Cruce Villa Amboró and 2 hours from Isama (by foot)	150 Km from Santa Cruz, 2 hours from Villa Amboró and 3 hours to Espejillos (by foot)	90 Km from Santa Cruz, 3 hours by foot or horseback to Bermejo (by foot)	135 Km from Santa Cruz, 13 Km from Mairana, 15 Km from Samaipata
Average time to reach the project from Santa Cruz (approx)	4,5 hours	5 hours	5,5 hours	5 hours
Accessible using public transport?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Accessible year-round?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (Inaccessible in Rainy Season)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (Inaccessible in Rainy Season)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Primary School in town	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Secondary School in town	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Health Facilities in town	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctor visits monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctor visits monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Must go to Bermejo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctor visits every 2

				months
Electricity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sewage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Villa Amboró	Isama	Volcanes	La Yunga
Communications (cell phone, phone line)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Two-way radio	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Two-way radio	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Two-way radio	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Two-way radio
Location on the park	North Side		South Side	
Number of Families in the Community	47 Families	51 Families (540 inhabitants approx)	12 Families	37 Families (200 inhabitants approx)
Number of Beneficiaries	47 Families	6 Families	2 Families	13 Families
Starting	1996	2002	1998	2001
Visitor Flow	3000 during the last 10 years, average of 3 visitors per month (during dry season)	No visitors are received at this time. The project is currently not operating	Over 100 Visitors per year, large groups from England during recent years	Only 1 to 2 tourists stay in the lodge overnight every month. Most only visit forest

4.3. CET Projects in ANP

Being important environmental NGOs, PROBIOMA and FAN Bolivia prioritize environmental conservation and diminishing the impact of human settlements and tourism in the ANP area (among others). The projects aimed at providing the local population in the NAIM area with incentives to protect the environment. This new sense of ownership and the perception of the National Park as a positive rather than negative status of the land would hopefully also increase their living standards by diversifying the source of income with a high-yield and low environmental impact activity such as ecotourism.

However, poverty reduction was not the priority of the project. There was no base line of the quality of life in the villages where the projects took place, nor has such data been collected so far, and thus the changes on the living standards are still non quantifiable.

4.3.1. Villa Amboró¹³

Location

The community lies near Surutú river, one of the main rivers in the region. During the rainy season, however, the village is frequently inaccessible due to seasonal

¹³ This section is based on the interviews to the beneficiaries in Villa Amboró, PROBIOMA, SERNAP, ANP Tourism Coordinator, Santa Cruz Local Government. Further details are provided in Annex B.

river floods. Villa Amboró belongs to the province of Ichilo, to the Buena Vista municipal section.

Tourism Attractions

The main attraction for tourists are the treks created by the locals, that allows visitor to enjoy the impressive natural beauty of the place. The nearby river has several waterfalls and natural pools. The treks are kept clean by the local community, and they advise strongly to avoid any damage to the environment.

There are 2 short circuits (Maravillas and Tatucitos), and 2 ‘adventure’ circuits (Mirador del Amboró and Macuñucu y los Cajones del Amboró) (PROBIOMA, 2007). Besides the view of the landscape, several different plants and animals can be seen on the treks, some of which are rare species. Monkeys, deers, armadillos, parrots, snakes and bears can be found in the area. However, many of the species are rarely spotted during the walks. There are, still, a number of insects, plants and animals that the tourist comes across, even during the shortest trek.

Characteristics of the Community

Most of the inhabitants are migrants from Western Bolivia, from the departments of Chuquisaca, Potosí or Cochabamba in most cases. They have migrated recently (either they themselves or their parents migrated to Villa Amboró). Thus, the settlement is rather new, and the new inhabitants have adapted their way of life to the new environment. It must be noted that most of the migrants come from either valleys or the western highlands, and therefore the tropical area of Amboró is a foreign environment for them.

Visitor Flow

PROBIOMA claims that there have been over 3.000 visitors since the beginning of the project 10 years ago. However, there is a general lack of data about visitors to the park and the project, and the existing data does not provide many details. The data from the project was not available at the time of this research, and some of the visitor registries at the projects may be incomplete.

There is another issue which deals with the number of visitors who visit the paths created by the communities (the ecological circuits) and the number of people who really use the services local guides, loge and restaurant services. It is common for outside tour operators (tour operators based in Santa Cruz, Buena Vista or Samaipata) take the tourist without making use of any services from the community.

But based on the information provided by the president of the community management directive of the project, during high season (June-October) there is an

average of 3 visitors per month. During low season the lodge is mostly empty, due to the difficult accessibility of the location.

The average tourist stays an average of 2 to 3 days, and the largest portion of visitors come from Europe (mainly France, Germany, Spain, Sweden and The Netherlands). One of the problems that the locals feel is that many tourist are too adventurous, and become either abusive in their behaviour or too independent taking unnecessary risks. Being mostly backpackers, the average traveller avoids spending much on lodge or food.

Beneficiaries of the project

The project has involved most of the families from the community either as direct or indirect beneficiaries. All the profit (i.e. net income after salaries have been paid according to the number of ours that each member has worked and the costs have been covered) is split equally between the community (village Union, education, health and sports) and lodge upgrade and repairs. There are three levels of beneficiaries, as explained by the president of the Ecotourism Association:

1. The Community

The community itself has large benefits from the project. The Union that represents the community is now self-sustainable and does not require the monetary support of the members. There is also a part of the income that is channelled for health and education (such as improvements in the local school and village health centre, purchasing supplies, etc). On some occasions, the money that comes from the tourism is used to purchase fuel that will allow the heavy machinery to operate and clear the roads during rainy season. There is a small fund that is available for immediate access. In this way, most of the individual payments for the community have been eliminated.

2. The Lodge

Villa Amboró Eco-Lodge also brings benefits for those who participate directly in the project, through direct (monetary) benefits and through training in different areas of receptive tourism (client service, food and hygiene, guidance, minimizing environmental impact and others).

3. The Families

The families in Villa Amboró also experience benefits from the project through the demand for food products for the lodge, direct work and hiring horses to pick up the tourists. The project does not have horses (nor any other mean of transportation) for its exclusive use, and therefore has to rely on hiring the animals from the community members.

The role of PROBIOMA

It was not only the promoter, but also played an important role supporting the community throughout the implementation of the project and providing building material for the lodge (such as tiles or cement). The initial amount invested by the NGO was US\$ 3.000.- for the 3 locations (Villa Amboró, Isama and La Yunga). Later, the project in Villa Amboró received another US\$5.000.- also through PROBIOMA.

PROBIOMA communicates twice a day, and through this constant communication the NGO can update the villagers of any arrangements that need to be made for the tourists, the dates and time of arrival and so on.

The CET Project also relies heavily on PROBIOMA for repairs in the lodge or new training needs. The Ecotourism Association is aiming to have full legal status as an organization, and therefore be able to set up an office to deal directly with the tourists and provide information and promote the lodge. For this the current support of PROBIOMA is also very important.

Impact of the project

Perception of Poverty Reduction

Because most of the settlers in Villa Amboró have migrated from the Andean region, the nutrition in most of the cases is an adaptation of the typical carbohydrate based diet of the Bolivian highlands.

The monetary income generated directly by the CET project is marginal, and there is a perception of a very low impact of this. The main activity has always been agriculture, and the tourism activities will hardly take the place of this as a livelihood. However, the impacts on the education and health infrastructure and the elimination of the payments for the community Union and other community activities (extra fees for school repairs, per diem for community leaders on leave, and so on) are highly appreciated.

The project has given employment to men as administrators, porters and guides, and to women as cooks. It has allowed to some women to be able to cope with the family burden in single-parent households by providing an income. The CET project has also generated multiplying effects through an increased economic movement through the purchase of food items and services (horse hiring).

Most of the grown up population has attended some years of school, though there are rare (or maybe none) villagers who have finished primary education. In most cases they have finished only up to the fourth year, and are able to read and write, though with some difficulty. They are, however, aware of the importance of education, and their children attend school through the whole year, even though the kids must also help with the agricultural and housekeeping work. Children need to either move or walk considerable distances if their parents want them to also

complete the secondary cycle (or more). However, those who continue further education tend to migrate to intermediate cities (La Angostura, Buena Vista, El Torno, La Guardia) or to the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra. This is the case most of the time, as young people migrate to look for new opportunities in the cities, and the population in Villa Amboró is largely composed by children and teenagers or mature to elder people. Young workers are rarely found.

Perception of Environmental Conservation

There is a very low impact of the community on the environment. Even though the main activity is slash and burn agriculture, the pieces of land of each villager are well defined, and the awareness of being inside the NAIM has generated some degree of environmental conscience in Villa Amboró.

Those more directly involved in the CET Project are even more aware of the importance of environmental preservation, as they see the environment as the main attractive for tourist, as thus an asset to ensure a constant flow of income (even if this income is not substantial at the moment). The NGO, through the training courses, has risen awareness on the best practices, garbage management and other important issues that have helped to minimize the impact of both daily living and tourism activities in the village. The paths are kept clean by the guides, and they beware the tourists against littering.

The National Park Authority (SERNAP) claims that the CET project with the largest environmental impact is Villa Amboró, due to a larger number of visitors, a number which may be surpassing the carrying capacity for the protected areas of the characteristics of ANP. However, as we mentioned before, this impact is seen as not important and does not appear to put at stake the environmental preservation of the National Park.

Perception of Authorities

Inside the community the CET project is perceived as a positive enterprise, and almost no family is left outside. However, the relations between Villa Amboró's authorities and the local authorities in Buena Vista (municipality) and the park authority back in Santa Cruz is less than optimal.

The municipal authorities (the Mayor of Buena Vista), tend to focus most of the resources in the municipal capital of Buena Vista, and little or no resources to boost tourism reach the smaller communities such as Villa Amboró or Isama.

The park authority (SERNAP) claims that the orientation of PROBIOMA has led the village to oppose the regulations of the park authority, instead of pushing towards a joint effort for conservation.

Impact of the Project

Even though income poverty has not been drastically reduced, this case shows that in some other areas, poverty has been reduced. Seen as powerlessness, the CET Project has started an empowerment process for the community. The Ecotourism Association in the community and the link between this association and the Community Union has provided a better position to negotiate with authorities. However, on this process, there is still a sense of disorganization, and is a pendulum swing that is leading the community to focus on small issues rather than the broader, bigger picture.

The income that the CET Project has provided has lead also to some improvements in the services such as health an education, and to some extent, to an improvement on gender equality to income sources. However, it is hard to see if the work involved in sustaining this project is worth the rather small economic revenues. The project is still, even after 10 years of operation, highly dependant on PROBIOMA, and it is questionable if the project will be successful if left completely in hands of the community. There seems to be a rather permanent dependence relation to the NGO. In any case, self-sustainability and improvement in the tourism services seem to be unrealistic in the short to medium term.

Effects such as the social and cultural changes are difficult to assess, and the lack of baseline and follow-up information makes it even more difficult to reach an objective conclusion on poverty reduction.

4.3.2. *Isama*¹⁴

Location

The community lies near the Isama and Surutú rivers, both of them important rivers in the region. Isama belongs to the province of Ichilo, to the Buena Vista municipal section. The community is split into Isama-I and Isama-II, and the project is in Isama-II. However, the distinction between both is mostly nominal as the beneficiaries for the project belong to both communities, and they share the same geographical space.

Tourism Attractions

The tourism attractions are very similar to the ones that can be found in Villa Amboró. The richness of the environment and biodiversity is staggering, and the paths that lead through the forests help the tourist enjoy the experience even more. The project currently offers one long track that takes the tourist through a 4-hour walk (one-way) to reach Cajones del Amboró and Macuñucú. PROBIOMA

¹⁴ This section is based on the interviews to the beneficiaries in Isama, local authorities of Isama, PROBIOMA, SERNAP, ANP Tourism Coordinator, Santa Cruz Local Government. Further details are provided in Annex B.

website also promotes the walk to the Mirador del Amboró. However, this path was not advertised (or not available) at the moment of the visit.

Characteristics of the Community

Isama shares many similarities with neighbouring Villa Amboró. As the latter, Isama's population is composed mainly by immigrants from the western highlands, which to a large extent has determined the cultural, social, economic and productive structures in this village. There is also high migration level towards intermediate cities and the capital (Santa Cruz) for younger job-seekers

Number of Beneficiaries of the project

Currently there are 6 men working as guides and 6 women working as cooks for the project, most of the time is a kinship relation between both. The CET project's income is split in 50% to cover administrative costs and 50% for the community and Union of Isama.

Visitor Flow

Visitor flow has been almost non-existent. This is because there have been important delays in completing the works. The role of PROBIOMA started in 2002, and so far it has not been able to lead the project to a take-off. Nevertheless, the Ecotourism Association has been able to survive the rough times and still hope for an increased flow of tourist once the building works are finished.

The role of PROBIOMA

The CET Project in this case is interesting because it was not born out of suggestion (or imposition) of an NGO. Rather, it was a true Community Based project, where Francisco Vique, one of the villagers, pictured the natural beauty as a tourist attraction that should be used for the benefit of the community. However, financing the project was a difficult task, especially for poor communities that had little to offer as collateral. Successive offers from the park authorities and municipal authorities to support this project have led so far nowhere, as such help never came. PROBIOMA finally offered the villagers of Isama to provide them with a donation of US\$3.000 plus training towards the end of 2001. Later, a smaller amount was also assigned to implement and improve the construction of the lodge.

Currently the construction works are not fully finished, and therefore the project is not yet fully operational. Sometimes communication with PROBIOMA through the radio is difficult as the person in charge of the radio in Isama pays little attention to this task due to the regular absence of tourists.

Impact of the project

Perception of Poverty Reduction

In Isama, there is no perception of poverty reduction. They have taken part of many workshops and experience exchanges not only with other projects within the ANP, but also in other areas in Bolivia. Hence, they have an awareness of the potential benefits in poverty reduction. However, so far there has been no impact on poverty reduction in the area, and the project has generated dissent and division.

In the case of Isama, women have been included in the Ecotourism Association as well as playing an important role as cooks in the project. Thus, there has been empowerment of women.

The Ecotourism Association represents both Isama I (2 representatives) and Isama II (3 representatives). The directive is elected on a yearly basis. The President of the Ecotourism Association in Isama, Nereo Abrigo, believes that *'they want to diversify their activities through Ecotourism in order to stop depending only from the agricultural production, and thus be able to pull themselves out of poverty'*¹⁵.

Other positive/Negative effects introduced by the project

One of the most important problems that the project is facing (a problem identified by the Park Authority, PROBIOMA, local authorities in Isama and those involved in the project itself) is the lack of unification of the community around this project.

At the beginning, the community was not only united, but also convinced of the success of the project. However, the lack of support from authorities and NGOs, and the long time that the project is taking, has led to many of the former supporters to give up on the enterprise. Furthermore, after so many efforts had been done to build the circuits, cabins and other infrastructure, and after holding constant meetings and going through a training process, the community has seen almost no income in return. Hence, many of them do not consider this project to be worth the time, effort and voluntary work, as they don't see any reward for it.

Impact of the Project

In the case of Isama it is very hard to establish if there has been any impact of the project at all. The low number of visitors has left so far little more than a sour taste

¹⁵ Personal communication with Nereo Abrigo

to those who still believe in the project, and some conflicts have also risen due to the fracture that the community has seen around this project.

However the authorities in the village still believe that if the village could gather their efforts and work, finalizing the building process is just around the corner, and the benefits of community ecotourism could start blooming finally. This process will need not only patience, but extensive support with social work rather than funding and building before this unification can finally be seen.

4.3.3. Volcanes¹⁶

Location

The path to reach the community follows the river Colorado, which has to be crossed 14 times before reaching the lodge. During rainy season this path is not usable, but there is an alternative (longer) path, thus providing a link to the nearby towns year-round.

Tourism Attractions

Volcanes is the closest CET Project to the ANP (close to the ‘Red Line’), with only 500 meters separating the lodge from the park itself. The surrounding mountains and canyons are a good setting for several circuits. However, the circuits are not as well developed as in other projects, and in some cases can be more dangerous, adventurous and physically demanding than what the average tourist is willing to experience. Currently the project offers 6 different trekking paths, some of which take several hours to complete and wonder into the park itself. The paths are the following: Mirador de Volcanes, Loma Borda, Torrecillas Paths, Pailnes, El Curial and La Lima.

Characteristics of the Community

There seems to be a division between the most powerful and resourceful, who have lands for cattle, and those whose main activity is agriculture. Those dedicated to livestock seem to have less interest in other activities, and do not support the CET projects (but most of them do not oppose them either). A considerable portion of the community comes from the central valley of Vallegrande.

Number of Beneficiaries of the project

Currently only two families are involved in the project, making this the project with the smallest number of beneficiaries. There has been a growing conflict over the control of the project between the families, which has split the organization in

¹⁶ This section is based on the interviews to the beneficiaries in Volcanes, PROBIOMA, SERNAP, ANP Tourism Coordinator, Santa Cruz Local Government. Further details are provided in Annex B.

two groups that take turns on a bi-monthly basis to offer the tourism services in Volcanes.

The small number of people involved in this project casts doubts on the 'Community Based Tourism' concept. Even though this is advertised as a community based project by the NGO, and the beneficiaries identify themselves as a community based project, the low ratio of beneficiaries involved in the project could lead us to question this. The project was opened from the beginning to the whole community, which is why this project is seen as 'Community Based'. But since there has been a small number of families who were interested in the project, there is little that separates this CET experience from other ecotourism projects that are not community-based (such as Laguna Verde, for example. See page 15, under Community Ecotourism).

Visitor Flow

This project has a higher visitor flow than the other CET projects. Forest Tour Operator, an important tourism agency in Santa Cruz, has established the contact to allow high school students to visit Volcanes.

The role of PROBIOMA

PROBIOMA started the project 9 years ago, and currently still supports it. The NGO has tried to settle the conflicts between the families, but was unable to resolve the issues completely. However, it apparently did prevent further conflict and the project was able to continue operating.

Due to this conflict, the resources are currently being held at the NGOs offices in Santa Cruz, as well as other important documents regarding the working hours of the members. This is also a limitation for the beneficiaries because they can't have easy access to the resources.

Impact of the project

Perception of Poverty Reduction

As in other projects, the beneficiaries feel that the project provides some income, though it is not seen as an important source of income, rather as an alternative. As they explained, it is sometimes a good option because working in the CET projects is less physically demanding than working on the daily duties in the field, and therefore it is a good option to diversify the activities. Since there is a small number of beneficiaries (only 2 families) and a relatively high number of tourists, the resources could have a higher impact. However, due to the conflicts and the fact that the resources are kept by PROBIOMA, the impact is less than expected.

However, the project does provide some income diversification, and the constant flow of tourists provides work to both groups.

In this case, there is a very low involvement of the community. The low number of beneficiaries and the fact that the income is not used for investment within the community makes the impact on poverty reduction very low, and this is also perceived by the members of the project.

Perception of Environmental Conservation

There is little impact of the project on the environment. Unlike other projects, the paths are not used by outside tour operators, and therefore there is little impact on the environment.

However, the area near Volcanes is very attractive for tourism, which has generated a number of tourism projects in the area. Currently there are two hotel/eco-lodges nearby, which are competitors for the CET project. The hotels have road access and considerable investments have been made to provide high-quality lodges. Given the proximity to the ANP, all these projects can have a high impact through the infrastructure and road construction, especially as the tourist flow increases.

Perception of Donors

A new project is part of the tourism-promotion project carried out by the IADB and the government, and this will be yet another competitor for the CET project.

Perception of Tourist Operators

Several important tour operators, such as Forest Tour Operator, and Michael Blendinger Tours (one of the most famous tour operators for the southern side of the ANP) are interested in the Volcanes area. Forest Tour Operator sends tourists regularly to the lodge, making use of all the facilities of the CET project. Michael Blendinger Tours offered an agreement, which was turned down by the members of the project because they didn't feel confident to accomplish the requirements and standards of the operator. If this agreement had taken place, an even higher number of tourists would have reached the Volcanes CET project, thus increasing the income for the families.

Impact of the Project

This project has several opportunities that could be used to increase the positive impacts on income and life quality. However, the lack of interest of most of the families in the community and the internal division of the members has led to a decrease in the potential impact. The role of the NGO is still important as a mediator in this conflict. In the short run there doesn't seem to be a clear definitive solution.

The current impact is very low, mainly because of the number of beneficiaries. Even if the whole community becomes part of the project, the overall impact would be small because of the reduced family number in the community. This also limits other non-monetary aspects of poverty reduction: the community does not have a school, health centre, electricity or purified water. The living conditions are still precarious, which leads most of the young adults to migrate to bigger towns nearby. There is little importance given by the local authorities (Samaipata Municipality and Santa Cruz Local Government) to the community, and this also limits the possibilities to negotiate new investments for the area. Most of the investment reaches the nearby town of Bermejo, but little or no investment is seen in Volcanes.

4.3.4. La Yunga¹⁷

Location

La Yunga belongs to the Municipal Section of Mairana. To reach the place, the first stop is Mairana (4 hours approximately). From there, a private transport has to be arranged to reach La Yunga, which is at the top of a steep mountain near Mairana. An alternative route, though in worse conditions connects the towns of Samaipata and La Yunga.

Tourism Attractions

La Yunga offers several attractions, but by far the main one is the Giant Fern Forest (long and short paths), which allows the tourists to appreciate an unusual sight of this rare plants, among other native plants and animals. As part of the project, an elevated platform was built to minimize the visitor's damage to the forest. Other circuits offered by the project are Cave Paintings, The Dry Forest, High Humid Forest, San Rafael River and the Devil's Tooth and Mirador.

Characteristics of the Community

Besides agriculture and some livestock, medicinal plants are also being cultivated in the area. Unlike the other communities, there is an important portion of the population that is non-migrant, though there are also several migrant families.

Number of Beneficiaries of the project

When the project started, all the families were included. However, the long time to implement the project and the lack of patience from some of the members caused that nowadays only 13 families are in charge of the project. However, the CET organization (ASYTUR) is opened to new members.

¹⁷ This section is based on the interviews to the beneficiaries in La Yunga, FAN Bolivia, SERNAP, ANP Tourism Coordinator, Santa Cruz Local Government. Further details are provided in Annex B.

Visitor Flow

The most important attraction, the Giant Fern Forest, receives a continuous flow of visitors. However, most of the time the visitors don't stay in La Yunga overnight. The visitors pay an entrance fee, which also includes the local guide services.

The role of FAN

In a relatively short time, this project is almost completely independent from the NGO. The role of FAN Bolivia is almost non-existent at this time, and the project has reached self-sustainability. The members manage the maintenance and expenses, and keep the revenues in a local bank nearby. Part of the benefits are used for investment in the community, such as improving the school or other needs.

Impact of the project

Perception of Poverty Reduction

25% of the net income is dedicated to community investment. The beneficiaries see an improvement in their quality of life. Nonetheless, most of the income comes from the use of the paths and not from the lodge.

Perception of Environmental Conservation

The elevated path in the Giant Fern Forest is very impressive and shows an effort towards minimizing the impact of the visitors. However, the nearby town of La Yunga, the roads that surround the forest and the agricultural activities show a higher impact compared to the other CET projects.

Perception of Tour Operators

Tour Operators have included the Giant Fern Forest as a standard destination, although the eco-lodge is not included in the packages. Most of the tourist operators working in the area acknowledge the appeal of La Yunga for the tourists. However, the members of the ecotourism association are considering the possibility to open their own offices in a nearby town (Samaipata or Mairana) to deal directly with the tourists and try to boost lodge use.

Impact of the Project

The project in La Yunga seems to be working well: it shows maturity and is not dependant from the NGO. It has increased the income for the members, and there is investment in the community. Even though the project does not include all the community members, it does benefit a considerable portion of them (around 1/3 of the families). This project was the first one that had a full-time manager in the

lodge and a female guide (most of the time, women are restricted to cooking activities in the projects). This shows that the income generated by the project is considerable enough to justify a full-time manager, and that there exists women empowerment.

However, it must be noted that the incomes are not substantial enough for all the members, and that the main source is not the lodge but rather the visitor's fee for the Giant Fern Forest. New paths and more attractions should be developed to allow the project to grow. Furthermore, the income generated by the visit to the forest is much lower than the one that could be generated by the lodge: the lodge uses the work of the manager, cook and other services, and allows the local producers to act as suppliers of food and other services (backward linkages). If the tourism focuses mostly on the forest visit, then the only person related is the local guide, and there is little or no other expenses that stay within the community.

Overall, the project seems to be working fine, but the impact on the beneficiaries is still low, even though there is the potential to increase the positive effects.

5. ANALYSIS OF THE CASE-STUDIES

5.1. Stakeholders and their relations with CET

This section analyzes some of the important relations around CET projects. Besides the project itself and the communities involved in them, there are several actors that influence greatly on this kind of projects. Authorities, international donor and development agencies, NGOs and tour operators can have crucial effects on the outcomes of CET projects. We analyze what the most important stakeholders are doing to promote successful CET projects, and to what extent this has an effect in the projects under analysis.

5.1.1. Public Entities

5.1.1.1. Planning and Development Ministry¹⁸

The National Development Plan was created in 2006 by the new government, and the main aim is to eradicate inequality. One of the axes in the PND is ‘Productive Bolivia’, and this axe considers tourism as one of the important economic sectors for development. The new plan steps away from large investments in tourism, and focuses on smaller community based projects and ecotourism.

Tourism is seen by the new government as ‘productive, integral, multi-disciplinary and multi-sector’. In this sense, the government intends to promote and prioritize the participation of communities and indigenous groups in tourism and to preserve the environment. In this way, according to the PND, inequality will be reduced. The state will promote income generation. The rural communities will become central actors in development, and receive training, financing and public investment.

The government expects that the private sector will compete with such projects, and create the strategic alliances with the communities to do so. In this way, the government expects to prevent profits from concentrating in a few private enterprises.

5.1.1.2. SERNAP

The National Protected Areas Service (SERNAP) is the public entity in charge of all the national parks and other protected areas in the country. Each National Park is managed independently, and the offices of ANP are in Santa Cruz. The

¹⁸ Based on interviews with the Planning and Development Ministry, UDAPE, Vice-Ministry of Tourism, BID1098/SF-BO Program, SERNAP, ANP Authorities, Santa Cruz Local Government, FAN and PROBIOMA

tourism coordinator for the ANP is in this office. The ANP authorities are aware that tourism is an opportunity for development, but a risk to the environmental sustainability of the park as well.

The National Protected Areas Service tries to promote ecotourism as a way to preserve the park and at the same time improve the income for the communities that inhabit the ANP and NAIM areas. As tourism coordinator, the person in charge tries to generate a common agenda for tourism development. It also mediates in some conflicts that arise between communities, tourism operators, NGOs and local authorities. However, due to lack of resources and staff, this task may be too big for the ANP authorities. Furthermore, some NGOs and communities do not agree with the actions of the park authority and challenge their decisions, generating more conflict.

The main offices of the National Protected Areas Service are in La Paz. The main offices do not have any personnel in charge of tourism issues, even though in the future this will be corrected. According to the officers of SERNAP, tourism is central for the development of projects that can increase the income of the communities inside the parks. Being a part of the government, SERNAP has also prioritized the development of community-based tourism ecotourism. In this, the role of the state is to promote and regulate the economic and social development. SERNAP, as an operative branch, aims at promoting tourism.

For tourism promotion, SERNAP aims at training communities for business and negotiation, and are opened to let the private sector and NGOs take over this task.

To regulate community ecotourism, SERNAP has joined the IADB to create the rules and regulations for the tourism law¹⁹. SERNAP was also involved in the elaboration of the Supreme Decree 28591, which was issued in January 2006, and regulates tourism activities inside protected areas.

5.1.1.3. Local Government

The Local Government of Santa Cruz ('Prefectura') has a tourism coordinator, who is in charge of trying to promote tourism for the whole region. But they recognize having little experience on this: Santa Cruz has recently seen an increase of tourism, and the efforts to regulate ecotourism had coordinate efforts have begun recently. One of the new programs will focus on regulating tourism inside protected areas. The local government is also investing in a new showrooms and other infrastructure where local handicrafts and tourist information will be available.

They aim at providing training to the communities that are involved in tourism, and work with the 56 municipal governments, the hotel chamber and tourism

¹⁹ Ley de Turismo N°2074

operator chamber for cultural and touristic development, improvement of touristic infrastructure and participation in local, national and international events and fairs.

But this coordination has just begun. The local government noticed that regarding some issues, SERNAP has a different approach, and thus there is a need to set a common agenda. In relation to the Tourism Vice-Ministry, the local government notices that their role has been diminished due to lack of resources. However, both institutions still work jointly to promote the region at an international level.

5.1.1.4. Tourism Vice-Ministry

The Tourism Vic-Ministry has recently published the National Tourism Plan, which is a document that resulted from several meetings with the stakeholders in the tourism sector.

5.1.1.5. BID1098/SF-BO Program

This project consists of 12,5 million US\$, from which 10 million come from a loan from the IADB. It consists of two different programs:

- **Sub-program 1** is managed by the Vice-Ministry of Tourism, using 2,8 million US\$. The goals are:
 - Promoting Bolivia as a tourism destination
 - Create the rules and regulations for Law 2074 in order to regulate all the different areas of tourism.
 - Support to the tourism quality management
- **Sub-program 2** is managed by FONDESIF (), for the remaining 9,7 million US\$. It aims at financing small and large tourism projects (25.000US\$-100.000 US\$ and 100.000US\$ -1.000.000US\$ respectively)

Currently, this program is one of the most important ones. The Tourism Vice-Ministry depends heavily on the resources of this project, as does the plan to promote community-based tourism nationwide.

This program fits within the new vision of the government, as it promotes sustainable projects that need acceptance of the whole community to be implemented. Even though in many cases they are private projects, one of the requirements is that the project prioritizes the use of local labour force and services, thus creating strong backward linkages and increasing the impact and multiplying effects in the communities. In many cases the projects are also handed over to the communities themselves to take over the project after a certain period.

5.1.2. *International Donors*²⁰

The donor agencies played an important role for the development of CET projects. IADB, UNDP and GTZ have promoted some experiences in national parks before, such as Chalalán and Tomarapi. IADB currently is supporting tourism activities through the aforementioned program. The German Cooperation (GTZ and KfW) are supporting the activities of SERNAP through MAPZA and BIAP. SNV is currently supporting the process of regulating the tourism sector.

The interviews have shown that in most cases, the international donors have aligned the credits with the new development plan, which, in many cases, involved reviewing the objectives and conditions of the loans. Program BID1098/SF-BO started under the previous government, but it has adjusted well to the new government priorities.

International cooperation seems to be putting less emphasis on financing CET projects directly. Rather, the focus seems to be to generate the conditions that will allow CET projects to develop, such as clear regulation for projects in protected areas and generating tourism standards that will ensure the quality of the existing projects.

5.1.3. *Tour Operators*²¹

Bolivia has experienced an increase in the number of tourists, mostly backpackers, who reach the country because of the natural landscapes and well preserved ecosystems, looking in many cases for adventure tourism. This has in turn created a bloom in the tourism service sector, such as tour operators, guides and lodges. In Santa Cruz many tour operators take advantage of the proximity to ANP to promote short trips to visit the park. However, one of the conflicts arises because in many cases the tour operators do not make use of local facilities. The tours generally take the tourist into the park with their own guides and cook. The problem is that they usually make use of the paths that local communities have created to attract tourism, without paying to make such use.

In Villa Amboró this has generated conflicts between the community (who claims that all tourists should make use exclusively of local guides and lodging facilities) and the tour operators, who resist to do so.

However, some travel agencies (Forest Tour Operator is one of them) promote the use of the existing CET projects, and have been an important trigger for some of the projects. An important portion of the tourists that reach Volcanes do so through Forest Tour Operator.

²⁰ Based on interviews with IADB; GTZ, SNV, KfW, SERNAP, ANP Authorities, Santa Cruz Local Government, FAN and PROBIOMA

²¹ Based on interviews with Forest Tour Operators, Agustín Echalar, SERNAP, ANP Authorities, Santa Cruz Local Government, CET Project beneficiaries of Villa Amboró, Isama, Volcanes and La Yunga, FAN and PROBIOMA

Another important agency belongs to Michael Blendinger, based in Samaipata. Currently he has an important share of the market that reaches Samaipata. Michael Blendinger was involved in creating some of the circuits for Isama and Villa Amboró, and has also trained some of the members of the CET projects. On some occasions he approached the CET projects to create alliances. However, the members of the projects were intimidated by the high standards that the agency was asking for in terms of quality of service, punctuality and client service, and therefore no alliances were created. However, this agency still visits projects such as La Yunga and Villa Amboró.

5.2. Interactions between stakeholders

5.2.1. The implementation of the projects: NGOs and Communities

The implementation process of the four projects present few differences. Three of them were implemented by PROBIOMA, following the same approach. Two of the projects were implemented almost a decade ago, the third one was implemented since late 2001. In this same year the project of FAN Bolivia was also being implemented. In this section we will take time as an important variable, because by comparing projects that have existed for similar periods we can see if the important variables are different from time, such as the NGO itself, location or characteristics of the community.

However, there are some important differences in the outcomes. The project implemented by FAN Bolivia started with the identification of the forest as an area that needed preservation but could be used as a tourist attraction. The initial phase included a long phase of workshops and training even before building the lodge. After that process, the building phase was done quickly, and small improvements to the circuits were done. Currently, as we mentioned before, the project is almost completely independent from FAN Bolivia. The relation is marginal, and the NGO only provides occasional checks and help and training if needed.

The project in Isama, on the other hand, started when one of the locals (Francisco Vique) identified the area surrounding the community as an outstanding landscape that could be appealing for tourists. He convinced part of the community to purchase land that was being used for logging. The community looked for support from an institution, which was hard to find. Eventually they got in touch with PROBIOMA, who invested in the community to build the lodge and contracted expert advisors to create the paths and design the circuits together with the locals

As time passed and the infrastructure was not finished, many of the members decided to drop out of the project. This weakened the project, and generated a sense of disappointment among the beneficiaries. Today only a few members still

belong to the CET project, and some of them don't have high hopes about the future. Even though a considerable part of the infrastructure has been completed, the lodge looks abandoned and out of use. The efforts of PROBIOMA to attract tourists have not been enough, and the association for ecotourism is lacking the strength for the last push.

On the other hand, the projects of Villa Amboró and Volcanes were implemented together, long before La Yunga and Isama. Both were implemented by PROBIOMA, but the outcomes were different. In both cases the communities have an important proportion of migrants, but the origin of the migrants differs. However, this last difference is unlikely to be the source of the different outcomes. Another difference is the size of the community. Villa Amboró is at least four times bigger than Volcanes, and Volcanes is more dispersed in the area, lacking a clear 'village' area. The community is rather a series of scattered houses. This makes coordinated work harder. Another difference is the main activity. In Villa Amboró, Isama and La Yunga, the main activity was agriculture, and, to a lesser extent, livestock. But Volcanes had a higher number of people dedicated exclusively to livestock, and those people were less interested in the CET project. This may be one of the facts that affected the possibility to generate a stronger group with higher participation of the community members.

However, this difference can't explain the problems in Isama. Based on the experience of GTZ in Tomarapi and IADB in Chalalán²², two key factors that allow a successful CET project are i) the location needs to be attractive enough for a continuous flow of tourists, with outstanding landscapes and accessibility, and ii) the implementation phase has to be done carefully and over a long period of time during which the base for the organization is created within the community, and the members are trained in all the required areas. This last factor takes a major commitment and resources from the implementing entity (NGO or other), because it can last several years before the process is finished.

Between the different CET experiences in the country there have been temporary workshops and seminars that took the members from different CET projects to one location to learn from similar experiences. In many occasions the interviewees mentioned that they found the organization in Tomarapi excellent, outstanding and hard to replicate. One of the persons from Volcanes even identified this factor as the key explanation for the success in Tomarapi and the lack of it in Volcanes.

²² Tomarapi is a Project funded by GTZ and UNDP, in the Sajama National Park on the Altiplano region (Western Bolivia, near the border with Chile). Chalalán (which is the most famous CET project in Bolivia, and one of the most important ones at an international level) is located in the department of La Paz, on the north eastern region in the Madidi National Park, on the border with the department of Beni.

5.2.2. *The communities and Amboró National Park*

The projects have generated in all cases a deeper knowledge of the environment. Even if the project does not have a considerable flow of tourists (and therefore income), all the members that were interviewed had a considerable knowledge of the importance of preserving the environment as an asset for future income.

This is related not only to the incomes that the CET projects generate, but also to the training that the NGOs and the park authorities give them. It is important to remember that both FAN Bolivia and PROBIOMA are environmental NGOs, and this, if there is an issue on which they did put extra effort, is the importance of preserving the park.

The park authorities explained that in most cases the people, especially in communities with CET projects, have realized the importance of the ANP, and consider the ANP as an advantage that provides them an opportunity rather than a constraint. However, population pressure for agricultural lands and grazing lands, plus growing populations due to migration of peasants looking for land, put an enormous pressure on the ANP. Higher numbers of visitors, according to park authorities, are starting to generate impact on the environment surrounding Villa Amboró.

5.2.3. *Analysis of the projects: Why do some work and others don't?*

Establishing the reasons for success or failure of this type of projects seems to be difficult. Each community has different characteristics that may influence the impact of CET projects. Furthermore, several non-observable characteristics can have an impact on the project as well, such as personal relations and individual characteristics of the beneficiaries and detractors of the projects.

However, some of the problems that the projects experienced seem to show straightforward relations to the outcome of the project. The number of families involved in the project seems to be one of the important factors. La Yunga and Villa Amboró can be seen as the most successful projects among the four analyzed, and both of them are the projects with the largest number of beneficiaries (both in relative and absolute numbers). Nonetheless, this relation can not be seen as a direct or proportional relation, where the larger the number of beneficiaries, the greater the success.

There seems to be no correlation between the time and success. Another factor seems to be the location. La Yunga enjoys easy accessibility and has a differentiated product (namely the Giant Fern Forest). Regarding the communities, the social and power relations can have important positive and negative effects, and conflicts can easily lead to the destruction of the projects

Other hypotheses that need deeper analysis are the effects of the activities of the community on the willingness to commit to the projects. The case of Volcanes

is an example: In this study, Volcanes was the only community where livestock was the main activity rather than agriculture. According to the local guide, those involved in livestock are more powerful, have larger extensions of land and more income. This makes CET projects less appealing for them. On the other hand, those involved in agriculture tend to be more vulnerable to poverty, and thus are more willing to participate in CET.

Another hypothesis is the influence of the population density. While larger towns may have a hard time to coordinate efforts and reach consensus, small communities that are scattered over large extensions can also face similar difficulties. Once again, Volcanes is a small community that is distributed over a large area, while this is not the case in the other three projects.

However, the two hypotheses need further research to be tested, and the data (and objective) of this research can not provide a definitive answer for them.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This research has analyzed the impact of four CET projects in ANP and NAIM in Bolivia. Even though there are several positive aspects of such projects, the impact on poverty alleviation and vulnerability reduction is still small. Given the scope of this study, it is not possible to generalize if such projects should or should not be seen as an opportunity for local development. However, we can cast some doubts on the government's PND that sees community based tourism as one of the key elements for development. The impacts on livelihoods and diversification of income is still minimal in the four cases in ANP.

We have established that community based approach does not guarantee success, nor equality or lack of conflicts. Community-Based Ecotourism is still a long way from being a clear option for poverty reduction. Even though in most cases the projects are seen as positive by the beneficiaries, CET has not been able to provide a minimum income on which the beneficiaries can rely regularly.

The government has stated a series of goals regarding CET, and there is already important work towards regulating the tourism sector. However, important government bodies are still understaffed and in many cases with budget constraints that restricts more efficient work.

Even though the budget problem has been constant for several years, this government seems to have cut the budget for the tourism vice-ministry even further, although Bolivia is experiencing (for the first time in many years) a fiscal surplus.

The new government changed most of the authorities in public entities. These changes have a cost in knowledge loss, as many of the new public workers have little know-how. This leads to problems in the policy implementation.

The PND seems to be a politicized intention rather than a plan, as many of the pieces of the puzzle are missing. There appears to be an insufficient commitment of the government to go beyond the intentions.

Funding for CET projects has been provided by some international donor agencies, NGOs and local and national government institutions (Ministerio de Planificación y Desarrollo Económico, 2006, Denman, 2001, McLaughlin et al., 2002, TNC, 2004). McLaughlin et al. (2002) indicated the need of comprehensive policies to promote ecotourism and join the disperse efforts of existing projects. Lately, it has become evident that there is little coordination and business-oriented management in the projects of the Amboró region and this hinder the current development of ecotourism in the region (Alcoba, 2006).

6.1. Policy Recommendations

There is a need for a leading institution in the process to promote CET. The role of SERNAP to promote tourism inside the protected areas could set this institution as the ideal one for this task. However, the budget problems and restricted number of people inside the institution makes this goal hard to reach. Even though there is a tourism coordinator for some national parks, there is no tourism coordinator at a national level inside SERNAP, which seems to be contradictory.

The impact of local, regional and national tourist policies is high for all tourism projects. Local policies do not reflect the PND and the importance that the central government has given to tourism in general and community based tourism in particular. The national policies have so far not reached the “ground level”, and there is no positive impact on the projects. Furthermore, the changing policies and priorities of the successive governments lead to uncertainty that is harmful for the projects. The lack of support to park authorities and tourism vice-ministry means a double burden for any CET project in national parks.

The authorities should promote long-term commitment among donors and NGOs. This could strengthen greatly the new projects and the probabilities to increase the impact of the project on poverty and livelihoods. So far there is a short term vision of many NGOs and Donor/Development agencies.

In general, new policies to promote CET should aim at providing the arena where NGOs, Donors, Government at all Levels, Communities, Tourist Operators and Park Authorities meet to set up a comprehensive strategy and alliances for CET development.

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ANNEX A: ECONOMIC DATA

Table A.1: General Economic Data									
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
GDP Growth (%)	4,64	5,27	1,65	4,27	4,67	4,68	4,36	4,95	5,03
Per Capita GDP growth (%)	2,29	2,90	-0,65	1,90	2,27	2,26	1,91	2,46	2,53
Annual Inflation (%)	18,01	14,52	10,46	9,31	8,52	12,58	7,95	6,73	4,39
Population (million inhabitants)	6,7	6,8	7,0	7,1	7,3	7,48	7,66	7,85	8,04
Unemployment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Inequality (Gini coefficient)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
GDP Growth (%)	0,43	2,51	1,68	2,49	2,71	4,17	4,04	4,63	N/A
Per Capita GDP	-1,98	0,14	-0,64	0,17	0,42	1,86	1,79	2,40	N/A
Annual Inflation (%)	3,13	3,41	0,92	2,45	3,94	4,62	4,91	4,95	N/A
Population (million inhabitants)	8,23	8,43	8,62	8,82	9,02	9,23	9,43	9,63	9,83
Unemployment Rate	4,33	4,79	5,24	5,48	6,01	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Inequality (Gini coefficient)	0,58	0,62	0,59	0,60	N/A	N/A	0,60	0,59	N/A

Source: INE and UDAPE

Table A.2: FGT Poverty Measures

Poverty Line	Level	FGT	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003-2004	2005	2006	
Poverty (%)	Overall	P(0)	63,47	66,38	63,12	65,15	63,15	60,59	59,92	
		P(1)	35,99	40,16	34,55	36,65	31,11	34,13	32,39	
		P(2)	25,62	29,81	23,88	25,95	19,79	23,80	21,79	
	Urban	P(0)	51,36	54,47	54,28	53,91	54,41	51,05	50,27	
		P(1)	22,43	25,60	24,60	23,79	22,20	22,84	21,80	
		P(2)	12,93	15,49	10,16	13,75	11,97	13,05	12,21	
	Rural	P(0)	84,00	87,02	77,69	78,75	77,67	77,60	76,47	
		P(1)	59,37	65,39	50,95	57,56	45,94	54,29	50,55	
		P(2)	47,43	54,62	39,10	45,80	32,79	42,97	38,22	
	Extreme Poverty (%)	Overall	P(0)	40,74	45,16	38,84	41,34	34,50	38,16	37,68
			P(1)	22,22	26,32	20,06	22,31	15,92	20,30	18,15
			P(2)	15,86	19,53	13,89	16,00	9,88	14,08	11,87
Urban		P(0)	23,51	27,93	26,18	25,71	22,95	24,30	23,36	
		P(1)	8,91	10,97	14,65	9,40	7,64	8,68	7,94	
		P(2)	4,98	6,19	5,94	5,12	3,76	4,67	4,09	
Rural		P(0)	69,94	75,01	59,71	62,12	53,72	62,90	62,25	
		P(1)	45,12	52,92	36,39	43,31	29,70	41,03	35,67	
		P(2)	34,50	42,65	27,00	33,70	20,03	30,86	25,23	

Note:

P(0) is Poverty Incidence, corresponding to the FGT $\alpha=0$

P(1) is Poverty Gap, corresponding to the FGT $\alpha=1$

P(2) is Poverty Severity, corresponding to the FGT $\alpha=2$

Source: UDAPE, 2007

ANNEX B: LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Table B.1: List of Interviews			
Stakeholder	Place	Date	Interviewed People
<u>CET Projects</u>			
Villa Amboró*	ANP	01 Aug 07	President of the Community's Ecotourism Association (Agustín Arenas)
		01 Aug 07	Craftsman and Guide (Marcos Rojas)
		01 Aug 07	Guide (Santos Corma)
		01 Aug 07	Cook (Estefanía)
Isama*	ANP	02 Aug 07	Guide (Francisco Vique)
		02 Aug 07	President of the Community's Ecotourism Association (Nereo Abrigo)
		02 Aug 07	Community Representative (Roberto Choque)
Volcanes*	ANP	02 Aug 07	General Secretary (Benito Villarroel)
		08 Aug 07	Guide (Camilo Galarza)
La Yunga	ANP		Guide (Pedro Galarza)
			Cook (Justa de Galarza)
			Manager (Efrasio Jimenez)
			Guide (Donatila Rioja)
<u>NGOs</u>			
FAN Bolivia	Santa Cruz	30 Jul 07	Environmental Economist (Natalia Calderón) Head of Territorial Management (Javier Mejía)
PROBIOMA	Santa Cruz	31 Jul 07	Ecotourism Promotion (Sadid Morris)
		11 Aug 07	Ecotourism Coordinator (Luis Patiño)
<u>Public Institutions</u>			
SERNAP	Santa Cruz	30 Jul 07	Tourism Coordinator (José Luis Isnardez)
	La Paz	15 Aug 07	Planning Director (Edwin Camacho)
		15 Aug 07	Planning and Conflict Management Technician (Álvaro Baez)
Tourism Vice-ministry	La Paz	16 Aug 07	Tourism Strategy and Policy Coordinator (Orlando Poma)
Local Government	Santa Cruz	10 Aug 07	Tourism Expert (Armando Rojas)
Economic and Social Policy Analysis Unit (UDAPE)	La Paz	14 Aug 07	Tourism Analyst (Alvaro Lazo)
FONDESIF	La Paz	14 Aug 07	Coordinator Sub-Program 2 (José Castro)**
<u>International Donor/Development Agencies</u>			
GTZ	La Paz	17 Aug 07	Chief Counsellor (Jürgen Czerwenka)
IABD	La Paz	15 Aug 07	Sectorial Specialist on Tourism (Waldo Vargas)
UNDP	La Paz	16 Aug 07	HDI Coordinator (George Gray)
KfW	La Paz	17 Aug 07	BIAP Programme Coordinator (Uwe Gebauer)
SNV	La Paz	17 Aug 07	Sustainable Tourism Assessor (Juarn René Alcoba)
<u>Tour Operators</u>			
Forest Tour	Santa Cruz	07 Aug 07	Commercial Manager (Walter Guzmán)

Operator
Agustín Echalar La Paz 19 Aug 07 Freelance Tour Operator

ANNEX C: PROTECTED AREAS IN BOLIVIA

Table C1: Characteristics of Protected Areas in Bolivia

<u>Category</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>
National or Departmental Park*	Strict and permanent protection of representative ecosystems, biogeographic provinces as well as flora, fauna, landscapes and scenic beauty that allows the continuation of ecological and evolutionary processes within the ecosystems.
Sanctuary*	Strict and permanent protection of endemic species (flora and fauna), species at risk of extinction and singular ecosystems.
Natural Monument*	Preserve outstanding natural features, because of their uniqueness and spectacular characteristics as landscape. This category protects geological, physiological and paleontological formations, as well as the biodiversity within the area.
Wildlife Reserve	Protect, manage and use in a sustainable way, under official supervision, the existing wildlife for both intensive and extensive use for extractive and non-extractive activities
Natural Area of Integral Management (NAIM)	Promote the compatibility of biodiversity conservation and sustainable local development by allowing the interaction of communities, differentiated zones communities that make use of the natural resources.
Natural Immobilization Reserve	This is a temporary classification for areas that need further studies in order to establish the final category, the areas are protected for up to 5 years under this category until the studies are carried out.

() Extractive and consumption activities are forbidden, as well as infrastructure construction, unless it is used for scientific purposes, ecotourism, environmental education or it is related to the indigenous communities' livelihoods.*

Source: Self-elaborated based on Supreme Decree 24781, 1997

Table C2: Population and Area in the Bolivian National Parks

<u>National Park (*)</u>	<u>Area (Hectares)</u>	<u>Population (**)</u>	<u>Population Density per Km²</u>
1 Sajama	200.000	1.654	1,10
2 Eduardo Avaroa	714.745	670	0,09
3 Cordillera de Sama	108.500	4.500	3,98
4 Apolobamba	240.000	16.000	3,82
5 Tunari	300.000	N/A	N/A
6 Cotapata	58.620	18.500	2,80
7 Madidi	1.895.740	3.500	0,18
8 Carrasco	622.600	18.100	N/A
9 Toro Toro	16.570	1.130	5,00
10 El Palmar	59.484	3.300	5,50
11 Tariquía	246.870	3.500	1,50
12 Amboró	150.000	41.000	9,23
13 TCO-Biósfeta Pilón Lajas	400.000	700	0,11
14 Isiboro Sécure TIPNIS	1.240.000	5.200	0,45
15 Noel Kempff Mercado	1.523.446	1.590	N/A
16 Serranía del Iñaño	263.000	6.758	N/A
17 Serranía de Aguaragüe	108.307	5.527	5,10
18 Estación Biológica el Beni	135.000	700	N/A
19 Manuripi	747.000	933	0,21
20 Kaa Iya del Gran Chaco	3.510.704	300	0,002
21 San Matías	2.918.500	5.400	0,21
22 Otuquis	1.005.950	>400	0,03

(*) Includes National Parks, National Reserves and Integral Management (or 'buffer zone') areas

(**) According to Ribera and Liberman (2006). The authors recognize that in may cases there is no consensus on the exact number of inhabitants in the parks, and thus the data may not be completely accurate

(***) According to Basic Needs, at municipal level

(****) When information was available.

Source: Self-Elaborated, based on INE, UDAPE (2007) and Ribera and Liberman (2006)

ANNEX D: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND POLITICAL SPACE

Social struggle and confrontation against the government has been constant for many decades. Even though social movements lost some of their importance in the mid-80's, there has been a strong comeback since the mid and late 1990's and early 2000s.

During April 2000, social struggle under president Hugo Banzer started to build up in the city of Cochabamba. The events escalated in what is now known as the 'Water War', and is in many cases seen as the beginning of a series of clashes between civil society and the government (Rivero, 2006, Ratnikas, 2007). Later that same year, the clashes of coca-leaf growers opposing the coca eradication program of the government left over 10 killed (Ratnikas, 2007). The clashes between government and social movements in February and October 2003 were extremely violent, and left numerous deaths among civilians, police and military. The social struggle and claims for equality and improvement in living standards gave the social movements a rebirth. This new strength forced Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada and later Carlos Mesa to resign presidency and supreme court head Eduardo Rodríguez assumed presidency to call for advanced elections (Ratnikas, 2007).

One of the most important icons in this process has been Evo Morales, who was elected as a congressman in 1997 (Ratnikas, 2007). Even though being part of the congress, he still kept his position as part of the trade union of coca-leaf growers. He strongly opposed the neo-liberal approach of the traditional political parties, and took active measures to oppose economic and social policies by the government.

In 2005 Evo Morales was elected president. This was the first time that a candidate was elected with 'absolute majority' (over 50% of the votes), and also the first time that the president had an indigenous background, although the country has a large indigenous population. This new government now is implementing the 'Plan Nacional de Desarrollo' (PND), and the aim of this government is to reduce poverty and inequality, and to give priority to the indigenous and excluded communities.

The renovated boost in social movements and indigenous communities, plus the presence of the new president has empowered local communities and put them at the centre of the development discourse. Today, more than any other time, the local communities are the most important actors for economic growth.

ANNEX E: PHOTOGRAPHS



Group 1:

Flora of Amboró: Flowers



Group 2:

Fauna of Amboró: Birds, Reptile and Amphibian



Group 3:

Flora of Amboró: Ferns and Flower



Group 4:

CET Projects (In clockwise order, starting top-left): Isama, Volcanes, La Yunga, Villa Amboró



Group 5:

Beneficiaries(In clockwise order, starting top-left): Isama, Villa Amboró, La Yunga, Isama



Group 6:

Landscapes(In clockwise order, starting top-left): Volcanes and Rio Colorado, Volcanes Lodge, La Yunga, Surutú River near Villa Amboró



Group 7:

Local Guides (In clockwise order, starting top-left): Camilo Galarza (Volcanes), Donatila Rioja (La Yunga), Santos Corma (Villa Amboró), Francisco Vique (Isama)