Title of the Story: “Sustainable tourism as an alternative to improve the quality of life of the local population”

Destination Name: (include any state, province or region)
Parque Nacional Tingo María

Country: Perú

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Position: Coordinador

Nomination Category: (Please check the boxes that indicate the focus of your story)

☒ Localizing the destination supply chain
☐ Decarbonizing the destination supply chain
☐ Culture & Communities
☐ Environment & Climate
☐ Nature & Ecotourism
☐ Tourism Reset & Recovery

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Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

Issues faced

What was the problem/issue solved with the good practice? Click to add your text

Tingo Maria, which means "meeting of Maria", Tincos which in Quechua means "union of two rivers (Huallaga and Monzon)", and Maria the name of a woman who gave lodging to travelers who moved along the rivers; it is the capital of the district of Rupa-Rupa and at the same time of the province of Leoncio Prado in the department of Huánuco - Peru. Tingo Maria is surrounded by landscapes covered by forests, waterfalls, caves and biological diversity, and is becoming an example of sustainable tourism in the country.

In the 80's and 90's, Tingo Maria was a territory dominated by terrorism and drug trafficking, with a frightened population and illegal agricultural activity such as coca leaf production. During this time, public and private actors made various efforts to change this scenario, achieving gradual results, however, it can be mentioned as an important turning point that in 2012 comrade Artemio (terrorist and drug trafficker) was captured, which was crucial for the state to initiate important negotiations with community leaders and authorities, providing opportunities for access to education, health, and identification documents for each citizen.

In the Buffer Zone of Tingo Maria National Park there are 495 people who worked in the cultivation of coca leaves, as a contribution to improving their quality of life, since 2013 we have been working hand in hand with institutions such as DEVIDA, IIAP, Army and the National Police of Peru and properly SERNANP - PNTM, in raising awareness of the population to change the cultivation of coca leaves for other sustainable crop options. In 2015, the PNTM initiates the mechanism of signing Minor Activity Agreements for the Use of the Landscape Resource (tourism) benefiting 35 families, in addition, from 2016 to date there are 2 Conservation Agreements benefiting 20 families and, in 2018 2 Exploitation Contracts for Resource Management are signed benefiting 14 families. These agreements signed with the population contributed to the reduction of hectares of coca leaves in Huallaga, according to United Nations reports, the result is that in 1994, 29,000 ha of coca leaf cultivation were identified and currently, 1,000 ha are identified. The final objective is to replace coca leaf cultivation in its entirety with alternative activities such as sustainable tourism.

Methods, steps and tools applied
The agreements that are signed with the population are made by the PNTM's management, through which the right to use the natural resource landscape and resource management is granted, with the objective of "contributing to the sustainable development of its environment, particularly its Buffer Zone"; the agreements are planning and orientation documents for the development of tourism and recreational activities within the protected natural area.

These agreements are granted to a natural or legal person belonging to the local population, who develop activities such as equipment rental and tourist accessories, environmental interpretation, snack sales, sale of typical dishes, preparation and sale of handicrafts, vehicle parking, and management of melipona bees. In order to raise environmental awareness among the local population and to encourage them to commit to sustainable tourism, several strategies have been implemented, such as the following:

1. Capacity building for the 495 inhabitants in sustainable tourism, environmental interpretation, enterprise management, customer service, good food handling practices, alternative crops, soil management, and the importance of improving the quality of life, among others.

2. The Research Institute of the Peruvian Amazon provides technical assistance in alternative crops, training in the care and management of seedlings (papaya and cocona), provides seeds and performs technical monitoring until the harvest is ready for the market, these products are also offered to tourists during their tour of the ANP. In this way, this coordinated intervention benefits 20% of the population linked to the PNTM.

3. DEVIDA has been working with the population belonging to the special use zone, providing assistance and technical monitoring in the production of coffee and cocoa, which are acquired by entrepreneurs who have Conservation Agreements, these products are processed into chocolates, ice cream, snacks, ground coffee and beans, and finally, offered to tourists during their tour of the ANP. In this way, this coordinated intervention benefits 15% of the population located in the special use zone of the PNTM.

4. The 50% of the population has agreements with the PNTM that allow them to offer tourists: handicrafts, food such as typical dishes or snacks based on local inputs, ice cream based on local inputs, sale of fruits grown and harvested in sustainable bio gardens of the PNTM.

5. Furthermore, 15% of the population has agreements with the PNTM for environmental interpretation, orientation and taking photographs of tourists during the tour in the PNTM.

6. There is also a coordinated effort with the Peruvian Army and National Police, who patrol the area on a regular basis. To date, 2 police stations have been installed to guarantee the tranquility and security of the population, reducing the risk of drug trafficking returning to their territories. Based on the above, it can be concluded that the coordinated and articulated work with other stakeholders, and the strategies implemented by the PNTM, have contributed to improving the quality of life of the population, as well as promoting formal and/or decent work in tourism in the PNA, which has increased the economic income for the benefit of the families that have agreements with SERNANP and the PNTM.
Key success factors

What helped you tackle the issues? Click to add your text

The main factor that led us to success was the little commitment of the population to improve their quality of life in betting on new alternative crops, commit to give 100% to change the mentality and accept the new challenges such as training in new agricultural techniques, the local population of arduous management between institutions such as (DEVIDA). The local population was gradually joining the change, which greatly facilitated the work of the organizations, consolidating a great team on both sides, as well as the institutions bet on the population settled in the influence of the ANP, because they saw in them the ability to improve and undertake new challenges, being partners of 2 conservation agreements with the ANP.

Within the PNTM there are fairs where all the products produced in the buffer zone and the special use zone are exhibited. The municipality supports fairs in the markets so that the population has greater access to local products. Products are also exported through Peruvian government-organized expo fairs. With the support of DIRCETUR, an internship was conducted with the villagers who have agreements for minor activities to replicate what they learned in the ANP from their successful experiences in service quality. The local people are trying to improve their treatment of tourists daily, innovate the presentation of their products, and be more attractive. The local population affirms that the support received from the PNTM was crucial to leave behind coca cultivation and drug trafficking.

Lessons learned

While implementing the Good Practice what challenges were faced, and how were they overcome? Click to add your text

In the beginning, the local population did not have a good organization that made them conformists. There was a small group that got involved in creating a Farmers’ Association called El Buen Sembrador (The Good Sower) created in the 1990s within the Tingo María National Park, who decided to change illicit crops for sustainable crops such as coffee, cacao and cocona, changing their mentality and joining partners to ensure the conservation of the flora and fauna.

Changing the population’s mentality was one of the most important challenges for the ANP. To achieve this, a lot of work was done to raise awareness among the population, getting them to bet on alternative crops and sustainable tourism were the best results. The articulated work with other institutions and the constant monitoring of the population was crucial for this achievement. If the population feels economic and emotional stability, they will bet on the legal. Another important challenge was to articulate the products of the new crops to the markets and to the tourists; the products that were offered were the same that could be found in all the markets; we bet on innovation, good treatment and the quality of the products, which led to a great demand for our products in the markets.

We sought to make the activities sustainable (environmental, social, economic) in order to ensure their future; environmentally, we reforested with timber trees (Bolaina, cedar and capirona) the coca-growing areas, which in turn were replaced with coffee, cocoa and cocona seedlings; Socially, the entire population of the buffer zone and the special use zone benefited; economically, the PNTM has tourist attractions that are very popular with tourists and each year the number of visitors is increasing by 3 to 5% annually, which guarantees the demand for the products. The PNTM has done an excellent job with the local population, generating economic benefits; as an institution, it supports the population, guaranteeing their economy and quality of life, and at the same time, the population reciprocates for the conservation of the ANP.
Results, achievements and recognitions

What were the qualitative and quantitative results of the good practice? Has it received any rewards?

According to figures obtained from the analysis of the matrix of effects by activities carried out in 2020, it was determined that the conservation status of Tingo Maria National Park's ecosystems is in the "GOOD" category, because the report of effects by activities indicates that 93.553% of the grids have no effects. This is a result obtained thanks to the hard work and commitment of the local population and institutions.

The local population has been empowered in the conservation of the Natural Protected Area, for sustainable tourism, generating economic benefits, currently there are 25 Minor Activity Agreements that lead mostly with 80% women and 20% men, as well as 04 innovative enterprises linked to the PNTM access to the Tourism Emprende Program (MINCETUR competitive fund), thus generating opportunities to diversify tourism and promote the products of coffee, cocoa, lemon, banana and others.

The PNTM as nature and recreation tourism and with the support of strategic allies, it is possible to observe the growth of 3 to 6% annual growth of tourist visits (2016=85115, 2017=85744, 2018=102715, 2019=106438, visitors). Freedom and security of the population was achieved, opportunities are generated for access to education and health, in addition, the population assumes an important role as agents of conservation of the PNTM through sustainable economic activities.

Additional references

Provide links to further information. Pictures and videos should be available for download either from Youtube, Vimeo or other Cloud-based (Google/ One Drive) download URL.

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7tnUxe6d7o&ab_channel=RevistaCaretas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7tnUxe6d7o&ab_channel=RevistaCaretas)
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