



2021 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title of the Story: Ecotourism for the conservation of the jungle of mirrors

Destination Name: Pacaya Samiria National Reserve, Loreto

Country: Peru

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Position: Sustainability coordinator

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

Please find detailed information for the categories below in the Top 100 training module 'Good Practice Story'.

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

Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices in the Top 100 training module "Good Practice Story".

Should you have any questions on your submission please refer to our FAQ page or contact top100@greendestinations.org

DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

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?

The Peruvian Amazon for a long time was the open source of resources for the communities and cities settled in the Loreto region; tropical forests were deforested for timber, hydrobiological resources were increasingly unsustainably exploited, and forest animals were hunted in an increasingly predatory manner. Faced with this, the Peruvian State undertook the task of protecting these unique ecosystems of great biological richness, creating the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve in 1972 in order to protect two million eighty thousand hectares of flooded Amazon forest and the vulnerable species that inhabit as the paiche (*Arapaima gigas*), the largest fish in the Amazon that due to its great taste was in high demand in the local market, the taricaya (*Podocnemis unifilis*), the river turtle appreciated for its eggs that are part of the diet of the Amazonian population, the otorongo, the pink dolphin and a diversity of birds, making it one of the most important wetlands in the country.

However, the problems in the jungle of mirrors did not end with its designation as a protected area. There was still a lot to do! The more than 200 communities settled in the interior of the area and the buffer zone were not going to stop making use of the forest and its resources overnight since it was one of the few sources of livelihood for their families. Likewise, it remained to identify the conservation alternatives that would benefit both the population and the forest itself.

The Pacaya Samiria National Reserve began to be seen as a space of tourist interest and the first tour operators from the city of Iquitos appeared, who entered the reserve to go on excursions to observe flora and fauna, go on walks and visit the riverside communities. These companies began to employ the local population of the Yanayacu Pucate basin, but very sporadically and without long-term benefits.

Faced with the growing tourist demand, tourism was foreseen as an opportunity for local people as an alternative to use the natural resource provided by Pacaya Samiria, in this case the landscape..

Methods, steps and tools applied

The task was not easy: various strategies were applied and strategic allies were sought, such as the NGO Pro - Naturaleza and the NGO Green Life, with whom an environmental education program was implemented; a program for the sustainable use of natural resources and an ecotourism program with which a great project called "Consortium Rumbo al Dorado" was started, with which the native communities of Veinte de Enero, Yarina and Manco Cápac settled in the Yanayacu Pucate basin. for the provision of tourist services that comply with sustainability standards; that is, a balance between the environmental, social and economic component. The objective of the project was to offer an alternative income to local populations through ecotourism, for which a permanent training has been developed that creates awareness about the value of natural resources, thus ensuring their conservation. We worked with the organizations formed in each community: COMAPA January 20, made up of 19 families (58% of the community), UPC Yarina by 17 families (71% of the community) and UPC Yaku Tayta by 12 families (El 18% of the community).

Although it is true that the project as a consortium only lasted 5 years, the awareness-raising work was intensified by the park rangers of the protected area and allies such as the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism were sought through the Rural Community Tourism program to provide training in accommodation, food, finance and good environmental practices in the tourism sector.



Key success factors

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

In the first place, the work articulated with key actors such as the NGOs Pro-Naturaleza, Green Life and the National Service of Natural Protected Areas by the State that intervened in the native communities through awareness-raising activities, training in the provision of tourist services and financial support for the implementation of three shelters in the tourist corridor.

Second, the promotion of tourism in protected natural areas by the State and the private sector as spaces with great tourist potential that preserve unique ecosystems of great natural beauty.

Finally, the alliance with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism for capacity building and access to competitive funds for investment in tourism ventures.

Lessons learned

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

One of the biggest challenges was to convince the population to abandon predatory practices such as illegal logging, hunting and excessive fishing of endangered species. Achieving recognition by the population about the importance of conserving the standing forest and that the species could be used in a sustainable way through management plans was hard work that was achieved by working together with the population to establish the exploitation parameters and the activities necessary to protect the fauna of the protected natural area, such as community patrols.

Another important challenge was to involve the population in the tourist activity and that they know the operation of the tourist services since many of these people had not taken a tourist service or had previously worked in tourist businesses; Therefore, the training of the population on accommodation, guidance and food services was decisive.

Results, achievements and recognitions

What were the qualitative and quantitative results of the good practice? Has it received any rewards? Click to add your text

*The communities of Veinte de Enero, Buenos Aires and Yarina were made aware of the importance of conserving flooded tropical forests and the species that inhabit them. Today the population has abandoned predatory practices such as illegal timber extraction and illegal fishing for paiche (*Arapaima gigas*), it is involved in the sustainable use of aguaje (*Mauritia flexuosa*) and taricaya (*Podocnemis unifilis*) and in the provision of tourist activity. The involvement process generated tourism entrepreneurship ideas that materialized in recent years. Currently, the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve currently has tourist ventures in the communities of Veinte de Enero with the accommodations of Tours Pacaya Samiria and Renaquito Tours, in the community of Buenos Aires with Bromelias Pacaya Samiria and La Ceiba camp; and in the Yarina community we find Yarina Lodge, Yanayacu Expeditions and Ivy Mara Ey Lodge, thus benefiting more than 40 families.*

Additional references

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1J5WWyJ--UbjJcHiTw_wwgcJXwRG1tjW3?usp=sharing

