



# Integrating Biodiversity Conservation and EcoTourism: The Bohol Province, Philippines Experience



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# Bohol's Biodiversity Situation

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- High diversity of flora and fauna found in different ecosystems
- 75,7666 hectares (1/4 of the Province's area) is considered Environmentally Constrained and Environmentally Critical Areas
- Bohol Marine Triangle found 6,000 species of mollusks and related species in a 15,000 hectare area
- 1,200 species of crabs and shrimps
- 1,920 hectares of coral reefs
- Limestone landscapes landmarked by the Chocolate Hills



# Bohol's Biodiversity Situation

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- Biggest man-made mangrove forest in Southeast Asia
- Presence of reptiles, amphibians, bat species, and the Tarsier
- 60% of the country's marine mammal species found in Pamilacan Island
- Almost 70% of total land area in Karst formation
- 78 birds species belonging to 28 families
- 411 fish species
- 370 macro invertebrates species
- 12 major watersheds



# Bohol's Biodiversity Situation

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## Threats to Biodiversity

- destruction of eco-systems (due to conversion of forests to agricultural and urban uses)
- disappearance of habitats
- pollution
- overexploitation (due to increase in population, poverty and limited livelihood opportunities)
- erosion
- overhunting
- illegal trade





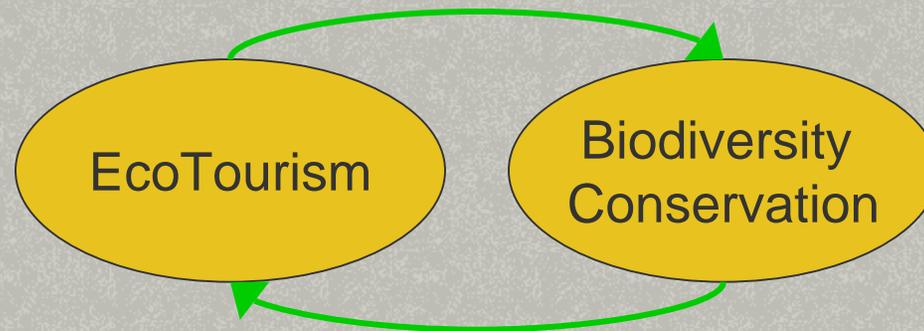
# Biodiversity Conservation through Ecotourism

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The Province of Bohol integrates biodiversity conservation into the tourism sector through promotion of ecotourism to local governments and communities as a tool for poverty reduction

Ecotourism contributes to Biodiversity Conservation and vice versa

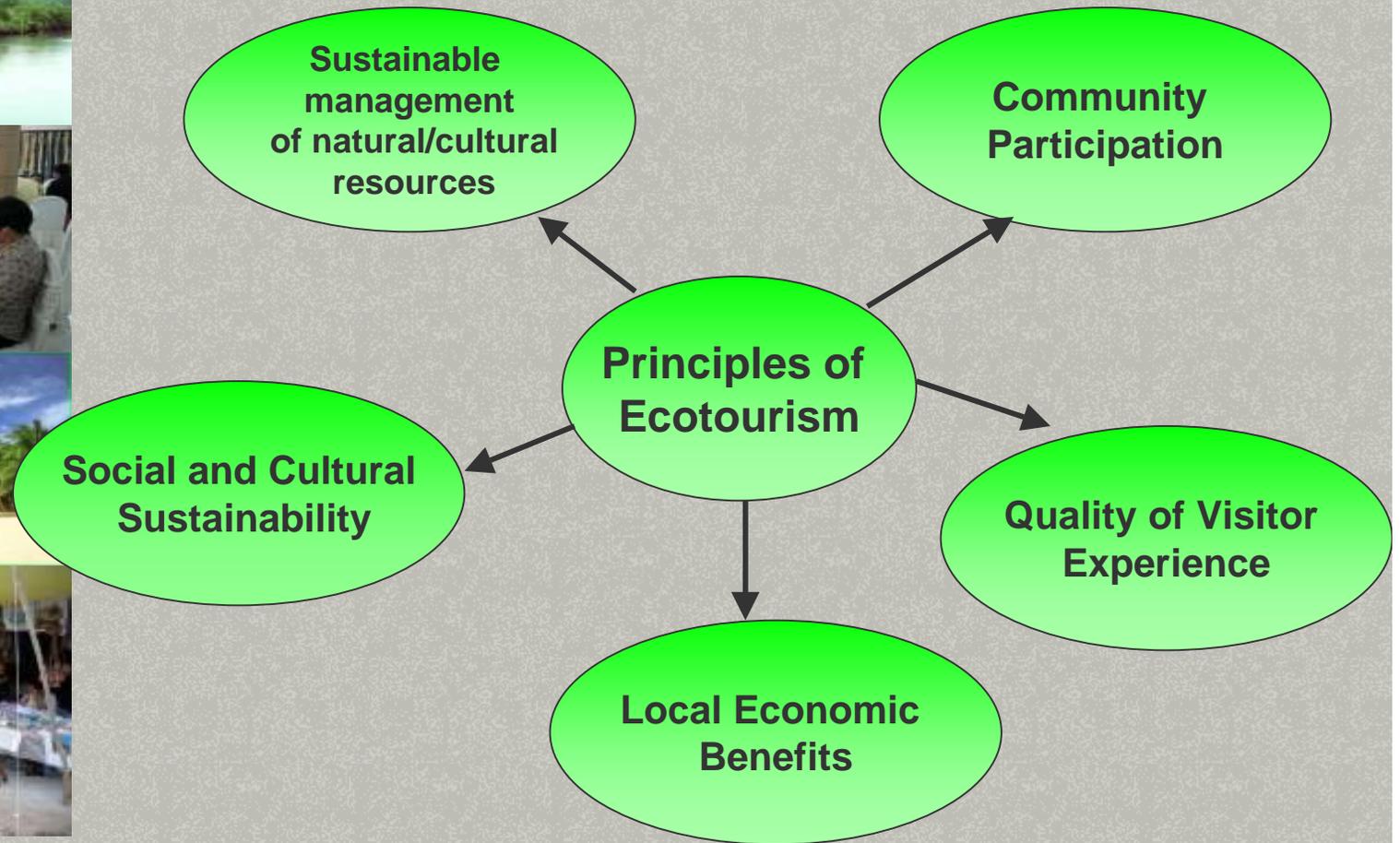


The basis for ecotourism is the biodiversity in a given area.

Care must be taken to ensure that the existing biodiversity is maintained and enhanced over time for ecotourism to be sustainable.



# Biodiversity Conservation through Ecotourism





# Biodiversity Conservation through Ecotourism

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## Initiatives & Management Tools

- **The Bohol Environment Code:** identifies ecotourism as a major strategy for the conservation of biological diversity, preservation of unique natural cultural heritage and creation of employment opportunities and thus mandates:
  - Prioritization of ecotourism zones and areas for development
  - Determination of appropriate type of development and management with community & private sector participation
  - Regulation and control of growth of ecotourism activities
  - Local governments to provide ecotourism services and facilities





# Biodiversity Conservation through Ecotourism

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## Initiatives & Management Tools



- Crafting of Bohol Biodiversity Conservation & Ecotourism Framework
- Establishment of database for terrestrial, freshwater and coastal/ marine flora and fauna
- Establishment of Biodiversity Research Center
- Implementation of the Biodiversity Monitoring System
- Implementation of the Coastal Resource Management (CRM) Certification System
- Strong ties and partnerships with government, communities non-government organizations and academe



# Biodiversity Conservation through Ecotourism

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## Successful Cases



### The Pamilacan Island Marine Life Tour

- Organized the Pamilacan Island Dolphin and Whale Watching Organization as a legal cooperative (80 families/ 144 members)
- Increased awareness and understanding of communities involved on environment conservation and ecotourism
- Enhanced networks and partnerships for government, community and industry
- Improved skills to local personnel in business management, tour guiding and visitor management
- Five-fold increase in income



# Biodiversity Conservation through Ecotourism

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## Successful Cases



### The Candijay Mangrove Adventure Tour

- Organized the Panadtaran Mangrove Association with 160 members to conserve and preserve the environment
- The association is awarded by the DENR with a 600 hectare-mangrove for them to manage and utilize
- Organized a team of tour guides which is currently accepting bookings for eco-tours
- Implementation of support programs provided by local and foreign-funding institutions



# Where to now?

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## ■ Strategies and Policies

- Enhance the conservation and protection of biodiversity through comprehensive Information and Education Programs
- Institutionalize appropriate monitoring and control system for the management of biological diversity and tourism activities
- Implementation of Biodiversity Conservation and Ecotourism Framework Plan
- Increase in biodiversity in farming, agro-forestry and forest program





# Where to now?

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## ■ Strategies and Policies

- Establishment of wildlife corridors to connect forest fragments to similar ecosystems
- Application of strict zoning in protected areas to control ecotourism activities
- Preservation of island ecosystems and endangered species through appropriate site management
- Enactment of provincial, municipal and village legislation to support biodiversity conservation
- Rehabilitation of original habitats by reintroducing native species



# Lessons Learned

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- An ecotourism project benefits the entire community, but not necessarily hires the entire community
- Ecotourism is not for all sites, there are many sites that should not be developed because they are too sensitive
- Ecotourism is not all advocacy but food for the family
- Good ecotourism demands much preparation for site selection. It is not just a matter of how much revenues to be realized
- The existing biodiversity is our capital, we must learn to spend only the interest of this capital if we are to have any sustainability now and for future generations



End of Presentation

thank you!