DESTINATION LAKE ATITLÁN

A Marketing and Communication Strategy and Action Plan and Benchmarking Analysis of Community Based Tourism for the Lake Atitlán Region of Guatemala

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AGENDA

Scope of Work

The Road Ahead

Situational Analysis

Findings & Recommendations

Follow-up Activities
SCOPE OF WORK & ATITLÁN TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN

- Identify positioning strategy to improve the image and brand
- Propose actionable marketing steps targeting priority markets
- Raise awareness and provide training tools for local agents about CBT
- Establish crisis communication strategies and support materials
THE ROAD AHEAD

- Enhance local sustainable tourism by strengthening the destination management organization
- Maximize benefits to local tourism stakeholders by improving market accessibility
- Mold the image of Lake Atitlán as a safe and vibrant destination
- Culminate an unforgettable experience for the tourist through nature, cultural heritage and adventure
## Guatemala Comparative Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Visitor Arrivals (in thousands) for 2006</th>
<th>Air Arrivals as % of Total Arrivals 2006</th>
<th>Leisure % of Visitors 2006</th>
<th>Business % of Visitors 2006</th>
<th>Other % of Visitors 2006</th>
<th>Expected % of Employment from Tourism as of 2008</th>
<th>Travel &amp; Tourism Growth Expected for 2008</th>
<th>Tourism as % of Total GDP Expected for 2008</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
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</table>

UNWTO & WTTC
# GUATEMALA

## COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace of Mayan Culture</th>
<th>UNESCO World Heritage Sites</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>◦ Archaeological sites in Tikal, Yaxha, Quirigua, Aguateca</td>
<td>◦ Antigua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Indigenous communities throughout Western Highlands</td>
<td>◦ Tikal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Indigenous communities throughout Western Highlands</td>
<td>◦ Quirigua</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colonial Cities &amp; Monuments</th>
<th>Natural Beauty and Landscape</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>◦ Antigua</td>
<td>◦ More than 30 Volcanoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Quetzaltenango</td>
<td>◦ Western Highlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Guatemala City</td>
<td>◦ Lake Atitlán</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HIGHLIGHTS OF LAKE ATITLÁN

Natural Beauty
- Surrounded by 3 volcanoes
- Exotic Flora (8,000) & Fauna (1,000)
- Deepest Lake in Central America

Culture
- 14 distinctive communities surround the lake
- Multi-ethnic diversity
- Distinctive Mayan rituals and customs

Activities
- Boat Tours
- Spanish Schools
- Nature Reserves
FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Observations
- Priority Action Plans
- General Recommendations
MARKET SEGMENTS

Nature

Community Based Tourism

S.A.V.E.

Adventure

Cultural

Religious

Historical

Activities & Experiences
Community-based tourism (CBT) is a process for developing and managing tourism that engages and benefits the local community as well as tourists.

CBT is not a specific type of product – any tourism product has the potential to be community-based.
NATURE TOURISTS

Activities & Experiences

- Hiking
- Wildlife
- Plants
- Agritourism
- Nature photography
- Horseback riding
- Plantations
- Mountaineering
- Bird watching

Atitlán Natural Reserve in Panajachel
Beaches of Jaibalito
Corazón del Bosque Birdwatching
Asuvim Coffee Tours in Santa Clara
ADVENTURE TOURISTS

Outdoor activities
Watersports
Scuba diving
Volcano climbing
Hang gliding
Kayaking
Hiking/Trekking
Canoeing

Activities & Experiences

Scuba Diving in San Pedro
Kayak rental in San Marcos
Chuiraxamolo’ zip-lining and rappelling in Santa Clara
Paragliding
Jovenes Maya Hiking Tours in San Marcos
CULTURE/RELIGION/HISTORY
TOURISTS

Activities & Experiences

Archaeology
Architecture
Art
Church/Cathedral
Culinary
Ceremonies
Handicrafts
History
Festivals
Mayan

Santa Cruz Colonial Church
Ijat’z Association - Village tourism
Lema’Women Weavers Association
Visit to Maximon in Santiago
S.A.V.E. TOURISTS

Scientific, Academic, Volunteer and Educational Tourist

- Scientific research
  - Cooperativa Spanish School in San Pedro
- Experiential learning
  - Ijat’z Association
- Volunteer with community projects
  - Environmental Education and Agro-ecological Center
  - Rupalaj K’istalin in San Juan: Reforestation Program

Activities & Experiences
Observations

- Great opportunity for wider distribution of tourism benefits within communities
- Limited capacity for developing and managing sustainable tourism products
- Existing community-based products stand to gain from stronger linkages and marketing initiatives
### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop S.A.V.E. Market Segment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBT awareness brochure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBT Capacity Building toolkit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Impact Water Sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atitlán boat excursion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian-Friendly Panajachel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay Another Day Campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Training in Event Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DEVELOP S.A.V.E. MARKET SEGMENT

ISSUES
• S.A.V.E. is a fast growing market segment
• S.A.V.E. can contribute positively to sustainable tourism development
• There are some S.A.V.E. activities around the lake, but they are not fully coordinated

SOLUTIONS
• Pilot Project: “Voluntelingual” Project (Link Spanish schools and volunteer projects)
• Establish S.A.V.E. Center to coordinate all S.A.V.E. tourism activities

Preliminary Estimate
Labor costs of S.A.V.E. Center coordinator: approx. $14,000/yr
**ISSUES**

- Many communities are not aware of the benefits of CBT
- There are conflicting definitions of what CBT is

**SOLUTIONS**

- Utilize brochure to enhance understanding and spread awareness of the benefits of CBT
- Greater community participation in tourism development

**Preliminary Estimate**

- Approx. $2,000.00
ATITLÁN BOAT EXCURSION

ISSUES
• Tourists looking for better organized lake trips, packages, and community visits
• Opportunity to improve current lake trips
• Room for increased collaboration among boat operators

SOLUTIONS
• Creation of 2 routes for a 5 community-visit guided boat tour, to be tested in the high season.
• Recorded guide in multiple languages for the tours.
• Added products such as meals and sunset cruises for boat tours

Preliminary Estimate
• Approx. $10,000.00
ISSUES
• Average length of stay in Atitlan is 1.5 days
• Tourism product offerings are unclear to tourists
• Existing tourism products and events not promoted well
• Minimal linkage between tourism products and services

SOLUTIONS
• Passport discount program
• 2nd day hotel discount
• All day or two-day “Hopper” Boat Pass

Preliminary Estimate
• TOTAL: $12,000/year
Why Stay Another Day?

The Stay Another Day campaign invites you to discover more about the authentic local culture and heritage, experience the beauty of the deepest lake in Central America and explore the richness of the surrounding landscapes.

How much do you know about Lake Atitlan? With over 14 communities in close proximity, the Lake Atitlan area offers ample experiences to choose from regardless of your budget.

Communities to Visit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>San Pedro</th>
<th>Santiago</th>
<th>Panajachel</th>
<th>San Antonio</th>
<th>San Juan</th>
<th>San Marcos</th>
<th>Santa Cruz</th>
<th>Santa Clara</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Pedro</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santiago</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panajachel</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Antonio</td>
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<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa Cruz</td>
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<td>❌</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa Clara</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<td>✔</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Things to Do!

- Coffee Plantation
- Natural Reserve
- Natural Tour & Park
- Eco-park
- Bird-watching
- Hiking
- Zip-lining & Rappel
- Volunteerism
- Reforestation
- Agroecology
- Spanish School
- Environmental Education Program
- Cultural Experiencing

Things to See!

- Church
- Festivals & Ceremonies
- Museum
- Heritage & Architecture
- Lake Villages

Things to Buy!

- Weaving Products
- Carpets
- Wood Furniture
- Candles
- Soaps
- Coffee
- Natural Herbal Medicine
- Handmade Bracelets
- Basket Weaving

Stay Another Day!!!

With a complimentary dinner...

Visit our Tourist Center and obtain your wooden Stay Another Day passport to qualify for discounts NOW!!!
Collect four color stamps from any of our communities on your wooden Stay Another Day passport and you can receive a complimentary dinner.
ACTIVITIES AND EXPERIENCES

General Recommendations

- Establish a small grant competition program for tourism business concepts to encourage community entrepreneurship
- Launch a “This month’s leading attraction…” program recognizing the richness of attractions in the area
- Launch a small sponsorship program for local cultural and community events to secure resources for increased visibility
- Establish stronger linkages between Lake Atitlán and leading national and regional attractions to increase tourist flows
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Activities & Experiences

Destination Management

Marketing & Positioning

Crisis Management
MARCETING AND POSITIONING STRATEGY

Observations

- There is a need for a unified marketing material packet.
- Lake Atitlán should distinguish itself from other destinations within Guatemala by a recognizable brand.
- Thus far, there has been limited community buy-in.
- There is a need to establish connections with major media outlets.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branding Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Distribution Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community-Based Tourism Distribution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep Lake Atitlán Beautiful Campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote Lake Atitlán as one of the New 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wonders of Nature</td>
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</table>
**BRANDING COMPETITION**

**ISSUES**
- Need for a brand and image for the Lake Atitlán region
- Community buy-in, in establishing a positive recognizable image has been limited
- Raising awareness of the benefits that tourism brings to the region

**SOLUTIONS**
- Accomplished:
  - Stakeholder forum to brainstorm potential brand and image ideas as well as generate a perception of the lake
- Next Steps:
  - Branding competition to engage youth and their families
  - Launch events and media coverage

**Preliminary Estimate**
- Approx. $1,500.00
MARKETING DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY

ISSUES
• Need for a marketing material packet for key stakeholders
• Need to establish a marketing distribution strategy and develop proper channels
• Need to create a method to track benefits of marketing i.e. # of increased tourists or # of increased tour and hotel bookings

SOLUTIONS
• Establish brochures and posters that highlight Lake Atitlán’s product offering with official logo and brand
• Create distribution channels with key stakeholders & identify which materials are appropriate for them
• Create a scorecard to track marketing efforts

Preliminary Estimate
• Approx. $2,500.00
MARKETING DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY DIAGRAM

Select Stakeholders
- INGUAT
- Hotels
- Tour Operators
- Restaurants

Appraise most effective marketing means for target market
- All Marketing Materials
- Brochures/Posters
- Posters

Distribution Frequency
- Every six months
- Monthly
- Yearly

Review Impact
- How successful has the distribution of marketing materials been in attracting tourists to the lake?

Evaluation/Adjustments
- Key Indicators:
  - # of tourists per quarter
  - # of bookings made
- Sololá Commission report of a cost benefit analysis
- Communication/Documentation
- Knowledge Sharing

Marketing & Positioning
ISSUES
• Limited awareness of CBT products
• Low volume of tourists to CBT initiatives
• No linkage to the special interest market

SOLUTIONS
• Link to special interest tourism websites, blogs and publications
  • Responsibletravel.com
  • Intrepidtravel.com
  • Intelligent Travel blog
• Familiarization Tours

Preliminary Estimate
• Approx. $2,500.00
MARKETING AND POSITIONING STRATEGY

General Recommendations

- Establish a cooperative marketing committee within the Sololá Sub-commission to ensure coordination of marketing efforts
- Launch an online interactive podcast interpretation program for the region to enhance the visitor experience
- Develop a virtual media corner on the Destination Lake Atitlán website to provide a set of useful information and attractive visual materials for interested media
- Organize a familiarization trip for travel journalists and writers to enhance global awareness on Lake Atitlán
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Activities & Experiences

Destination Management

Marketing & Positioning

Crisis Management
CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Observations

- Stakeholders uninvolved in a tourism strategic plan
- Tourists unaware of what to do in case of an emergency
- Crisis strategies exist in various communities, but not shared
- Unreported tourism crime to local police
## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Communication Toolkit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Response Capabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder Crisis Management Toolkit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Management Campaign: Promoting Peace of Mind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Target: CONRED, ASISTUR, Tourism Sub-Commission

Purpose: Institutionalize Crisis Communication Channels

Content:

• Communication Diagram
• Crisis Press Release Template
• Guidance for Media Relations
• Media Contact List
CRISIS RESPONSE CAPABILITIES

ISSUES
• Need for established key contact in each municipality
• Absence of relevant equipment to ensure needs of crisis management team

SOLUTIONS
• Complete crisis communication flow system
• Provide necessary equipment (generator, satellite phones) to crisis coordinators and each communication point i.e. all municipalities

Preliminary Estimate
• Approx. $12,000.00
STAKEHOLDER CRISIS MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT

- **Target:** Industry Stakeholders (hotels, restaurants, tour operators, etc.)

- **Purpose:** Provide Integrated Crisis Response Procedures

- **Content:**
  - Evacuation Maps
  - Emergency Numbers
  - What to do in case of...
  - How to assist guests in a crisis
CRISIS MANAGEMENT CAMPAIGN: PROMOTING PEACE OF MIND

ISSUES
• Absence of post crisis media management and image recovery
• Opportunity to promote greater awareness of tourism crisis management strategy
• Need for improved communication and knowledge sharing between stakeholders

SOLUTIONS
• Presentation of Crisis Evacuation Strategy
• Develop Cohesion between Stakeholders
• Distribution of Stakeholder Toolkits
• Informative capacity building workshops
• Forum discussions on community approaches to security concerns

Preliminary Estimate
• Approx. $5,500
CRISIS MANAGEMENT

General Recommendations

- Establish an emergency crisis fund to secure resources for immediate crisis response needs
- Incorporate a safety & security bulletin on Lake Atitlán website to provide reliable and consistent updates
- Establish an emergency “Report a Crime” hotline for reliable tourist assistance
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Destination Management

Activities & Experiences

Marketing & Positioning

Crisis Management
DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Observations

- Need for organization of existing stakeholders currently providing services to the tourism community.

- Destination Management Organizations (DMO) are public/private sector partnerships, often referred to as tourism councils or chambers, visitor convention bureau, etc.

Recommendation: The creation of a Regional Destination Management Organization to fulfill Strategy 12 of the Lake Atitlan tourism plan, i.e. “Creation and adaptation of a tourism information structure.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional Destination Management Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply System for Measuring Excellence in Destinations (SMED)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lake Atitlán Destination Website Portal</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## ROLE OF THE DMO...

**A leader in coordinating tourism functions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>National</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Destination promotion, including branding and image</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy, research and development</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaigns to drive business, particularly to SMEs</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unbiased information services</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operation/facilitation of bookings</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Destination coordination &amp; management</td>
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<td>Visitor information and reservations</td>
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<td>Training and education</td>
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<td>Business advice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attractions development and management</td>
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</table>

**INGUAT**

**Lake Atitlán Regional DMO**

**Community/Municipal Organization**

Destination Management
Destination Management Linkages

Elements of the Destination:
- Attractions, Amenities,
- Accessibility, Human
- Resources, Image, Price

DMO
Leading and Coordinating

Marketing:
- Consistent branding
- and promotion

Delivery of Services:
- public, private, civil
- sectors, i.e.
- sustainable CBT
- products

Creating a Suitable
Environment:
- policy, legislation, regulations, i.e.
- crisis management
REGIONAL DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

ISSUE

• Need to increase awareness of the role of the Sololá Tourism Sub-Commission
• Opportunity for improved cooperation between stakeholders for an efficient approach to Lake Atitlán tourism development

SOLUTION

• A campaign to raise awareness for the need for a Regional DMO
• The creation of a Regional DMO to facilitate:
  • communications
  • development efforts
  • service provision to tourism stakeholders

Preliminary Estimate
• Approx. $45,000.00
MEASURING EXCELLENCE OF DESTINATION LAKE ATITLÁN

- **Why?** “Tourism destinations should sustain or enhance the geographical character of a place – its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents.”

- **How?** Employ internationally recognized tool to measure achievement of destinations developed by World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED).

- **Recommended Tool:** CED’s System for Measuring Excellence in Destinations (SMED) is an innovative analysis tool to promote the pursuit of excellence in tourist destinations around the world. SMED consists of 12 guiding principles.
PRINCIPALES DE EXCELENCIA: ANÁLISIS DE IP

1. Riqueza cultural
2. Integridad física del paisaje
3. Diversidad biológica
4. Pureza ambiental y eficiencia de los recursos
5. Calidad local de la vida y prosperidad
6. Control local e involucramiento
7. Calidad de empleos
8. Satisfacción del visitante
9. Posicionamiento apropiado en el mercado
10. Destinos turísticos y empresas económicamente viables
11. Calidad del gobierno local
12. Evaluación de resultados
ISSUE
• Needs to know its competitive position of Lake Atitlán
• The measurement of excellence of Lake Atitlán is needed to identify performance gaps and make improvements

SOLUTION
• Become the first destination in Central America to develop a system for measuring destination excellence
• Achieve sustainable tourism development goals and enhance competitiveness

Preliminary Estimate
• Approx. $40,000-50,000

Destination Management
58% of US Online Leisure Travelers use internet to research where to visit. Need for a website embraced by all stakeholders.

FUTURE

• Dual Purpose
  • Establish lake as a destination on web
  • Intranet for internal communication
• Featuring:
  • Itinerary Generator
  • Trip Planner
  • Online Booking Capabilities
• Utilize Search Engine Optimization

Preliminary Estimate
• Approx. $25 – 50,000

Source: Forrester Research
Lake Atitlán Destination Management System

Sololá Tourism Sub-commission

Direct Distribution to Tourist

Local Tourism Trade (MSMEs)

3rd Party Distribution Channels

Regional Destination Management

Tour Operators

Hotels

Attractions

Community Based Tourism

Tourism Infomediaries

Online Travel Agencies

International Tour Operators

International Travel Agents

Internet Call Centers

Tourism Information Center

Internet

Call Centers
General Recommendations

- A relationship needs to be established between INGUAT at the national level, the emerging regional DMO, and the local tourism organizations.
- There is a need for a human resource development strategy to build capacity for the development of the regional DMO.
- UNWTO’s best practices for management of the destination need to be explored to determine the best structure i.e. public-private partnership, NGO, etc.
FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES
FOLLOW-UP SCOPE OF WORK

Completion of final report from consulting team

Design educational materials for the CBT Roundtable

Investigate the establishment of a new boat tour

Foster CBT linkages in San Lucas Tolimán
ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS OF FOLLOW-UP

- Identified “best practice” examples of Community-Based Tourism enterprises.
- Designed presentation materials on CBT and benchmarking.

- Conducted interviews to gauge interest and feasibility of new tour.
- Identified potential partners amongst boat owners, tour operators, and guides.

- Interviewed stakeholders in San Lucas tourism.
- Organized and hosted a meeting of local tourism business owners, NGOs, and cooperatives.
OBSERVATIONS

• Strong presence of natural and cultural resources gives Atitlán potential to be developed as a competitive international destination

• Need to expand vision of tourism beyond “just business” and include the potential social and environmental benefits; government support is necessary

• Social capital is well-developed around the lake; great opportunity for increased cooperation and coordination
Thank you!

Final report available online at:
Questions & Answers