

# 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

George Washington University & Universidad del Valle Consulting Team



# THE CONSULTING TEAM

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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



# **SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

# GUATEMALA COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

	Total Visitor Arrivals (in thousands) for 2006	Air Arrivals as % of Total Arrivals 2006	Leisure % of Visitors 2006	Business % of Visitors 2006	Other % of Visitors 2006	Expected% of Employment from Tourism as of 2008	Travel &Tourism Growth Expected for 2008	Tourism as % of Total GDP Expected for 2008
<b>Guatemala</b>	<b>1,502</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>6.8</b>
Belize	247	73	95	5	0	26.6	1.0	20.8
Costa Rica	1,725	71	N/A	N/A	N/A	13.1	1.2	13.5
El Salvador	1,138	30	29	26	45	7.9	0.1	9.1
Honduras	739	48	54	18	28	7.65	2.4	9.3
Nicaragua	773	34	74	17	9	5.1	5.4	6.5
Panama	843	80	44	29	27	11.6	1.4	12.1



# GUATEMALA

## COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES

### Birthplace of Mayan Culture

- ❖ Archaeological sites in Tikal, Yaxha, Quirigua, Aguateca
- ❖ Indigenous communities throughout Western Highlands

### Colonial Cities & Monuments

- ❖ Antigua
- ❖ Quetzaltenango
- ❖ Guatemala City

### UNESCO World Heritage Sites

- ❖ Antigua
- ❖ Tikal
- ❖ Quirigua



### Natural Beauty and Landscape

- ❖ More than 30 Volcanoes
- ❖ Western Highlands
- ❖ Lake Atitlán

# 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



Activities &  
Experiences

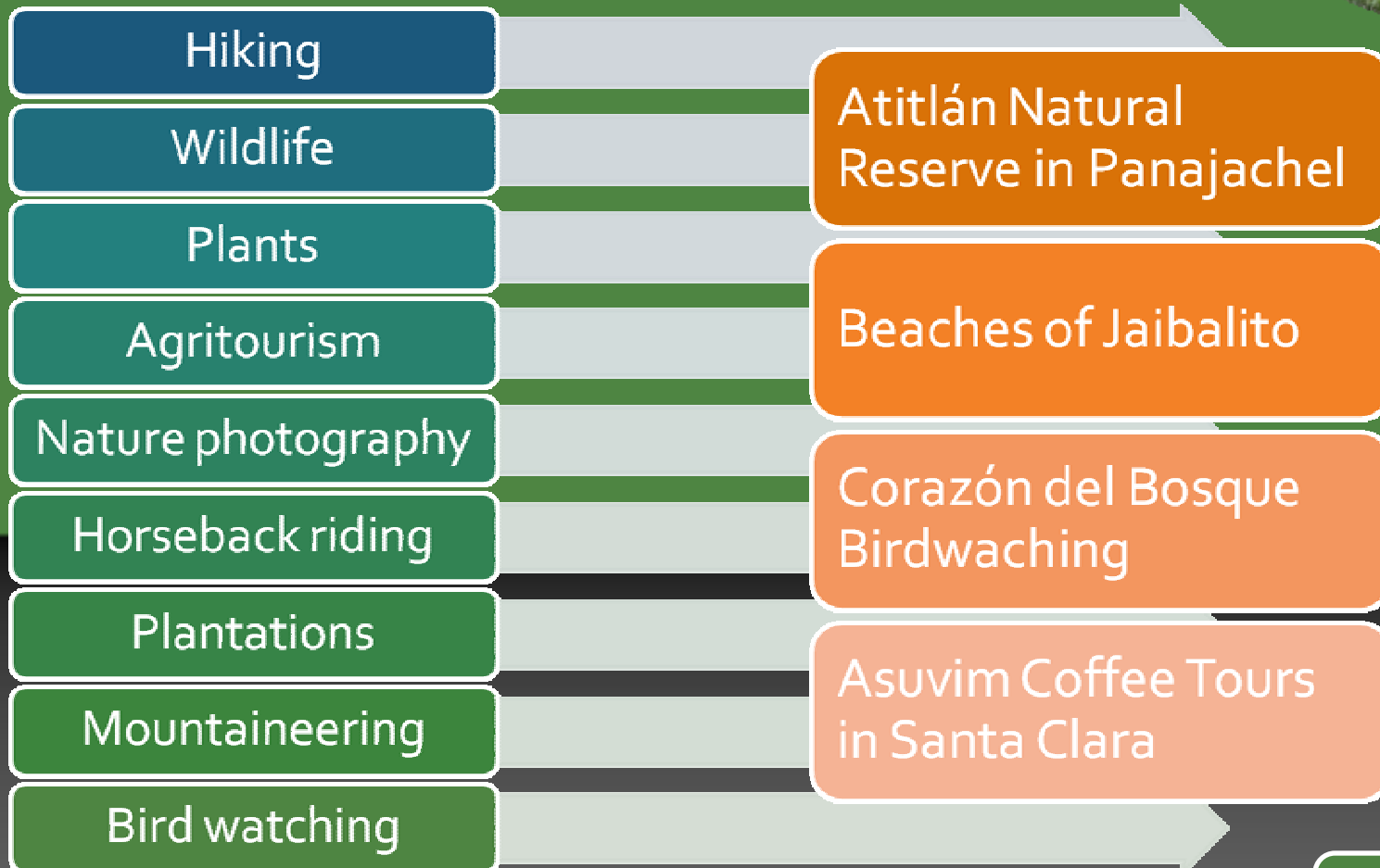


# COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM

- 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

Activities &  
Experiences

# NATURETOURISTS



Activities & Experiences

# ADVENTURE TOURISTS



Outdoor activities

Watersports

Scuba diving

Volcano climbing

Hang gliding

Kayaking

Hiking/Trekking

Canoeing

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

Activities & Experiences



# CULTURE/RELIGION/HISTORY TOURISTS



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

Activities &  
Experiences

# S.A.V.E. TOURISTS



Scientific, Academic, Volunteer and Educational Tourist

Scientific  
research

Cooperativa Spanish School  
in San Pedro

Experiential  
learning

Ijat'z Association

Environmental Education  
and Agro-ecological Center

Volunteer with  
community  
projects

Rupalaj K'istalin in San Juan:  
Reforestation Program

Activities &  
Experiences



# LAKE ATITLÁN

## ACTIVITIES AND 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

Action
Develop S.A.V.E. Market Segment
CBT awareness brochure
CBT Capacity Building toolkit
Low Impact Water Sports
Atitlán boat excursion
Pedestrian-Friendly Panajachel
Stay Another Day Campaign
Professional Training in Event Management



# 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:  
“Voluntelilingual” 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



Activities & Experiences

# CBT AWARENESS BROCHURE

## 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

Turismo de Base  
Comunitaria en  
el Lago Atitlán



Creado por: El equipo  
consultor de la Universidad de  
George Washington y  
la Universidad del Valle

Con apoyo de: Counterpart  
International y la Comisión de  
Turismo de Sololá

Activities &  
Experiences

# 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

Activities &  
Experiences

# STAY ANOTHER DAY CAMPAIGN

## 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
- 2<sup>nd</sup> day hotel discount
- All day or two-day "Hopper" Boat Pass

## Preliminary Estimate

- **TOTAL: \$12,000/year**

Activities &  
Experiences



### 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

Activity Exclusivity	Exclusivity to Members	Exclusivity to Sponsor	Exclusivity to Religious	Exclusivity to Religious
San Juan	✓		✓	✓
San Pedro	✓		✓	
Paraguriel	✓	✓	✓	
Barrogete	✓			
San Marcos		✓		✓
Barro Cruz			✓	
Barro Chery	✓			✓
San Juan	✓			✓



## 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
- Heritages & Architecture
- Lake Villages

### Things to Buy!

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

## Ecotourism & Nature

Item	Lot/Box Description	Box counting	Material Name	Material Qty/Box	Inventory
Box Item	✓				
Box Refill		✓	✓		✓
Physiotherapist					
Healthcare		✓		✓	
Box Material					
Health Care					
Health Care	✓			✓	
Box Item					

## Adventure & Sports

Product / Basketball shoe	Strong	Top Strong / Strong 2
Nike Air Max	✓	
Nike Air Max		
Reebok One	✓	✓
Reebok One		
Nike Air Max	✓	
Nike Air Max		
Nike Air Max	✓	

Student Enrollment	Paradeade	Chard	Team(s) (Swim)	Shower	Swimsuit/ Swimwear	Wings Tie
Don Ann	✓	✓	✓			
Don Pedro			✓	✓	✓	
Donatello		✓				
Don Diego		✓				
Don Marcos						✓
Donna Gail		✓				
Donna Clara	✓	✓				
Donna Jane						✓

### Education & Experience

Geodetic	Topographic	Cartographic	Hydrographic	Geomatics	Cultural	Environmental
Geodesy	✓					
Topography	✓			✓		
Cartography		✓				
Hydrography			✓			
Geomatics				✓		
Cultural Heritage					✓	
Environmental						✓

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 & Experiences



# 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

Activities &  
Experiences



# FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS





# MARKETING 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

# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Action
Branding Competition
Marketing Distribution Strategy
Community-Based Tourism Distribution Channels
Keep Lake Atitlán Beautiful Campaign
Promote Lake Atitlán as one of the New 7 Wonders of Nature

# 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 &  
Positioning

# 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

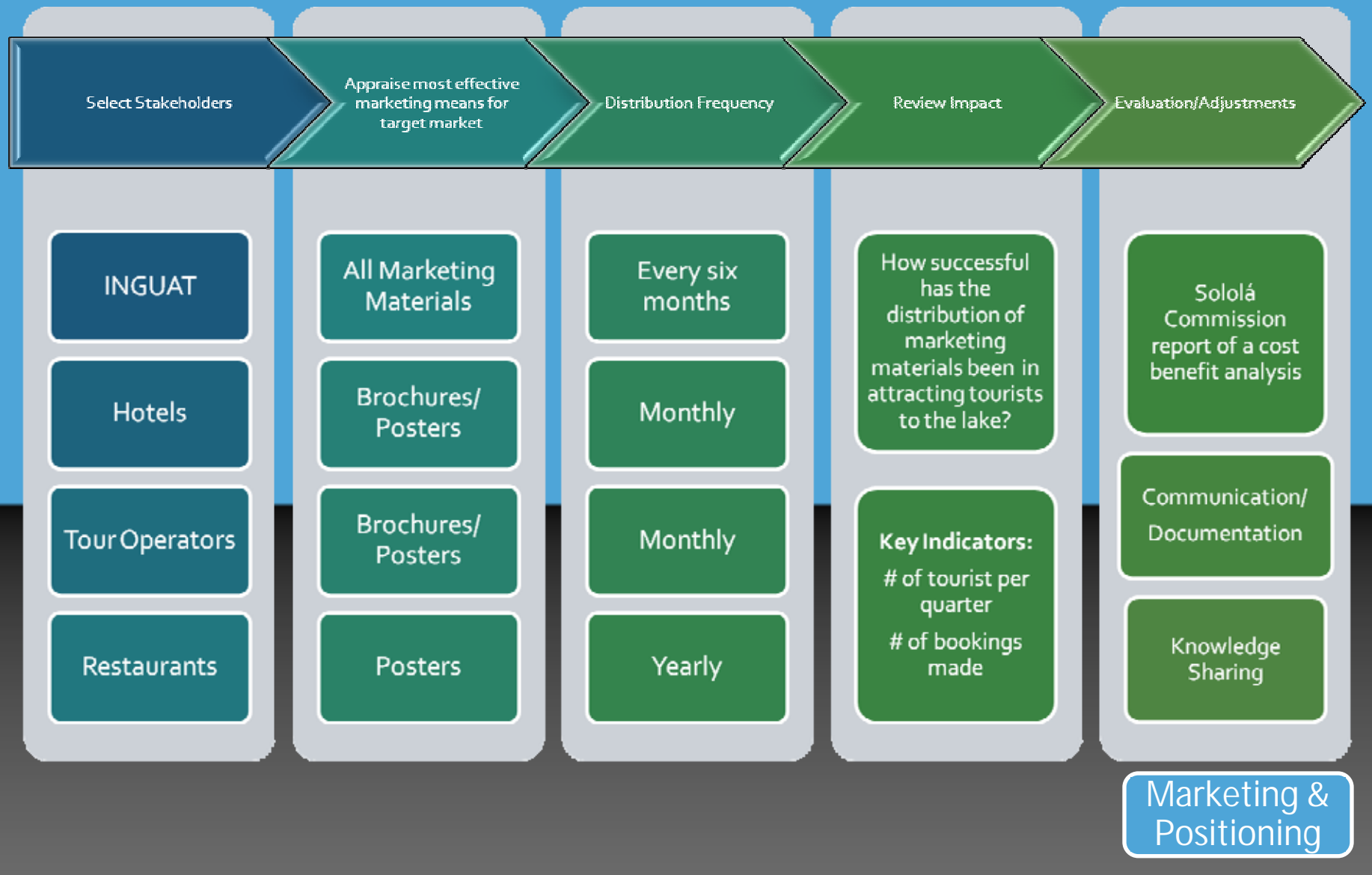
- Establish brochures and posters that highlight Lake Atitlán's product offering with official logo and brand
- Create distribution channels with key stakeholders & identify which materials are appropriate for them
- Create a scorecard to track marketing efforts

### Preliminary Estimate

- Approx. \$2,500.00

Marketing &  
Positioning

# MARKETING DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY DIAGRAM





# CBT DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

## 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 &  
Positioning

# 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



# 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

Action
Crisis Communication Toolkit
Crisis Response Capabilities
Stakeholder Crisis Management Toolkit
Crisis Management Campaign: Promoting Peace of Mind

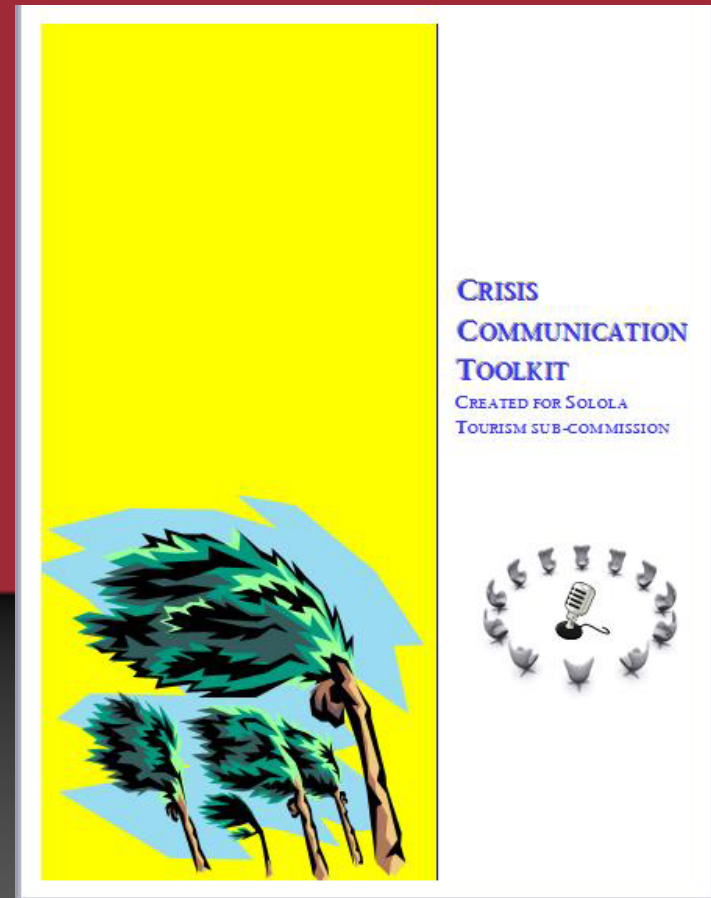
# CRISIS COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT

**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



# 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

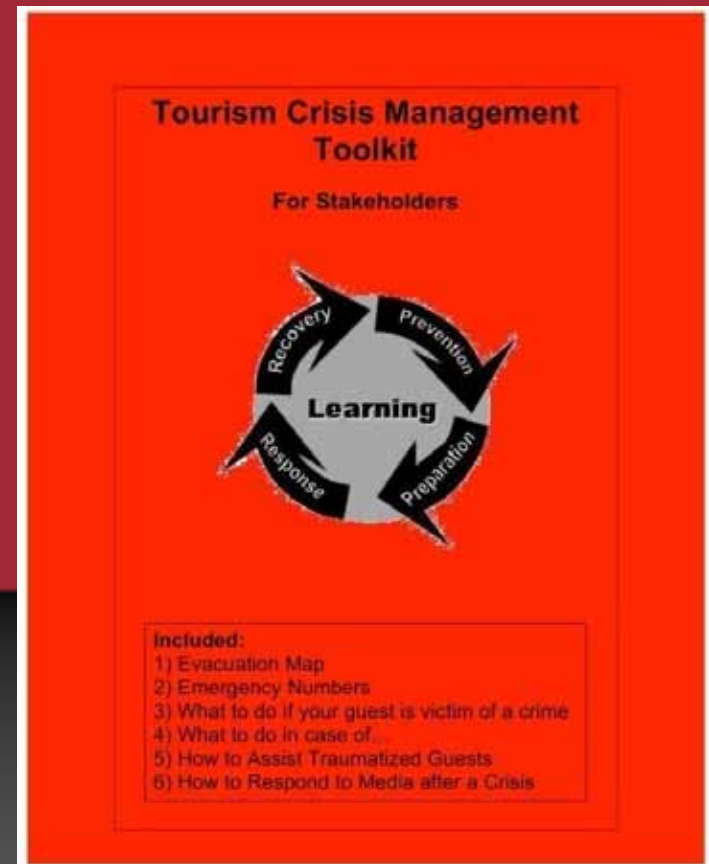
### Preliminary Estimate

- Approx. \$12,000.00

Crisis

# 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



# Lake Atitlán

Guatemala

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# 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

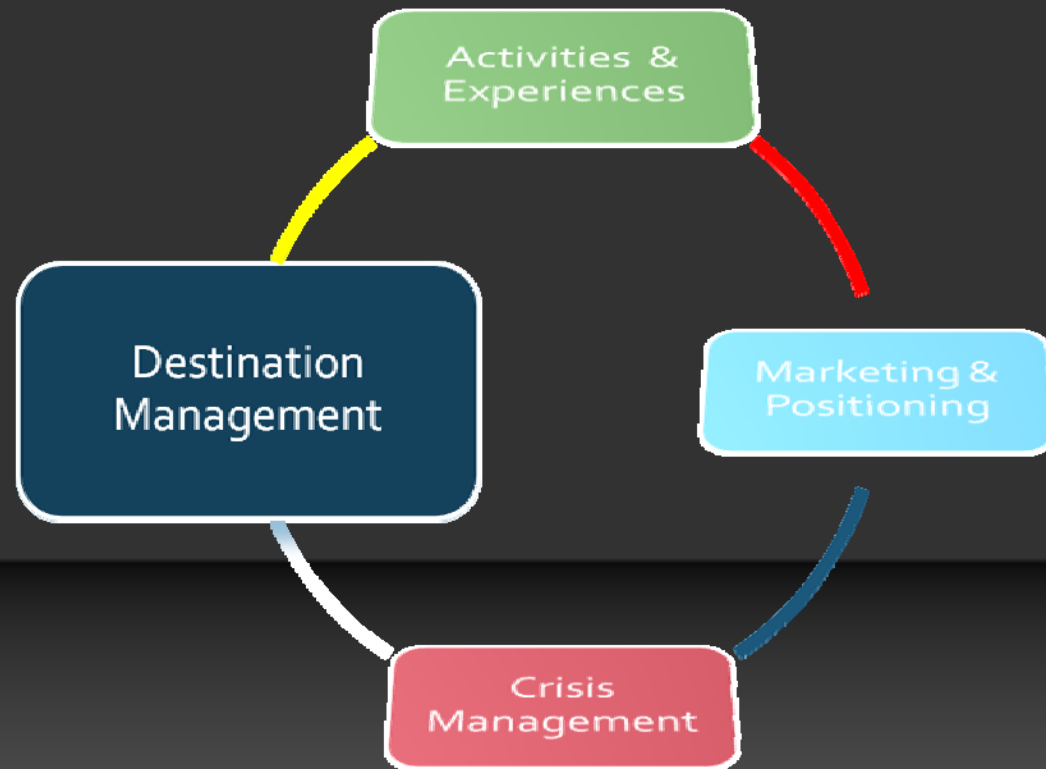
# CRISIS MANAGEMENT

## 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

## 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."



# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Action
Regional Destination Management Organization
Apply System for Measuring Excellence in Destinations (SMED)
Lake Atitlán Destination Website Portal

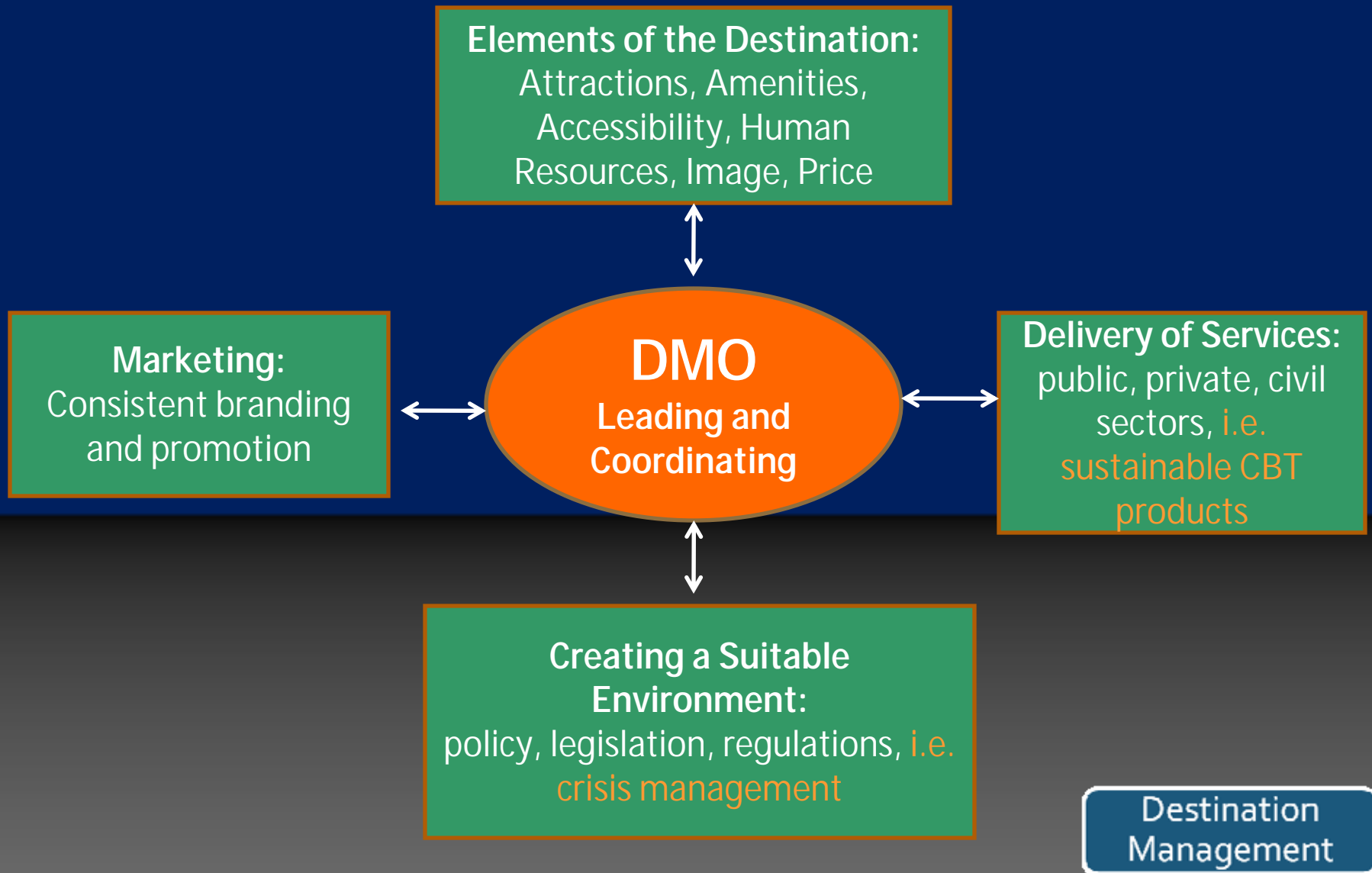
# ROLE OF THE DMO...

*A leader in coordinating tourism functions*

	National	Regional	Local
Role	INGUAT	Lake Atitlán Regional DMO	Community/ Municipal Organization
Destination promotion, including branding and image	✓	✓	
Strategy, research and development	✓	✓	✓
Campaigns to drive business, particularly to SMEs	✓	✓	
Unbiased information services	✓	✓	✓
Operation/facilitation of bookings		✓	✓
Destination coordination & management		✓	✓
Visitor information and reservations		✓	✓
Training and education		✓	✓
Business advice		✓	
Product “start-ups”		✓	✓
Events development and management		✓	✓
Attractions development and management		✓	✓

Destination  
Management

# DESTINATION MANAGEMENT LINKAGES



# 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

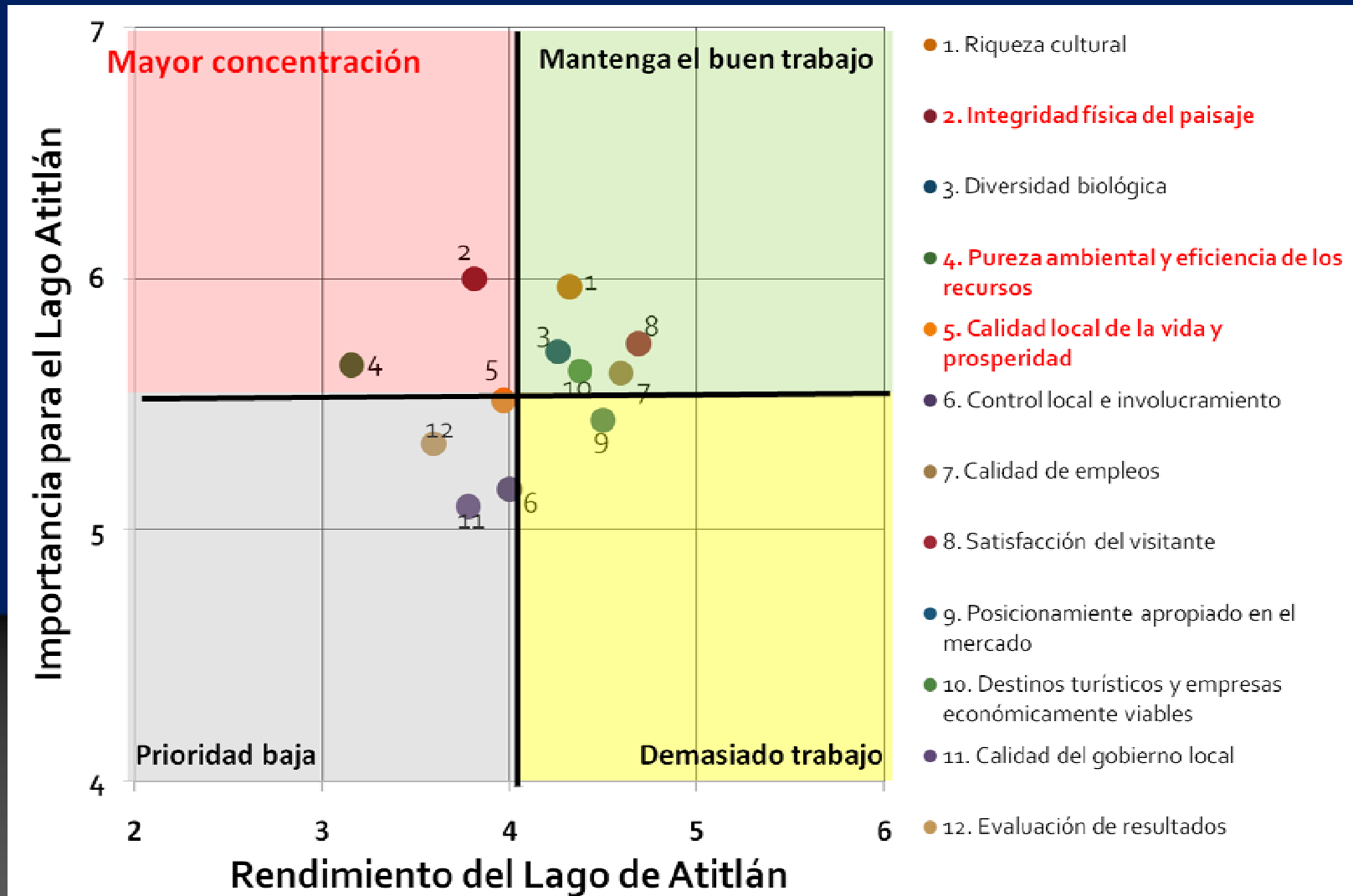
- Approx. \$45,000.00

Destination  
Management

# 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.

# PRINCIPLES OF EXCELLENCE: IP ANALYSIS



# APPLY SYSTEM FOR MEASURING EXCELLENCE IN DESTINATIONS (SMED)

## 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



# LAKE ATITLÁN DESTINATION WEBSITE PORTAL

## NOW

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



## FUTURE

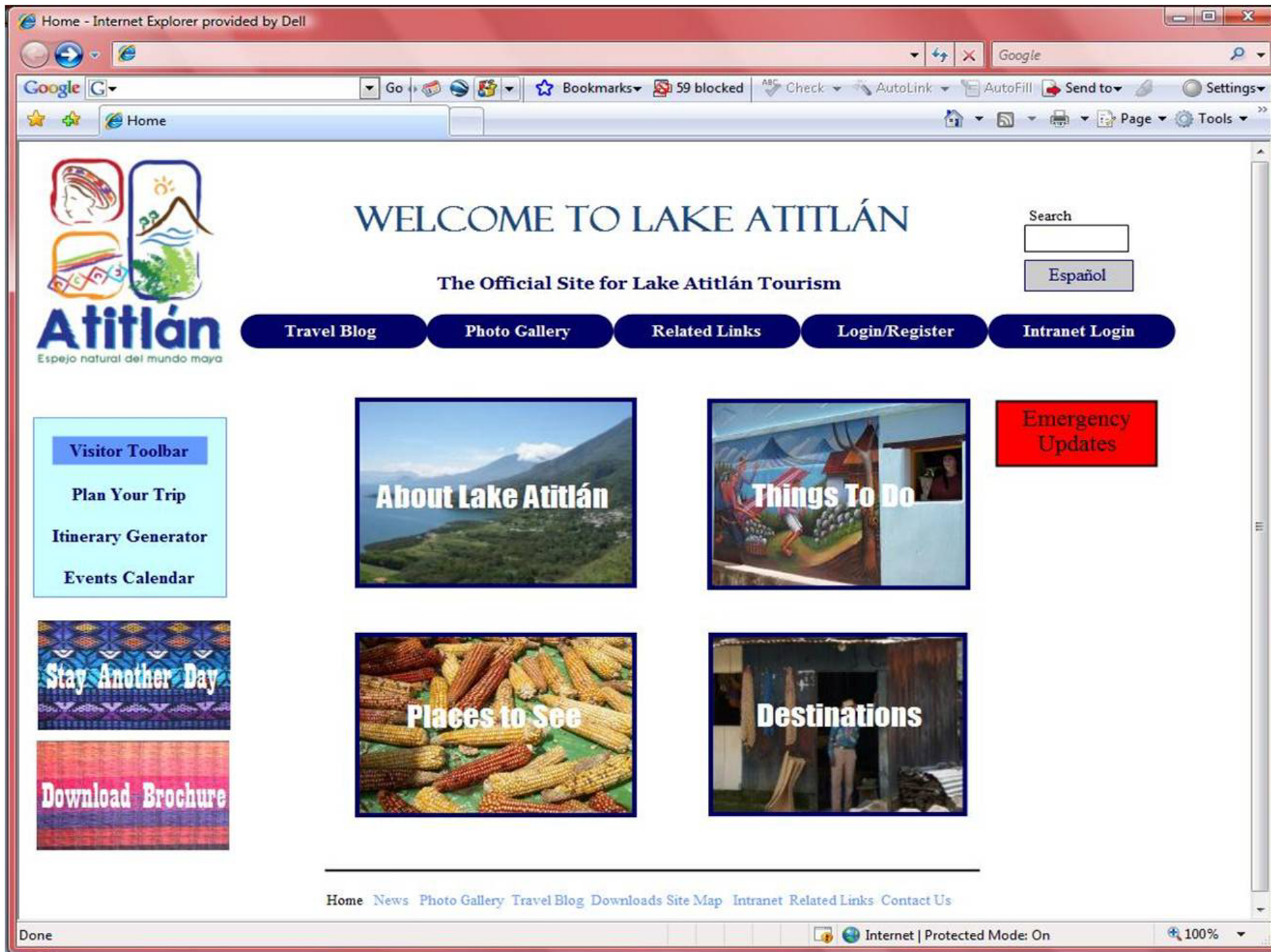
- Dual Purpose
  - Establish lake as a destination on web
  - Intranet for internal communication
- Featuring:
  - Itinerary Generator
  - Trip Planner
  - Online Booking Capabilities
- Utilize Search Engine Optimization

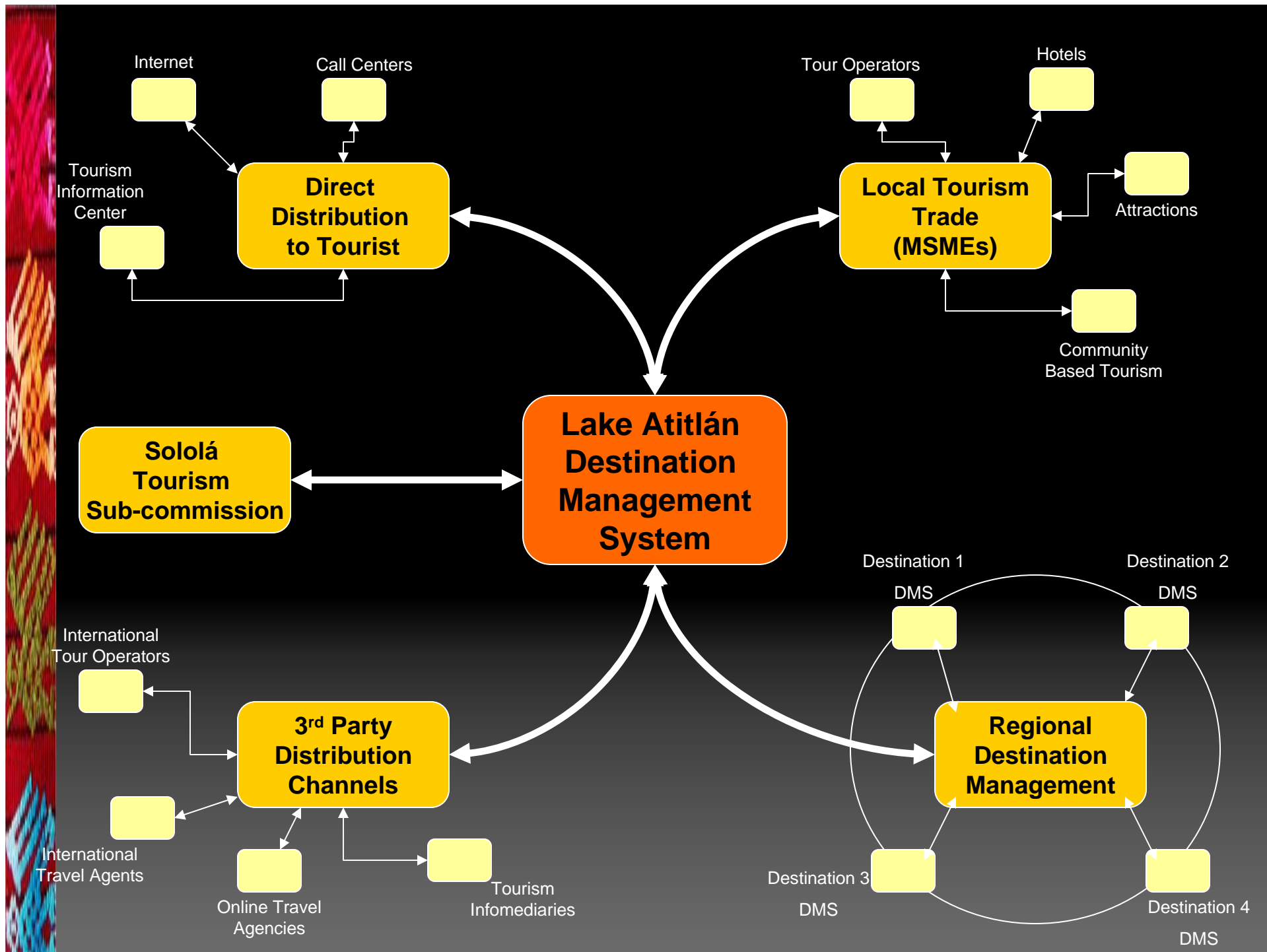
### Preliminary Estimate

- Approx. \$25 – 50,000

Source: Forrester Research

Destination  
Management





# DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

## 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:  
<http://www.gwu.edu/~dmp/2008-Guatemala/GuatemalaFinalReport-Complete.pdf>



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Turismo Competitivo



Cooperador



# Questions & Answers

