

TO DO! 2014

Contest Socially Responsible Tourism



Award Winner

**ACTUAR
COSTA RICAN ASSOCIATION OF RURAL
COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM**

represented by:

Lilliana Martínez González, Member of the Board

San José

Costa Rica

Award Rationale

by

Prof. Ludwig Ellenberg

1 INTRODUCTION

The application for the TO DO! 2014 was submitted by the **Costa Rican Association of Rural Community Tourism (ACTUAR)** from Costa Rica and was nominated by the TO DO! jury. Ludwig Ellenberg visited and checked ACTUAR from 9th to 17th December 2014. The evaluation began on 9th December at the head office of ACTUAR in San José where vice director Cinthya Quirós explained the current situation. She gave reasons for the selection of places to be visited during the evaluation and provided information on future activities planned by ACTUAR. All the board members were present and available for a detailed discussion. The author introduced the Institute for Tourism and Development, its history and its role in Germany. He explained the importance of the TO DO! award and the need for an independent assessment of ACTUAR.

On 10th December 2014, the author visited Chira Island (Puntarenas Province) and the local members of ACTUAR. In the morning of 11th December, he gained insights into the activities of ACTUAR in San Agustín de Escazú (San José Province), and in the afternoon he had time to participate in the annual conference of the “National Chamber of Rural Community Tourism” (CANTURURAL). From 12th to 14th December, the author visited El Copal (Cartago Province), Yorkín and Keköldi (Limón Province) and had a meeting with the Asociación Talamancueña de Ecoturismo y Conservación (ATEC; Talamancan Association of Ecotourism and Conservation) in Puerto Viejo de Talamanca. On 15th December 2014, the head office team and the board met again in San José, and the author informed them about his observations, discussions and conclusions, gave recommendations for the next steps to be taken by ACTUAR, described his assessment and explained why ACTUAR should be awarded with a TO DO! 2014.

2 BACKGROUND AND SETTING

Costa Rica is a tropical country in between the Pacific and Caribbean oceans, between Nicaragua and Panama. It has a size of about 51,000 km² and a population of about 4.7 million people. With a Human Development Index (HDI) value of 0.76, it reaches rank 68 among the 187 countries covered. With a per capita gross national product of USD 5,900, it reaches rank 70. Costa Rica is generally considered a predominantly “white” country, despite a mestizo share of about 1/8 and one percent of Chinese and black populations each. The indigenous groups with more than 30.000 people have been marginalised and ignored for centuries, and only in the past 25 years, they got the political weight that they had been denied for so long. Economically and socially the Bribri, Cabécar, Boruca, Chibcha, Guaymí, Maleku, and Naso continue to be marginalised groups in Costa Rica.

During colonial times, Costa Rica was the remote Southern rim of the Spanish captaincy general of Guatemala and focussed on subsistence farming. In 1821, it got independent and mainly remained shielded from supra-regional conflicts. The area used and inhabited was concentrated in the “Valle Central”, the central high valley, as a kind of “landlocked country with a sea view”. This central part of the highlands with its natural geographical advantages covers only about three percent of Costa Rica’s surface. However, since the European intrusion, it has been the economic pulse generator. Political decisions with impacts on the social, cultural and economic life of the country are being taken here, and half of the population still continues to live here, despite a fascinatingly creative agro-colonisation even of peripheral areas. Costa Rica is thus a very asymmetrically inhabited country and in this respect can well be compared to Iceland or Australia.

In its history, the country has also seen crises and conflicts, but the last major tensions were settled in 1948 and the economic activities have since then relatively peacefully coexisted, without any major crucial tests. Costa Rica has no army, is on extraordinarily friendly terms with the US, has good basic health and educational systems, is a political role model within Central America and has stable governments with free elections and usually nuanced changes

of political direction once in four years. At times, it has even had a pacifying influence on its Central American neighbours (Nobel peace prize for Oscar Arias in 1987). Luis Guillermo Solís, a former university teacher and candidate of the political centre, has since May 2014 been head of government, with good backing.

Costa Rica is a geographical superlative in Latin America: highest diversity in a very small territory! The predominantly volcanic mountain range between Nicaragua and Panama (Cordillera de Tilarán, Cordillera Central, Cordillera de Talamanca) with its multifaceted structure interrupted by a large number of valleys, the basin of the Central Valley at about 1,000 m altitude, the hilly areas and pockets of wet land on the Pacific side, and the alluvial plains on the Caribbean side with partly wide amphibian areas are located right next to each other. The Eastern side gets ample rainfall all year round. The highlands and the Pacific slope alternate between eight months of rainy season (“invierno”) and four months of dry season (“verano”). The lowland has constantly warm temperatures; with gradual differences depending on the altitude. Costa Rica belongs worldwide to the countries with the highest biodiversity. There is a large variety of insects, many species are still far from known. At some single locations, about 400 species of birds can be observed – this corresponds to the number of bird species in the whole of Central Europe. Costa Rica’s importance for global conservation can be compared to the Chocó in Colombia, the Mata Atlántica in Brazil, the Capensis in South Africa, the South West of Cameroon, the Rift Valley in East Africa as well as to the Himalayas and their neighbouring South Eastern region up to Papua New Guinea.

Costa Rica’s urbanisation processes (now about 75 percent urban population), the vehemently driven agro-colonisation even on steep mountain slopes, in hilly areas and swamps, as well as the destruction of forests over the past decades led to serious environmental problems. For almost 50 years, Costa Rica has been responding by demarcating protected areas. Since tourism started around the same time, these protected areas have been playing an important role in the country. In the meantime, one fourth of the area has been given a special status as “parques nacionales” (national parks), “reservas silvestres” (wildlife sanctuaries) and “refugios indígenas” (protected indigenous territories), withdrawing it from use.

Tourism has become one of the most important sources of foreign exchange. The number of foreign visitors per year – mainly from the US and Canada, increasingly also from Europe – has come to exceed two million. Domestic tourism is a relatively new phenomenon in the country and is increasingly gaining importance. Foreign tourists have mainly been tuned in to experiencing “nature”. They regard national parks, biological diversity and wilderness as attractions particularly worth visiting. There is hardly any mass tourism, at least not as extensive as e.g. in the Dominican Republic. Small groups, couples and individual travellers visiting the country are more typical of Costa Rica. Tourism dedicated to rural areas, with an interest in agriculture and a focus on land use, is new and small in numbers, but with high growth rates. As “rural tourism”, it will not replace the phase of pure ecotourism. However, it will increase the range of themes, and thus touristic diversity.

3 ACTUAR

ACTUAR has been promoting rural tourism in Costa Rica in a creative and original manner, on a continuous basis and well connected as an organisation. ACTUAR wants to improve the economic situation in the peripheries and reduce the number of land sales out of financial need as well as rural-urban migration. The organisation also wants to provide foreign and domestic tourists with a deeper understanding of the problems, way of life, economy, opportunities and beauty of rural Costa Rica. Other objectives include establishing and maintaining a nation-wide network of tourist destinations with similar objectives and contributing to upgrading remote areas of the country.

In 2001, an ecotourism conference organised by the “Programa de Pequeñas Donaciones” (PPD; GEF Small Grants Programme/UNDP) brought together indigenous groups, women, farmers and fisher folk from the periphery of Costa Rica. 15 of these groups (women’s organi-

sations, indigenous groups and peasants' organisations) decided to set up ACTUAR as a network of corresponding interests. ACTUAR formulated as objective making their living space attractive for tourists while controlling the direction and speed of developments, and finding mechanisms for tourism to provide an additional income to existing economic activities. The organisers had both domestic tourists and foreign tourists in mind. It was known that during their trip around the country, especially tourists from North America and Europe visit very different destinations in Costa Rica, seeking to combine hilly and coastal areas, forests and swamps, mountain areas and lowlands. The initiators of ACTUAR are still part of the organisation, none of the founding members left. What was entirely new was that tourism was not only focused on natural attractions, but could also focus on rural communities with their cultural characteristics. As basic common values ACTUAR formulated the "conservation of natural and cultural resources". There was a consensus that the communities involved had equal opportunities that democratic means of co-determination were self-evident, that men and women were equally entitled to participate and that indigenous communities had an equal say in decision-making processes.

Over the years, ACTUAR grew to more than 30 member organisations. Not all of the members are equally active and successful, but most of them have remained part of the network. ACTUAR was built up from outside, not from the central highlands. The head office was set up in San José as a coordinating institution that also serves the exchange of information, and later also the acquisition of funds for capacity building and marketing. It was managed by director Kyra Cruz until early in 2014. Since she left, discussions about the future structure of ACTUAR have been revived. The current vice director, Cinthya Quirós, earlier managed the finances of ACTUAR for five years and knows the organisation from within. During this time of transition, the board of ACTUAR has gained more weight. Therefore, it was important to the author to have extensive discussions with the members of the board. Some of them joined the author during parts of the trip: Meylin Chamorro from San Agustín, Liliana Martínez from Chira Island, Bernarda Morales from Yorkín, and Luis Zúñiga from Carbón Dos. All the three fields of work of ACTUAR were subjects of the discussion: development, marketing and administration. Unusually self-confident, in Costa Rica as a "land of nature", ACTUAR also focuses on the daily lives of rural communities, and on traditional food production. Among the tourism networks of Costa Rica, ACTUAR thus has a special role to play. The most important target group of ACTUAR are active kinds of tourists with an interest in the local rural culture off the beaten tracks, as well as eco-tourists and (groups of) students specialising in rural development or nature conservation.

ACTUAR has built up an impressive monitoring of activities, extensions to peripheral locations, training programmes, customer statistics and marketing. The organisation was repeatedly evaluated with positive results, last in December 2014 by Rainforest Alliance. ACTUAR works closely with the "Institute Costarricense de Turismo" (ICT; national tourism ministry) and is getting long term financial support from several organisations, at the national level especially from the PPD already mentioned, and internationally from Bread for the World (around € 100,000 per year).

ACTUAR assesses the objectives and capacities of applicants before adding them to the network in order to maintain its quality. If the new members have shortcomings, a plan will be devised to overcome them. This is a time-consuming process for the relatively small organisation. That's why only one or two new members are admitted per year.

ACTUAR combines two contradictory features: On the one hand, the organisation has gained a lot of experience in developing rural tourism without destroying the previous agrarian structure of communities. On the other hand, ACTUAR likes to experiment, is full of creative ideas and careful explorations of new ways in tourism. Furthermore, by giving information prior to the trips as well as through their tour guides on the spot, ACTUAR directly influences the behaviour of guests.

4 EVALUATION AGAINST THE TO DO! CONTEST CRITERIA

Preliminary remark: During an evaluation of just one week, there was not enough time to visit all the 30 members of ACTUAR. However, the trip was perfectly organised by the head office and took the author to extremes: partners at the outskirts of San José with opportunities and obstacles due to urban influence, seclusion from agricultural use, fisheries and mangrove management on the island of Chira, nature observation possibilities in the forests of El Copal and Kéköldi, tourism in the Bribri community of Yorkín. The eight members' team of the head office was available for several hours at the beginning and at the end of the trip to answer questions. Individual members of the board accompanied the author and were ready to discuss all the subjects raised. Furthermore, Cinthya Quirós tirelessly provided the author with very precise information on all the contest criteria. All of this increased the author's confidence to develop an adequate assessment of ACTUAR for the TO DO! award.

Comparing the activities of ACTUAR to the TO DO! criteria leads to the following assessment:

4.1 Taking into account the different interests and needs of the local people through participation

Naturally, there'll be diverging interests and to a large extent different basic needs between the membership organisation "Asociación para la Conservación y Desarrollo Sostenible de los Cerros de Escazú" (CODECE; Association for the conservation and sustainable development of the hilly landscape of Escazú), the owner of a finca with organic agriculture, the mask and puppet maker Gerardo Montoya in San Agustín, fishermen in the Gulf of Nicoya, the operator of an observation ward for students and biologists in El Copal, and the about 200 Bribri living in Yorkín. At least, what applies to all of them is that tourism needs to provide an income, that the network among the ACTUAR locations is strengthened, that every use happens without degradation, and that a protection of the natural setting remains possible. ACTUAR was not conceptualised in San José and exported to the peripheral locations. On the contrary, the founding members in their remote locations chose San José as a central location to provide services. In ACTUAR, a real partnership and participation has developed. The network does not just take the interests and needs of the local population into account, but implements the people's ideas that have emerged in discussions and have drawn a consensus!

4.2 Enhancing the awareness of the local people with regard to the chances and risks of tourism development for their economic, social and cultural lives

ACTUAR has adopted the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism, as defined by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), informs tourists accordingly, and strictly adheres to exposing any suspected case of sexual abuse.

The board meets once a month at the head office in order to exchange information, discuss changes planned, admit new members and plan training programmes. The courses made possible by donations to improve the management of tourism seem to be well conceptualised, high profile, and fairly distributed.

The following training programmes were organised in 2014:

- Courses at the member organisations ASOPROLA, Asomobi, Bribripá, El Copal, Escazú, and Yorkín on the national sustainability label in tourism "Certificación para la Sostenibilidad Turística (CST)" and on the Code of Conduct

- Courses at various locations on understanding social networks, Facebook, Skype, Excel, Word and e-mail
- Course in first aid for 20 local tour guides in Puerto Viejo de Talamanca
- Course on environmental diagnostics for all members including practical implementation in the field
- Participation of the members at the annual conference on Turismo Rural Comunitario (TRC; rural community tourism)
- Course on the impacts of climate change in Central America
- Course for the staff of the member organisation ATEC in Puerto Viejo de Talamanca on how to take care of visitors
- Exchange with tourism organisations in Ecuador, Namibia and Bhutan

The risks posed by tourism development in every day economic, social and culture life are less discussed in the classes, but even more so in the groups and around such training programmes. The participants share their knowledge with the rural communities in their daily cooperation when taking care of tourist groups, not in meetings specifically organised for that purpose.

4.3 Participation of broad local population strata in the positive economic, social and cultural effects of tourism

In the case of one ACTUAR member it was noticed that the proceeds benefitted one single family. This is an exception. Otherwise the consensus is that the income from tourism should be distributed. At all the places visited, the author gained confidence that this can be achieved. It works in an exemplary manner for 17 families in the case of El Copal and for all the inhabitants of the community of Yorkín. Sharing the positive economic benefits of tourism works well. The social impacts of tourism are difficult to assess, as it is not only through tourism that the outside world and modernity have impacts on rural communities.

4.4 Guarantee of the attractiveness of jobs in tourism or of income opportunities for the local people through improved working conditions in terms of remuneration, social security, working hours, further education and training

Since the jobs with ACTUAR are in peripheral locations, remuneration and social protection are subordinate issues. Where there are only a few tourists, there is not much to earn. So far, tourism has done little to provide social protection. Economic profit from tourism only complements subsistence farming in the communities and income from the sale of agricultural products. In many cases, infrastructural improvements are made possible by donations, while the head office and the board play a decisive role in distributing donations and introducing innovations.

The eight jobs at the head office in San José are attractive. With regard to remuneration, job security stipulated in contracts and a combination of office and field work, these jobs are real career opportunities. The job satisfaction of the staff at the head office is also being increased by good team building, close contact with many tourists, contacts with international institutions, and frequent exchange with the members of ACTUAR at peripheral locations. Since there are two guest rooms in the head office building, short-term guests of ACTUAR can stay there during their time in San José and thus also experience the daily work at the head office.

All the players at ACTUAR continuously get opportunities for further training. This refers to a large variety of subjects, as mentioned in 4.2 and beyond. ACTUAR has developed a good profile with regard to training options.

What is unusual for this kind of organisation is that the head office in San José has been upgraded to include a small restaurant that provides lunch for the staff of the head office and is open to the members visiting the central valley, the tourists looked after by ACTUAR and walk-in customers. The little restaurant “Regiones” set up in the entrance area of the head office highlights food from high quality organic production, and specialities from the provinces of Guanacaste and Limón and from indigenous communities.

4.5 Strengthening local culture and cultural identity of local people in the tourism destinations

Preserving local colour and the ways of life in remote areas of Costa Rica, keeping up traditional processes and holding up what is regional are some of the motives that led to the foundation of ACTUAR. This is done successfully; these are heartfelt concerns of ACTUAR. Modern Costa Rica and global networking are nevertheless welcome. The dosage and the pace, however, are determined by the communities themselves.

In the indigenous communities of ACTUAR, the strengthening of cultural identity can really be admired. In the last 30 years, it was about 20 times that the author had visited indigenous communities in Costa Rica. Nowhere did he get such a positive impression as in the evaluation of ACTUAR in Yorkín. This is an unusual Bribri community.

Since the Spanish intrusion in the 16th century, the about 5,000 Bribri in Costa Rica have been decimated, cut off economically and marginalised socially. For a long time, they lived in isolated situations, with only very little contact to the white population, mostly as self-supporters in the Cordilleras of Talamanca. Incidentally, they proved that forest eco-systems, despite being managed, can be preserved over many generations!

In the 20th century, the Bribri's situation deteriorated. They were regarded as stateless and were recognized as citizens of Costa Rica only in 1958. Their language was repressed. Even in their personal lives it was banned for many years, and it was weakened by Spanish as the medium at schools. Hundreds of Bribri men hired themselves out as workers in the banana plantations of the Caribbean lowlands. While the United Fruit Company offered jobs and money, the working conditions were poor. Furthermore, over the years the contact with pesticides was so intensive that many of the migrant workers fell ill – with lung cancer as a very common cause of death!

With Oscar Arias' first term of governance (1986-1990) and driven by political processes on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the “Conquista”, the conquest (1992), the conditions for indigenous groups were improved. The ban on indigenous languages was withdrawn and today the Bribri language, for example, even enjoys promotion. The “foreign” teachers were replaced by teachers from their own ethnic background. The Bribri of Yorkín decided to avoid working in the banana plantations and today they propagate food production without pesticides, chemical fertilizer and fungicides out of their own full conviction. Bernarda Morales began by organising the women's organisation “Casa de las Mujeres” (House of Women) and was soon supported by other women of Yorkín. They opened up Yorkín to tourists. Though they made mistakes and accepted setbacks, these are today regarded as a price that had to be paid. Five years ago, Yorkín even got a school, so the students no longer needed to pursue their secondary education externally. This is extraordinary for Costa Rica, as in Yorkín there are currently only 35 students in the higher standards. To the author's knowledge, Bribri has the smallest school in Costa Rica.

Furthermore, Costa Rica and Panama have in the meantime recognised the Bribri territory as a unit to be administered independently. The national border, which has since 1941 been measured and accurately defined, divides the settlement area into two parts of equal size. However, this has become irrelevant for the Bribri. Many of the inhabitants of Yorkín have both a Panamanian and a Costa Rican identity card and are thus “legal” on both sides of the river Yorkín. This has many advantages, including the fact that if there are (too) many tour-

ists, they can put them up in other settlements, two of which are on the Panamanian side. In this way, tourist peaks do not exceed capacity limits.

In Yorkín, tourist activities are very well organised. Everyday life in the community continues almost unperturbed in the presence of tourists. The visitors travel to the village in simple canoes that are generally used by the Bribri. Transport is coordinated by César, one of Bernarda Morales' sons. In a rotational system, many men in the village get their turn. In the community of Yorkín, tourists move around with advice or guidance, but not in a determined or actively directed manner. There is a plan for their movements which involves many villagers, but always also regulates the handing over of responsibilities and ensures "tourist free" days for the organisers. The tourists are put up in clean houses, but do not get luxurious facilities in their rooms. In most cases, several of them share one room. They get clean but only cold water, and like all the villagers, in the evenings they get artificial light for just a short time, generated by solar panels. For three fourths of the year, the paths within the village and those leading to the scenic attractions outside the village are muddy and difficult to access. They are not being "styled" for tourist visits. The meals in the "Casa de las Mujeres" are unhurried and taken together. The preparation is being explained and curiosity with regard to the kitchen work is welcome. About 80 percent of the food is produced locally. All the drinks except coffee are from Yorkín. There is no beer or rum. "Chicha" (maize beer) is brewed on some days of the year. So there is no prohibition, but a protection against external dependency. This reduces the amount of waste generated. The Yorkín settlement gives a neat impression and is waste-free.

Day to day activities that tourists may be interested in, such as cocoa production, preparation of meals, utilization of fruits, production of clothes, catching of fish in the Yorkín river, or hunting with bow and arrow, are presented in an unobtrusive manner and usually only upon request. For these cases, too, there are "duty rosters", i. e. regulated and changing responsibilities of the villagers involved in looking after the visitors. More detailed information on the history, ways of living, political changes and special traditions are organised in the "Casa de las Mujeres", but this part of the visitors' programme is also unobtrusive and will only be shared upon request.

In ACTUAR, Yorkín does not play any special exotic role, but is an equal partner just as the "white" members!

4.6 Avoiding/minimising any social and cultural damage caused by tourism in tourist destinations

Many members of ACTUAR get only small numbers of visitors. Therefore, the communities can easily cope with them. Thus negative impacts hardly exist. As visitor numbers also fluctuate, with the months of December to April and July to August being the peak seasons and with low periods in between, there is no continuous tourist burden anywhere.

In places with an accumulation of tourist arrivals (Yorkín gets the largest number of visitors), mechanisms to minimise the social and cultural damages caused by tourism are an issue that is carefully taken into consideration. There is an intensive exchange on this within ACTUAR. The guides of ACTUAR are particularly trained and pass their experiences on to others.

Itineraries are elaborated by considering the cultural particularities of the different nationalities: French tourists are often surprised with a "picnic" in the field. Visitors from the US are spared long walks while for Germans these are attractions that can be enriched by a beer break. The Japanese are won by rapid changes of place.

The author had feared that the largest damage might occur in Yorkín, as the inhabitants are not Costa Rica's usual rural population of Spanish descent, but indigenous Bribri. This fear was unfounded.

4.7 Environmental compatibility

ACTUAR takes care to minimise environmental damage. This refers to the production of food, the conservation of natural vegetation, reforestation of mangroves and forest trees, doing without chemicals in the treatment of soil and plants.

While operating trips, most of the transfers are realised by land transportation, partly by public transportation. National flights are avoided as far as possible.

4.8 Participation of women and men in planning and implementation processes – improvement of gender relations

In discussions and interviews the responsible persons in ACTUAR explain that men and women enjoy the same rights in the organisation. However, this does not seem to be the case. The head office and the board of ACTUAR are currently dominated by women. Though there is Luis Zúñiga as head of the board and Jorge Cole as an anthropologist in the head office, there are mainly women on the board and Jorge Cole is the only male employee of ACTUAR in San José.

In the ACTUAR locations visited during the evaluation, it is usually women who dominate. Keköldi may be mentioned as an exception.

4.9 Measures to ensure economic and institutional sustainability of the project

While all the members of ACTUAR do their own business in the first place, there is accompanying assistance if they are not successful. The head office tries to compensate and with improvements of infrastructure and training programmes it can achieve a certain control. The head office with its eight employees is financed by the income from tourism in such a way that 20 percent of the money received goes to the head office and 80 percent to the transport of tourists and to all the destinations visited. Since donations may also be expected on the long run – Bread for the World has made a commitment until 2017 –, ACTUAR does not regard the organisation as in danger. This is also the external impression: ACTUAR gets a lot of enquiries from communities, lodges and institutions who want to become partners.

5 CONCLUSION

Costa Rica is mainly visited for the purpose of nature tourism. Visitors are interested in almost pristine landscapes, exotic flora and fauna, national parks that are easy to visit and stark contrasts of extremely diverse areas in Central America. ACTUAR also provides enjoyment of nature, but relies on rural tourism in an original and diverse manner. The organisation was founded in 2001 and currently has more than 30 members. It was not conceptualised in the densely populated highlands, but was built up by representatives of peripheral communities. From a tourism perspective, the national network of ACTUAR is wise, as foreign visitors always find a combination of places in Costa Rica attractive, rather than staying in one place. A head office in San José is necessary to coordinate trips around the country and above all for external contacts. The visitor management cannot be done from peripheral locations in Costa Rica alone, the marketing is done from San José.

ACTUAR tries to implement environmentally sustainable tourism. ACTUAR upgrades rural communities. ACTUAR does not regard the development of tourism as an alternative to agrarian structures, but simply wants to provide an additional income. At ACTUAR, social contamination by tourism is regarded as a pressing problem and has been discussed from the beginning. A way of dealing with tourists has emerged which can be regarded as a positive persuasion of visitors. ACTUAR is particularly successful with tourism in locations that are generally tricky, namely indigenous communities. Yorkín is a positive example of ethno tourism and thus an impressive exception in this tourism segment!

The continuation of ACTUAR is welcomed and the author recommends not focusing on growth, but on more continuity while maintaining the number of members. Careful management, even to the extent of compensating visitor numbers at the various locations in line with capacity limits, has since its foundation in 2001 been one of the objectives ACTUAR and the author recommends to give high priority to that.

With the experience of having evaluated ACTUAR from 9th to 16th December 2014, the author feels certain in his assessment that ACTUAR deserves the TO DO! award 2014.

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