

TO DO!2001
Contest Socially Responsible Tourism

Award Winner

WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS

represented by

Mr. Mateo Jicca Corito, Managing Director

Cuzco, Perú

Rationale for the Award

by

Dr. Christian Adler

Manu National Park is situated on the eastern slopes of the Andean mountain range descending to the lowlands. It is bounded by the left margin of the river Rio Madre de Dios. Extending to the right of the river is an area settled by indigenous people consisting of the Harakmbut, Matsiguenga and Yine tribes, designated as the Amarakaeri Reserved Zone. This is where some 1,500 indigenous people live scattered across nearly 500,000 hectares of largely unspoilt dense rainforest traversed by numerous small rivers.

1. INTRODUCTION

WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS is a tourism enterprise based in Cuzco, Peru. It is wholly owned by eight indigenous communities of the Peruvian Amazon lowlands and run exclusively by its members. WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS sees itself as an agency for ecologically and socially acceptable travel to explore the territories of the Harakmbut, Matsiguenga and Yine communities. WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS takes its name from a sacred tree of the Harakmbut tribe.

On behalf of Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung e.V. (Institute for Tourism and Development), the expert appraiser went to Cuzco, Peru, in November 2001 to assess on site the application received from WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS. For five days, he took part in a round trip of the Amarakaeri Reserve, travelled on the river Madre de Dios and visited the settlements of Shintuya, Shipetiari, Diamante and a resort facility at Wachipaire.

In accordance with the insights and findings thus gained, it is recommended that the nominated organization, on the occasion of ITB 2002, receives a TO DO! award in recognition of its aims, operating principles and activities.

2. BACKGROUND

The bulk of tourism activities in Peru takes place in the Andean highland area centred on Cuzco. Founded by the erstwhile Spanish colonial masters, the city is located at an elevation of 3,400 m and has currently some 300,000 inhabitants. Declared a world heritage site, the city itself (with its numerous monuments and relics from the Inca period) and above all the internationally renowned Inca city of Machu Picchu are the centre of attention. As a result, every year a little over half a million visitors come to see or pass through Cuzco. Other tourist attractions are Pisac and Ollantaytambo in the Urubamba valley, also with well preserved sacred Inca sites (in what is called the Sacred Inca Valley), as well as the picturesque villages of the Quechua in the High Andes, e.g. Chinchero. Every year 70,000 visitors alone travel the Inca trail, a hiking route leading in a two- to four-day tour from the Urubamba valley to Machu Picchu.

A relatively small proportion of the arrivals also visit the Peruvian rainforest areas bordering on Brazil and Bolivia east of the Cordillera (Amazon drainage basin, cf. map p. 3). Some 9,000 tourists annually get to the region of Puerto Maldonado and Manu National Park, which, considering the diluted infrastructure there, is still a sizable number.

While 20 to 30 years ago tourism in Peru was almost exclusively handled by foreign operators running package tours, about 70 per cent of visits today are performed by individual tourists who more often than not make up "their own" programmes on site. This immense demand is meanwhile being met with a variety of one-day and longer trips by approximately 50 local agencies based in the old town of Cuzco in the little alleys off the Plaza de Armas. Pride of place among them is taken by sightseeing tours of Cuzco, trips to Machu Picchu and the Sacred Inca Valley, and touring the Inca Trail, but also river rafting, paragliding, and mountain climbs etc.

All agencies offer trips to the rainforest, advertising in particular Tampopata (Puerto Maldonado) and Manu National Park. But this does not mean that a tourist booking for “Manu” will really end up in the biosphere reserve. Most of the park is out of bounds for all access, with only a small zone at the northeastern end being open for conventional tourism. Permits to stay inside the park must be obtained, against payment of fees, from the park authority, which will not grant access to all tour agencies. At present, only nine such agencies are duly authorized.

A tour lasting six days through the rainforest costs between US \$ 700 and 1,000. Currently the annual figure of visitors prepared to pay the hefty price to visit Manu National Park stands at 2,800. The profit margin of the agencies amounts to approximately 40 per cent of the gross tour price, enabling them to invest in the construction of resort facilities, viewing platforms in the rainforest, their own four-wheel-drive vehicles to take the customers around, and high-powered well-equipped craft for river tours. Though offering less in terms of comfort, the smaller agencies are not much cheaper, transporting annually a comparable figure of some 3,000 passengers. They do not, however, take their customers into the national park but rather to the so-called Cultural Zone, which denotes precisely the area settled by the Harakmbut, Matsiguenga and Yine tribes covered in the present report. They have been – and continue to be – the only ones denied their share in this flourishing business.

To get through to the settlement area of these Indian tribes is much more difficult than to reach the town of Puerto Maldonado, itself deep in the rainforest. A narrow and tortuous mountain road snakes across the high Andean passes, through the cloud forest zone, before dropping deep down to the warm and humid Amazon lowland area – descending in the process from some 4,000 m above sea level to 300 m.

Pilcopata is the place where the all-season road built about 30 years ago ends. Onward travel from there is by an unsurfaced road (which rains will turn into a mudbath), at best as far as Shintuya. This is why for the lowland dwellers the river Rio Madre de Dios constitutes the main transport route, which is plied by motorized craft. Use is also made of the lesser tributaries, which take lightweight balsa rafts or can be walked along their edges.

This notwithstanding, the said communities were already missionized in the forties, affording them a relatively long record of contact with civilization, but not without consequences for their way of life. Whereas their family clans used to live widely scattered across the whole area, they are today gathered in eight settlements: Shintuya (236 inhabitants), Shipetiari (80), Diamante (450), Boca Isirioe (60), San José (130), Puerto Luz (460), Barranco Chico (60), and Puerto Azul (40).

Their livelihood continues to depend on subsistence farming carried on in small forest clearings, where they grow maize, potatoes, yuca, kamote as well as diverse tropical vegetables and fruits. They hunt with bow and arrows (no firearms) or fish the rivers. However, their natural habitat in the Amarakaeri Reserve designated as “Cultural Zone” is being threatened by a multiplicity of external influences – because a road linking Cuzco with the forest town of Puerto Maldonado has been cut through the rainforest in the southeastern part of their territory. Along this road migrants from other parts of Peru have begun to settle and have started to cut the forest. Their numbers have been swelled by some 5,000 gold seekers, whose intense quest has left behind lunar landscapes, poisoning the rivers with the mercury used in the process.

Consequently, the indigenous people are greatly concerned that this plundering of nature will continue and that ever larger parts of their ancestral lands will fall victim to the advancing loggers and gold prospectors. They are waging a campaign to stop this happening, but there

have been at times contradictory responses coming from the state authorities. While the national authorities have designated the entire unpopulated virgin forest (some 420,000 hectares) as the “Amarakaeri Protected Area” (with a “Cultural Zone” of about 160,000 hectares for the indigenous tribes), ownership of the whole territory continues to be vested in the state. The reason for this is that the development of resources “in the national interest” is exempt from the general ban on utilization of the reserve. In more specific terms, this is to say that the development of potential oil and gas deposits is to remain a real option, even though exploratory drilling has not yielded much in the way of results – partly because of protests from the population, partly due to the negative assessment by the authority in charge of indigenous people, Fenamad (Federación Nativa del Rio Madre de Dios), and partly on account of insignificant finds.

In sum, the situation concerning the indigenous groups living in the Amarakaeri Reserve is characterized by the following concurrence: while they have been exposed to the development pressure as described above and have witnessed the flourishing business of private tourism operators profiting in no small measure from the rainforest, its very inhabitants have been excluded from sharing this profit.

3. TOURISM PROJECT OF WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS

3.1 ITS GENESIS AND OBJECTIVES

In order to resist the pressure from outside, and to change the odds in this process in their own favour, the indigenous communities have for some time now pursued as their prime aim to permanently secure for themselves as a reserve the territory lived in by their ancestors. In this they have been motivated primarily by the desire to preserve their largely autarkic way of life in the forest, based on a traditional and ecologically sustainable system of using resources rather than plundering and destroying them. In addition, the urgent need arose to harness new sources of income which would support the communities’ socio-economic development while simultaneously preserving their own cultural base (e.g. by upgrading youth training, care of the sick, and improving living conditions in general as perceived necessary).

As the only means to connect both objectives, it seemed to make sense to implement their own concept of ecotourism, one which would contrast with the established system of tourism in the surrounding areas and would usefully complement the existing subsistence economy as well as assist in protecting the area’s biodiversity. Until recently, it was virtually impossible to earn cash from selling crops, as transport was too expensive, leaving the producers practically cut off from potential markets or consumers. But as the incoming tourist visitors need to be fed, thus creating a demand for locally produced food crops, it has become possible for the first time now to promote local socio-economic development.

For this to become real, however, the valid national legislation had to be taken into account, as it stipulates that the inhabitants of reserves or protected areas are required to produce a document in which their own participation in the utilization and management of their territory is duly defined. This “plan” serves as an “action plan” which is meant to lay down all development activities taking place inside a reserve. Should a conflict arise, it is settled by making reference to the paper and its regulations, which are considered binding by everyone.

With a view to complying with these legal requirements and ensuring the continued existence of the reserve with its hard-won protected area status, but simultaneously in response to hard economic facts, the eight communities of the Harakmbut, Matsiguenga, and Yine jointly formed a “committee for the recognition and management of the Amarakaeri Communal

Reserve” (Comité Pro-Reconocimiento y Gestión de la Reserva Comunal Amarakaeri) in 1998. One result of this has been the multi-communal WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS tourism enterprise founded on May 1, 1999, which is based in Cuzco.

Guides were chosen in the first two years of preparation. In 1999, test groups were led through the territory, and tour programmes were produced. Since 2000, WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS has been conducting regular group tours. Up to now, they have involved mainly small groups consisting of three or four participants, but occasionally there have also been groups comprising up to ten participants. Last year WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS totalled about 60 visitors.

3.2 PROGRAMME OFFERED BY WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS

On offer so far are eight programmes and routes through the territory of the indigenous communities, lasting between three and nine days. They make use of existing traditional paths between the settlements or of hunting trails, which to some extent had to be brought back from partial oblivion. These programmes will surely not meet exacting demands for comfort, but will definitely appeal to fit and adaptable travellers, who can look forward to a grand first-hand experience of the rainforest with all its diverse fauna and flora.

They will walk along small tributaries and use dugout canoes or simple balsa rafts quickly assembled on the spot for transport. Overnight camps are pitched along picturesque watercourses in tents or quickly built shelters covered with plastic tarps to keep out the rain. Participants will use their own sleeping bags and mats. Mosquito nets are available, and food supplies are carried along. The parties will fish en route and cook their meals on an open fire. There is clean water everywhere. Inside the settlements, the visitors are provided with their own huts for accommodation. Shintuya even boasts a small resort facility featuring three overnight huts and a restaurant building, all built in the traditional style, which is located some 500 m from the settlement itself and thus minimizes intrusion on the local population.

The trips vary not only in length but also in the level of difficulty. One of the more challenging tours is for example the Isiroé river expedition, which includes a two-day trek through the rainforest, followed by five days of travelling by dugout or balsa raft back to the Rio Madre de Dios, where the participants are then picked up by the river boat. The tour ends in Puerto Maldonado. But there are also easier trekking tours, such as the “river adventure through Matsiguenga territory” or the “Historical Harakmbut Trail”.

In Shipetiari as well as Wachipaire the locals have installed special circular walks to be used by the visitors, which are designed to give them an impression of the flora and fauna of the rainforest on a walk lasting a little under two hours. Shipetiari also offers a medicinal garden, in which visitors are acquainted with autochthonous healing arts.

During the trips the guides demonstrate their traditional techniques, such as fire-drilling and catching fish with bow and arrow. The villagers will approach the visitors in a friendly way, but are rather shy and reserved. Any offer of conversation is readily accepted, given that the visitor is the bearer of information about the world beyond the forest. Cooking is very popular, and the people do everything in their power to make the visitors welcome. The dishes are simple, in keeping with local circumstances, but a delight for the vegetarian, rich in local fruits and vegetables. Sausages, cheese, mayonnaise are also to be had, brought from Cuzco. The guides as well pay much attention to the wellbeing of the participants. It is around the campfire in the evenings that the latter will hear about Harakmbut mythology and the world view of the lowland tribes.

As a matter of principle, the various routes explore changing parts of the territory and visit different communities, avoiding any crossing with each other. Hence the organizers proudly

point to the fact that with WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS no group will ever meet another en route, in marked contrast to the other agencies, which tend to follow the same trodden paths.

WANAMEI's prices vary according to the route taken and the number of participants involved. A programme priced at US \$ 480 each for two participants will come to only US \$ 300 for eight.

Before the tour starts, every participant is handed a detailed written description of the route chosen and the planned activities, together with a list of what is required. Slide shows are arranged at the WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS office for interested parties so that they can fully comprehend what conditions will be like in the forest. When the tour has been completed, the participants are requested to offer their suggestions for potential improvements in a specially prepared form.

Unusually great care is taken by WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS concerning their guides. Every visitor is assigned a guide, who also doubles as a cook or food porter. The guides are drawn from a large pool of Spanish-speaking guides, whose selection and duty schedule are determined by a planning committee. The guides are assigned on a rotational basis to avoid preferential treatment of certain individuals. Each guide earns US \$ 10 per day. For the sake of gaining experience, younger guides are invariably assigned to work in practice with an older, more experienced guide.

3.3 TRAINING OF GUIDES

3.3.1 Language Training

A disadvantage already pointed out in WANAMEI's programme specification is that all the guides speak Spanish and none speaks English. This is why the agency recommends that participants should at least have a basic grasp of Spanish.

Efforts are being made to remedy this deficiency by a simple device: volunteers are invited from abroad to spend one to two months in one of the communities, taking part in the life of the indigenous people. They only pay for their board, about €4 per day, not for accommodation. In return, they are supposed to teach English to the local people, two periods a day. The volunteers are teamed up in pairs, one pair in each community at a given time, to be able to teach by turns. Up to now most of the volunteers have come from Denmark. They have worked twelve "man-months" in this way, training 50 guides. The programme is set to continue.

3.3.2 General Training

In order to prepare the guides for their tasks, a three-week training programme has been drawn up, divided into three week-long courses which are held in turn in each community, until after a few months all communities have completed the entire programme. Currently being planned is a programme to train future chief guides who are to be chosen from the existing teams of trained guides. They are required to have a good command of English and to excel in traditional knowledge and awareness of all autochthonous techniques and skills.

Those working as instructors on the training programmes are partly recruited from among the people themselves. In this case they represent highly experienced individuals with the capacity to present on the indigenous cultural heritage and expert knowledge of places and the flora and fauna. In addition, trainers are also provided by the FENAMAD organization (cf. section 3.4.2), by the school for guides at Puerto Maldonado, and are drawn from the ranks

of teachers of English in Lima. No small part in this programme is played by the IBIS adviser Claus Kjaerby (cf. section 3.4.1).

As could be seen from the syllabus, the variety of topics covered is great, ranging from the committee's directives and the objectives of ecotourism to kitchen techniques and questions of hygiene. Also treated are the tourists' expectations, organizational arrangements and responsibilities, nature conservation regulations, questions relating to security, and action in an emergency. Additionally, the conduct towards the visitors, the expected group dynamics, and potential conflict-solving measures are included.

These training programmes run by WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS are recognized by the Regional Tourism Office. Their graduates are awarded the title of "local special guide". The standards of the national tour guide certificate do not apply, however, but then the conditions in the forest are so markedly different.

3.4. EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE

3.4.1 IBIS

Named after the bird, IBIS is a Danish NGO (non-governmental organization), promoting help for self-help and supporting indigenous people in their effort to bring about a sustainable socio-economic development. IBIS provides the funding for an adviser based in Lima, whose task it is to assist the indigenous communities in structural development and the organization of territorial management.

In this capacity Claus Kjaerby, whose contract will expire in 2002, has been working for nearly five years on behalf of IBIS. He is a member of the working group RACIMOS DE UNGURAHUI. This is a Peruvian NGO (including two lawyers) that may be regarded as enjoying the confidence of the indigenous population of the country, dealing with human rights issues, territorial management and organizational development among indigenous groups. As reported, its recommendations are sought on the part of the state, and they are acknowledged as well. IBIS supports this NGO.

3.4.2 FENAMAD

Fenamad (Federación Nativa del Rio Madre de Dios, based in Puerto Maldonado) unites the indigenous communities of Peru's lowlands. Inter alia, Fenamad also represents the Harakmbut in their efforts to fend off logging and commercial goldmining operations. Fenamad itself turned to "Racimos" to win support in the capital Lima for the affected communities. The latter NGO responded by appointing the said IBIS representative Claus Kjaerby to advise the Harakmbut in setting up their tourism project.

Kjaerby, who knows the market given his past record as a tour operator, has achieved a lot in recent years. He succeeded in bringing home to the planning committee the potential for unwanted negative development arising from tourism; he has been instrumental in the training of the guides (cf. below); he had a say in the organization of WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS; and what is more, he has been involved in talks at state level on securing the future of the reserve etc. (cf. section 5 – Recommendations, for details).

4. APPRAISAL

Comparison of the activities of WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS with the TO DO! criteria for socially responsible tourism has yielded the following results:

Contest Criterion:

Involvement of the different interests and needs of the local population through participation

In the most direct sense, this demand is complied with, as the indigenous Harakmbut, Matsiguenga and Yine communities are the sole owners of WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS, which is also run exclusively by their community members. In this regard, this agency is probably the only one of its kind in Peru.

The project arose as a result of the external influences described earlier. What is interesting and at the same time exemplary is the participatory process which in the planning and development phase led to the setting up of the management committee described in 3.1. Each community delegates one representative to take part in its meetings, and one more is seconded by FENAMAD, the umbrella organization of indigenous communities. By now, the committee meets about every two months, with the venue of its meetings revolving around all communities. The people are always invited to take part so as to be involved in the decision-making processes of their spokespersons (cf. also Criterion "Chances and Risks").

The new source of income arising from WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS has for the first time generated employment and earning opportunities outside the subsistence economy, which can be distributed among all communities. In this way, the natural resources can be protected from excessive strain, and the forest continues to be utilized in a manner that precludes harmful consequences also in the long term.

Contest Criterion:

Raising the local people's awareness with regard to the chances and risks of tourism development for their everyday economic, social and cultural life.

The prime mover of the whole project is a planning committee which consists of representatives from all communities. After its establishment in 1998 this meeting weighed the chances and risks of tourism activities against each other. The communities were informed by a foreign adviser as to the negative effects tourism had produced elsewhere. To counter such effects a set of rules was decided upon concerning forest management, regulating such matters as access to the forest; control of illegal ingress and especially illegal use; access by tourists (dos and don'ts); hunting; harvesting / utilizing plants; authorization of scientific exploration; as well as monitoring environmental change.

It was also decided to draw up and implement a plan for the future management of the area and its resources, which would include ecotourism in its holistic development conception. As such, ecotourism was regarded as an activity which

- *"respects our traditional use of the forest, as well as the integrity of other traditional productive activities";*
- *"ensures the preservation of biodiversity in our territory";*
- *"guarantees appreciation of and respect for our culture, and the dissemination of awareness thereof";*
- *"benefits the visitor who learns from nature as if from school";*
- *"sustainably supports our communities both economically and ecologically";*
- *"generates income that can be used to ensure also the social development of our communities";*

- *“opens up a controlled local market for the products of our communities”;*
- *“preserves the forest as a refuge which is forever renewable through its physical infrastructure”.*

As things stand, new employment opportunities, and therefore additional revenues for the families, have already arisen for 60 guides at present (with plans for up to 150).

Contest Criterion:

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

After an investment phase, the profit made by WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS will be split on a 70:30 ratio. It has been agreed that 30 per cent of WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS' net profit will go into the management of the reserve, to be spent on such tasks as are decided by the planning committee. The remaining 70 per cent of the net profit is to be distributed among the communities in the form of a development fund, the size of which depends on the number of families inhabiting a given community. In one way or another, all members of the communities will thus have a share in this project.

In future, the income accruing to the planned-for 150 guides (10 per cent of the people) will be sufficient to provide the families with enough cash for their livelihoods. Currently the number of guides stands at 60 only.

What is evident already at the present level of concept implementation is the successful connection forged between the socio-economic development aspect and the requirements of territorial management. Even more so as the ecotourism practiced on the ground has also evolved into a primary economic argument vis-à-vis the state authorities when it comes to defending conservation needs inside the reserve. (In its absence it would be an easy option for the respective ministries of agriculture and mining to issue licences again for logging wood or mining gold.)

In consequence, there appears to be an opportunity at present to secure a decree from the state which will in all future protect the territory from the kind of exploitation and plunder as happened before, and will guarantee that the communities can develop in future according to their own needs and decisions.

Contest Criterion:

Guaranteeing the attractiveness of jobs in tourism for the local people by improving working conditions in terms of pay, social security, working hours, as well as job training and further education

The guides are trained for three weeks before setting out on tours. They also get instruction in the English language. With employment, they earn US \$ 10 a day, which is half more than the ordinary wages paid locally. A high proportion of guides are employed, as each visiting tourist is escorted by a personal guide. There is no discrimination against the younger ones among them – on the contrary, each experienced guide will be teamed up with a less experienced, younger one to facilitate learning from the experience of his senior. There are a total of 150 guides, employed on a rota basis to rule out favouritism. Their selection is decided by local “coordinators” and the planning committee.

The guides are to be employed as such no more than one week per month in order that their farming activities do not suffer. This also acts as a limiting factor on WANAMEI's capacity, estimated at a maximum of 500 tourist arrivals p.a. in future. Current figures are well below

this limit, however, with 60 arrivals in 2001, and 120 predicted by WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS for 2002.

Each community has so-called “coordinators” in charge of handling and expediting organizational matters. Communication is by shortwave radio link among the communities themselves and across the Andes with Cuzco. Thanks to a telephone relay station in Cuzco even messages from the rainforest will go through to Lima without much ado.

Women have also found a new source of income: on the one hand, they sometimes cook meals for the visitors and get paid, on the other, they supply natural crop products in the areas visited.

Social security along the lines of what is customary in the West is not known. The sick and the elderly are supported and looked after by their families.

**Contest Criterion:
Strengthening the local culture as well as the cultural identity of the people living in tourism destination areas**

The presence of visitors has had a very positive effect, inasmuch as the young people are encouraged to experience a renewed appreciation, from a low ebb, of their own cultural heritage, whereby the change towards a conscious re-identification with traditional culture has been reinforced. What is especially beneficial in this respect is the assignment routine for the guides: a senior individual who still embodies the traditional culture will always be teamed up with a more junior one. The latter will almost by coincidence acquire anew the traditional skills for which he commands the admiration of the visitors. He comes to appreciate again the elders’ bow-and-arrow skills, use of the fire-drill, knowledge of tribal mythology and historical sites, and their superb insight into the potency of medicinal plants.

**Contest Criterion:
Avoidance / Minimization of social and cultural damage caused by tourism in destination areas**

Most activities take place far from the settlements, and neither the sacred sites of the Harakmbut nor ecologically fragile areas are touched. A small resort facility is on hand in Shintuya to accommodate visitors also outside the settlement. Conditions are similar in Shipetiari, i.e. the everyday living of the indigenous population is not impaired by the visitors. In all communities, the coordinators have advance information about new tourists and meet them upon arrival. The visitors are looked after by the guides throughout their stay.

On the tours the visitors and their hosts become well acquainted with each other. Potential conflict situations are thematized as part of the guides’ training programme. As local representatives they are obliged to heed the dos and don’ts of their own culture, lest they get into trouble with their own people. For the entire stay, they keep control of access and contact between the visitors and their local counterparts and if necessary supply whatever explanations may be required by the visitors.

As a case in point, this expert appraiser observed how a Peruvian was instantly admonished for having tried to ‘dispose of’ a plastic container on a river bank. A checklist of dos and don’ts for tourists is available.

Taking photographs can be a most delicate matter everywhere. Not yet in these parts, however, maybe because tourists are still few and far between.

Contest Criterion:**Breaking new ground towards partnership and cooperation between the external tourism industry and the local people**

According to adviser Claus Kjaerby, it is WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS' policy to sell its programmes directly to its clients without making use of local intermediaries or international agencies or operators. Such a policy of direct 'partnership' between individual tourists and the indigenous population, of direct contact through e-mail or visiting the office in Cuzco, is considered 'innovative'. In Kjaerby's words: "Community-based ecotourism projects, in our opinion, should not necessarily promote international partnerships as this implies higher consumer prices and consequently wrong expectations in terms of services to be provided at the local level. Furthermore, it involves the risk that poor or wrong information is passed on to the tourist. This has been tested and it is clear that most foreign agencies give priority to sales rather than 'healthy' information." (also cf. 5: Recommendations)

Contest Criterion:**Creating other favourable conditions and the right framework conducive to socially responsible tourism development in the destination areas.**

During its regular sessions, the planning committee decides on the uses to which profits gained are to be put. It examines the accounting done by WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS and comes itself under the scrutiny of a Fenamad representative. Members of the communities can take part in the sessions, which guarantees a high level of transparency.

Additionally, every individual is called upon to participate in the decision-making processes of the committee. This provides the communities with an opportunity to determine themselves the future direction taken by tourism development in their territory. This is in marked contrast to the situation which existed there before – and is still common among the great majority of indigenous communities who get steamrollered by tourism without having a voice.

Contest Criterion:**Projects / Measures entered for the contest must be in line with the principles of environmental compatibility**

The local coordinators and guides are fully aware of potential threats to their local environment. They are duty-bound to conform to the standards of environmentally conscious conduct and therefore make every effort to keep the sites clean. All waste is meticulously collected and returned, the objective being to leave any campsite in a condition that does not show any traces of previous human occupancy. Their footprints on the river banks will have disappeared already after the next rain.

On top of this, the tours have had a very useful spin-off: as they lead through rather far-out parts which even the local people seldom visit, any signs of intrusion or illegal activities will at once come to the notice of the guides. In this way, tourism activities fund, as a sideline so to speak, the constant monitoring of the territory.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The aid organization IBIS (after its important and deserving involvement in the setting up of WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS) should take care to reduce its profile, except for the ongoing programmes (training of guides), and adopt the stance of an adviser and moderator. The

expert appraiser got the impression that WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS has an able manager in the person of Mateo Jicca, whose independent decisions should be respected. Only in matters concerning marketing and strategy is it conceivable that active external support would be of assistance.

For example, there are still not enough efforts to advertise WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS in the trade: a flyer distributed in the streets of Cuzco is simply not enough considering the level of competition.

It remains doubtful whether publicity by word of mouth or e-mail is enough to attract sufficient individual travellers. In such conditions it is to be recommended that a local agency should at least introduce its programmes to international operators with a view to cooperating with them (fair conditions and relevant information provided), given the fact that these operators send out groups on a regular basis. This could become one of WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS' core activities.

In order to improve communication in general, not just for the sake of tourism, efforts should be made to provide each indigenous community taking part with shortwave radio equipment as soon as possible. So far, only three of the eight communities have such equipment.

As yet, the visitors are transported across the mountains by hired four-wheel-drive vehicles. Purchase of a boat is a high priority. The costs would amount to approximately €4,000. This amount is not available. But long-term profits can hardly be expected as long as expensively rented vehicles have to be used.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The Harakmbut, Matsiguenga and Yine peoples are trying to show us by their endeavour how the virgin forest can be successfully managed without measuring its value in terms of ounces, barrels and cubic metres alone. To preserve their habitat means more to them than gold, oil or tropical hardwoods. It is no coincidence that WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS is named after the Wanamei tree, which is sacred to everybody. Throughout their history, these indigenous groups have led a life of abundance provided by the rainforest. Superbly adapted to their habitat with their knowledge and techniques, they gained their entire livelihood needs from the forest. Scarcity was a concept alien to them. But it is a fundamental concept of our type of economy, for it is demand that gives rise to markets. In order to satisfy our requirements we have to open up ever more resources, however, exploiting them in ways that are often destructive to the environment.

Since they came into contact with our world, the indigenous populations of the Amazon basin have been forced to adapt to it, which for many spells failure and extinction. We relegate these inhabitants of the rainforest to a marginal existence. In Peruvian society, the Harakmbut, Matsiguenga and Yine, too, find themselves at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

Yet these indigenous people have closed ranks. They want to take their destiny into their own hands. They have taken up an economic sector of our world – conceivably the only one open to them – by which they can preserve their independence and culture also in the future. They meet a demand and transport people who have a similar concern and appreciation for their forests, their plants and animals. They deserve!

Mateo Jicca is not pleased at all to have WANAMEI EXPEDITIONS called just a 'project'. A project is planned, its implementation is attempted, somehow or other. It is great to see it come to fruition in the end. If it does not, another can be thought up. This way of thinking is not applicable in this case, for the indigenous communities could hardly afford not to

succeed. “WANAMEI”, says Mateo Jicca, “is a projection of ourselves, one which we have worked so hard for.” And this sentiment does come across: this enterprise is imbued with the people’s entire lifeblood, with their hopes and expectations!

“WANAMEI” is also a vision. This is an existential issue, concerning the future of these tribes, their right to live as indigenous people, and first and foremost, the preservation of the basis of life.