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**Assessment of stakeholder views on tourism management in a  
Venezuelan national park.**

Jorge Gutic

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of  
Sheffield Hallam University  
For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

July 2003



To Jovan, because you inspired me to get here.

To Gisela, your strength and support are always with me.

To Sandra, you are the North Star that gives direction to my steps.

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## Assessment of stakeholder views on tourism management in a Venezuelan national park.

There is a need for new approaches to the management of tourism and natural resources in developing countries that recognise that there is often little tradition of stakeholder involvement in tourism planning and management and that, while wide and effective participation is to be encouraged, it is unrealistic to expect such participation to emerge quickly. The study evaluates recent trends and approaches in this literature and it develops two original conceptual frameworks for the management of tourism and natural resources in protected and other natural areas in developing countries: the Stakeholder and Resource Management Framework (STREM) and the Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA). These related frameworks take into account the restricted character of public participation and the conflicts over development and conservation goals that are often found in tourist areas in such countries.

These two frameworks develop a new approach to stakeholder involvement in tourism planning and management by objectives, where appropriate levels of tourism and resource use are defined in relation to the views of the affected parties. Use is made of stakeholder identification and analysis techniques, including assessments of their resource dependence and political power. Stakeholder interviews are conducted in order to assess the affected actors and to develop tourism and resource management strategies that reflect their views. The opinions of affected parties are evaluated in relation to valued resources, what to conserve, levels and kinds of resource use, and likely responses to various management proposals. The frameworks and related stakeholder interviews provide a structured and systematic approach to consultation with affected parties in tourism and resource planning and management in contexts where previously there has been little public participation. They provide managers with a better understanding of actor perspectives, thus enabling them to make more informed decisions. It adopts an anthropocentric perspective on sustainable tourism and resource use that gives prominence to stakeholder views on acceptable levels and kinds of resource use for tourism in natural areas.

This study applies key aspects of both frameworks in the context of Los Roques National Park in Venezuela. This resulted in the identification of 21 stakeholder organisations representing tourism operators, government and NGOs, from which 30 representatives were interviewed, and also a decision pathway questionnaire was completed. Perceptions of the appropriateness of current tourism activities varied between different interest groups. Most stakeholders felt that the park's current tourist volumes were appropriate, but the degree of approval was highest for tourism actors and lowest for NGO members. Most stakeholders expressed concern about tourism-specific management problems. The management scenario considered most likely to be applied in the park in the future involves a growth in tourist numbers and related facilities together with increased tourism management. Differences between this scenario and the preferences of various stakeholders are identified, together with the tensions that may result. These results, and the use of the frameworks, have practical value for the park's management and for the management of similar natural areas in Venezuela and other less developed countries. The practical application of the frameworks and interviews is evaluated here in relation to their value as policymaking and management approaches, and the frameworks are also further refined in response to the lessons learnt.

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# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

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### **1.1 Context to the study**

Tourism in both developed and developing countries is increasingly seen as a vital component of the global economy. More and more countries are looking to tourism not only as a replacement for extractive uses of natural resources and for industrial activities, but also as a new economic opportunity that can bring considerable economic growth. Highlighting tourism growth trends, the World Tourism Organisation (WTO, 2000; 2001) recognises that this activity has now become a major element of commercial interchange, particularly between developed and less developed countries, suggesting that in the coming decade tourism will become the largest single sector of world trade, and that by 2020 there will be 1.56 billion tourists a year.

The gradual shift in production to the service sector and the diminishing economic returns from the sale of primary resources has prompted many less developed countries to turn to their natural areas as a source of economic benefit through tourism (Hannah *et al.*, 1998). In turn, this has led to the recognition of tourism's potential as a source of new economic returns to local populations that traditionally depended for their subsistence on these resources, and an increased awareness of the need to protect natural areas formerly subjected to extractive uses.

The emergence of new tourist destinations has also brought a new type of tourist, particularly from developed countries, who are increasingly seeking to visit areas perceived to be unspoiled and where they can experience first-hand contact with natural resources, such as wildlife, which they cannot normally experience in their own countries (Cater, 1993). According to Boo (1990:2), this growth in what has been termed as the ecotourism sector *"has rapidly evolved from a pastime of a select few, to a range of activities that encompasses many people pursuing a wide variety of interests in nature"*. Accordingly, many governments in less developed countries have implemented policies for the

designation of vast tracks of their land as national parks or protected areas as a way to attract and develop tourism (Mowforth and Munt, 1998). These protected areas would usually comprise regions of outstanding natural beauty, sometimes associated with characteristics of unique ecological, cultural or social value, which are included within some form of legal protection and regulated development (Boo, 1990).

However, the use of natural areas for tourism has also resulted in negative changes, often due to the lack of local knowledge and expertise, exploitation by external actors, and the search for short-term gains. These negative impacts include physical effects on the resources, such as environmental degradation, and also social, environmental, economic and cultural effects impacting on local people, such as on their unequal access to the benefits of tourism, the implementation of management measures that reduce their traditional access to resources, and their increased economic dependence on an often highly volatile source of employment (Richter, 1984; Alipour, 1996; Cater, 1993; Tosun, 2000).

According to Butler (1996), it is concern about the potentially negative effects of tourism's growth and its effects on destinations that prompted the search for ways to define limits to this activity. This led to the development of the carrying capacity concept, which in its original form consisted of defining the maximum amount of use or of visitors that a destination could withstand without degradation (Wall, 1982). Thus, a common response to tourism's negative consequences in natural areas, particularly in less developed countries, has been to identify some form of capacity and then, less frequently, to attempt to manage tourism within that capacity (Boo, 1990, Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996).

Management responses based on carrying capacity have typically resulted in less than satisfactory results, among other reasons because they tend to rely on expert consultation, in which specialists, along with area managers and other policy-makers, get to decide how to mitigate negative impacts, sometimes disregarding the interests of local resource users (Gregory and Keeney, 1994). The responses generated by early carrying capacity

approaches have also been directed mostly toward solving environmental problems, while the social and economic impacts, particularly with regard to local populations, have been largely ignored, resulting in unsolved or new problems and disagreement among those groups with an interest in the resources.

The failure of traditional carrying capacity approaches has been partly attributed to the fact that public representatives, who theoretically represent the wider public, may not adequately define the scope of questions for policy debate, nor adequately represent the diverse views and interests of affected parties (Keogh, 1990). This realisation has encouraged a gradual broadening of the carrying capacity concept, resulting in new approaches that give consideration to the management objectives sought by destinations and propose greater stakeholder involvement in public planning as key elements to overcome tourism management problems. Some of these approaches, such as the Limits of Acceptable Change technique (Stankey, Cole, Lucas, Petersen and Frissell, 1985), the Visitor Impact Management technique (Graefe, Kuss and Vaske, 1990) or the Visitor and Resource Protection framework (USNP, 1997) pay significant attention to understanding the goals that the destination's managers are trying to achieve. Several commentators have also remarked on the need for increased public participation in the management of natural resources affected by tourism development, particularly by local communities affected by the increased use of local resources brought about by tourism (Sautter and Leisen, 1999; Boselman *et al.*, 1999; Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Brown *et al.*, 2001; Hardy and Beeton, 2001). They go on to suggest that greater public participation in decision-making in the planning process may not only bring more democratic empowerment to the decisions taken, but may also increase the knowledge and resources available for the process, and could result in a broadening of the planning options (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Murphy, 1985; Warner, 1997).

In the particular case of tourism, it has been suggested that the only analytical framework within which sustainable tourism can be delivered is one in which the stakeholders are identified and their concerns, values, goals and

responsibilities are analysed and incorporated into the management strategy (Robson and Robson, 1996). Increasing emphasis is being placed on involving the multiple stakeholders affected by tourism development in the tourism planning process (Yuksel, Bramwell and Yuksel, 1999). This involvement might help to identify a shared planning vision which is more politically legitimate, and which includes and responds to stakeholder views about appropriate tourism management and planning decisions for the destination. This evidence suggests that the application of Stakeholder Theory in the context of a planning process, particularly in relation to tourism and natural resources, could help to identify those participants who are relevant to the process, and might result in better solutions to management problems than would otherwise be possible.

However, the involvement of stakeholders in less developed countries in particular can be fraught with difficulties and problems peculiar to these contexts, where public participation in decision-making processes is the exception rather than the norm. The particular problems associated with public participation in these countries, or the lack of it, can lead to obstacles to the design and implementation of management proposals, sometimes severely curtailing or completely blocking management efforts. Under these circumstances, management frameworks are required that can be adapted in a pragmatic and context-specific way to the particular conditions of each country and indeed each destination. These frameworks should promote the use and management of the destination's resources according to goals informed and oriented by the needs and preferences of the local population and destination managers, but they should also be flexible enough to work with the level of community participation that is feasible in the destination, particularly where there are previously limited participative experiences.

In contexts such as those of less developed countries, where the alleviation of poverty and resource overuse are commonly perceived as primary management goals, any management framework should also be flexible enough to allow the consideration of objectives that do not necessarily prioritise resource conservation over other key management goals. This need for pragmatism and adaptability in the management of tourism is advocated by

Hunter (1997) and Munt (1992), who argue that there is no such thing as the single best approach to tourism planning or sustainability. This call for pragmatism and adaptability in tourism management is reflected in Hunter's (1997:864) statement that *"sustainable tourism must be regarded as an adaptive paradigm capable of addressing widely different situations, and articulating different goals in terms of the utilisation of natural resources"*, within which *"different levels of community involvement in tourism development decision-making are appropriate for different pathways of sustainable tourism"*.

## **1.2 The study research aim**

As the previous review suggests, management frameworks are needed that can steer the development of tourism in natural areas so as to avoid or minimise its negative effects, and which are capable of adapting to the peculiar management needs and participation conditions found in less developed countries. Thus, one goal of this study is to develop a conceptual framework for the management of tourism in natural areas that might be successfully used under similar participation conditions of other less developed countries.

In order to fulfil this goal, the study has three main aims. The first is to develop a conceptual framework for the management of tourism and natural resources, and within it, a more specific framework that identifies and assesses under conditions of limited participation the stakeholders relevant to tourism management proposals, as well as their resource needs and management preferences. The study's second aim is to partially assess these conceptual frameworks in a natural tourist destination located in a less developed country. The third aim is to feedback and strengthen the frameworks based on the lessons learned in the light of their application.

To fulfil the aims of this study, a conceptual framework for stakeholder and resource management by objectives has been developed which links Stakeholder Theory to visitor management and natural resource management issues. The resulting framework for Stakeholder and Resource Management (STREM) is intended to address the causes of natural resource overuse in a

tourist destination and to guide the formulation of management actions directed at maintaining resource use at acceptable levels, with these levels defined according to the perceptions of relevant stakeholders. Only part of this framework is applied in this study, and its design is one of the original contributions of this research.

Within the STREM framework, a second conceptual framework was developed to identify and assess stakeholders relevant to the management proposals for a destination and to inform the decision-making process about their needs and management preferences. This framework for Stakeholder Assessment (STA) is intended to assist in the development of tourism and resource management objectives based on a stakeholder identification, analysis and consultation process that provides a more structured alternative for stakeholder participation than the public consultation steps of the LAC-type frameworks. The STA framework is intended to incorporate consideration of stakeholder needs and preferences with the sustainable management of the destination's natural resources, with the management goals defined in the context of stakeholder perceptions. The design and partial testing of this framework is another original contribution of the study.

The STREM and STA frameworks were partly developed based on existing literature on carrying capacity, visitor and natural resource management, and also on stakeholder identification, analysis and management. Both frameworks were developed deductively, partly by integrating existing literature and, in the case of the STREM framework, by putting together these two bodies of literature. The study will partially inductively test the STA framework, by collecting information in the field about a destination-specific stakeholder and resource management situation, by feeding this information into the framework, and by assessing whether the framework has analytical and practical value in this specific context.

### 1.3 The study research objectives

Hence, this study builds a framework for the identification and analysis of stakeholders relevant to tourism and natural resource management proposals in a destination. It does so by integrating Stakeholder Theory with LAC-type visitor management approaches. It also tests the developed framework through its partial application in a case study, this being the Archipelago Los Roques National Park, a nature-based tourist destination in Venezuela. In order to achieve these aims, the study considers eight specific research objectives, and these are presented here in relation to the study's main aims.

#### *Objectives related to the first overall aim of developing conceptual frameworks*

1. To develop a conceptual framework linking visitor and natural resource management issues to stakeholder analysis, with this framework for "Stakeholder and Resource Management" (STREM) intended to assist in the management of tourism in a less developed country under conditions of limited public participation. Only part of this framework is applied in this study.
2. To develop a conceptual framework for the identification of resource management planning objectives based on a process of "Stakeholder Assessment" (STA).

#### *Objectives related to the second overall aim of assessing the conceptual frameworks*

3. To apply the selected approach to identifying stakeholders relevant to tourism and natural resource management proposals in a tourist destination.
4. To examine the views of stakeholders on the resources in a tourist destination and on the issues or problems to be addressed in relation to tourism resource use.
5. To identify and evaluate stakeholder interests or needs in relation to a destination's resources and their management.
6. To evaluate the extent to which the stakeholders are interested in, and have the capacity to influence, the management of tourism and of the resources in a destination.
7. To develop and apply an approach to interviewing stakeholders about tourist

"carrying capacity" and natural resource management issues, with the interviews providing much of the primary research evidence.

*Objective related to the third overall aim of revising and strengthening the conceptual frameworks based on the research findings*

8. To review the lessons learnt through the partial application of the STA framework and to use these findings to revise and strengthen the conceptual frameworks developed in this study.

#### **1.4 Structure of the dissertation**

This dissertation is organised into 10 Chapters. Chapter 2 comprises the Literature Review and it seeks to review a range of tourism and resource management approaches, as well as to consider how Stakeholder Theory can serve as the basis for stakeholder identification and assessment in relation to tourism management. This chapter also reviews the problems of stakeholder involvement in less developed countries, and it ends with a discussion of the most recent thinking about approaches to tourism and natural resources management.

Chapter 3 examines the context of Venezuela and the Archipelago Los Roques National Park, reviewing the management of the Venezuelan national park system and how politics are a pervading issue at the national and local level in the management of tourism and natural resources in Venezuela. It also explains how tourism has developed in the Los Roques National Park as well as the distribution of responsibilities among the park's managing institutions.

Chapter 4 presents an overview of the conceptual research framework employed in this dissertation, and it explains how use is made of a synthesis of visitor management approaches and of Stakeholder Theory to produce a "Stakeholder and Resource Management" framework (STREM). This chapter also explains how the STREM framework is intended to address natural resource overuse by relating resource use to the levels considered acceptable by the destination's stakeholders. Within the STREM framework, a specific

framework is also proposed for the identification and assessment of stakeholders. This "Stakeholder Assessment" framework (STA) is intended to identify and assess the stakeholders relevant to the management of a tourist destination, as well as their potential influence on the destination's management.

Chapter 5 explains the research methods used, discussing in a step-by-step fashion how the STA framework was applied. This chapter also gives an overview of the steps that compose the STA framework, and how it relates to the remaining steps of the STREM Framework.

Chapters 6 to 9 comprise the results and analysis of the data obtained during the fieldwork. Chapter 6 identifies the stakeholders in the Los Roques National Park that are relevant to the tourism management proposals, and it evaluates their attributes. Chapter 7 deals with the interests or needs of these stakeholders in relation to the park's resources and to park management. Chapter 8 examines the strengths and weaknesses of the existing management of tourism and natural resources in Los Roques National Park. Chapter 9 deals with the resource management preferences and the "realistic" options available to stakeholders in the Los Roques National Park, and it does this by examining the stakeholders' preferred management scenarios and also the scenarios with the greatest probability of implementation.

Chapter 10 presents the conclusions to the study, by discussing the value of the STA and STREM frameworks, particularly within the context of tourism management proposals in a less developed country. This chapter also further refines the conceptual frameworks presented in Chapter 4, based on evaluations of the lessons learnt from their application to the case study situation.

## **1.5 Conclusion**

This chapter introduced the academic and practical context within which this study is situated. For example, it explained how tourism in both developed

and developing countries has become a major source of benefits but also a source of significant problems, particularly in destinations based on natural resources. It has touched briefly on why carrying capacity management approaches have failed adequately to deal with these problems, and how alternative approaches have been suggested to deal with them. Finally, it argued that the conditions for public participation and the goals sought in the management of tourist destinations within less developed countries require the development and application of pragmatic, adaptive management frameworks. The chapter also presented the overall research aims of this research study and the more specific objectives linked to them.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

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#### **2.1 Introduction**

The main goal of this research is to identify and assess the views of stakeholders potentially affected by proposals for resource management in a protected area subject to tourism use, where the management actions are to be guided by objectives set by these stakeholders and where the end objective is to avoid resource overuse. Thus it is pertinent to review the current state of knowledge concerning visitor management approaches commonly used to achieve such objectives, including such approaches as Carrying Capacity, Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC), Visitor Impact Management (VIM) and VERP (Visitor Experience and Resource Management Programme). Some of the weaknesses of these approaches are also considered, and other alternatives are reviewed.

Within the field of tourism management increasing importance is now given to the identification of management objectives, as well as the need for *"decision makers...to address difficult trade-offs explicitly"* (Gregory and Keeney, 1994:1035). In turn, this has led to a debate about who should determine what these objectives are. There is growing recognition that in a democratic society, a range of stakeholders have an interest in such decisions and hence ought to be involved in some way in influencing how these decisions are made (Bramwell and Lane, 2000). This might help to explain the growing body of literature in the field of Stakeholder Theory, and this literature could assist in identifying and assessing the stakeholders affected by tourism management proposals. Elements of this literature are reviewed here.

In establishing management objectives, it is necessary to consider the socio-cultural contexts that may influence the process. As the case study for this research is of a protected natural area in South America, it is important to consider the challenges of managing tourism and natural resources in less developed countries.

Finally, this chapter reviews the emerging paradigm within which many tourism and resource management studies appear to be converging. This paradigm recognises the rights of stakeholders affected by management processes to participate in decisions that affect them, as well as the potential for increased stakeholder participation to help achieve more sustainable resource management outcomes.

## **2.2 Commonly used tourism and resource management approaches**

Many researchers suggest that the degradation of environmental and cultural resources in a tourist area can be avoided if the area's tourist use is managed within its carrying capacities (Butler, 1996; Getz, 1982, Getz, 1986). It was in the recreation field that the carrying capacity concept gained widespread use. At first, the focus was on biological and ecological issues, based on the hypothesis that increasing numbers of visitors would cause greater environmental impacts which could be measured through biological indicators (Manning *et al.*, 1996). However, researchers in this field soon realised there are critical dimensions of carrying capacity that are related to human values, and that the cultural and social aspects of the visitor experience had to be accounted for (Wagar, 1964; cited by Manning *et al.*, 1996).

The recognition of these cultural and social dimensions, particularly in relation to host populations, as well as the growing interest in avoiding the tourism's negative effects (Getz, 1982; Glasson *et al.*, 1995; Green and Hunter, 1992; McKercher, 1993; WTO, 1984), led researchers to look for increasingly sophisticated methods to limit tourist numbers (Getz, 1982; Glasson *et al.*, 1995; Green and Hunter, 1992; Johnson and Thomas, 1994; O'Reilly, 1986; WTO, 1985). Initially, the key to these methods hinged on establishing specific limits to the volume of visitors based on the destinations' physical or structural characteristics. However, these methodologies gradually expanded to acknowledge the existence of social and cultural limitations, such as visitor perceptions and management preferences of host populations. These limitations were not related to the number of visitors that a destination was

receiving but were important to acknowledge if tourism's negative impacts were to be reduced (Williams and Gill, 1994).

Although intuitively useful and appealing, the carrying capacity concept has proven difficult to apply in tourist management, partly because there are inherent theoretical problems with the idea of 'capacity', and partly because some of the parameters to be measured are difficult to quantify. Wall (1982) points out that in its stricter sense, the concept of capacity implies a fixed limit, which contradicts the notion of inherent change associated with destination life cycles, whereby the number of visitors that a destination receives is proportional to its level of development, moving from a few visitors in early development phases to mass tourism in later stages. He also argues that the same physical space could have very different capacities according to the management goals that are set for it, citing the different perceptions of 'adequate' capacity that the participants in individual or group activities might have.

Other problems inherent in the definition of carrying capacity are highlighted by Glasson *et al.* (1995) and by Williams and Gill (1994), who argue that there is little evidence suggesting that changes in the capacity limit of a destination translate into predictable changes in the area's ability to absorb tourist use, thus highlighting the difficulty of linking numerical carrying capacity indicators to the management of tourism impacts.

Lindberg, McCool and Stankey (1997) argue that carrying capacity often provides little or no guidance for practical implementation due to the concept being related to an evaluative criterion that reflects a desired condition. If this desired condition (for example, using criteria related to visitor satisfaction or 'adequate' conditions) is not clear and capable of being measured, then it will not be possible to determine the carrying capacity. They also argue that, although it is based on subjective criteria, the carrying capacity concept is perceived as being scientific and objective, creating further limitations because, instead of it being used as a management notion to describe the consequences of alternative use levels, it is expected to answer what the adequate use level should be in order to avoid tourism's negative impacts. Lindberg, McCool and

Stankey (1997) also state that the carrying capacity concept confuses management inputs with outputs, since the concept is typically related to visitor numbers, while management objectives are typically related to conditions. This makes it difficult for managers to establish how a given number of visitors would help them to maintain the area's resources in an adequate condition.

Some authors (Becker, Jubenville and Burnett, 1984; Graefe, Kuss and Vaske, 1990; Shelby and Heberlein, 1984; Watson and Kopachevsky, 1996) suggest that tourism carrying capacity, although generally interpreted as a scientific concept, requires decisions based on judgement, which draw on the value systems of those applying the concept. Shelby and Heberlein (1984) argue that the implementation of carrying capacity involves both descriptive and evaluative components, the latter involving value judgements, and both components should be adequately integrated in order to achieve a capacity determination. As Burch (1984:494) argues, *"regulating access to public land is always an issue of politics, not a matter for decision by science."* He further argues that the exclusion of certain activities and type of users from natural areas is a matter of class conflict and not of scientific research, and the decisions required to implement such exclusions *"are issues of social equity and therefore central to the political process"* (p.495).

In response to the limitations of carrying capacity, some frameworks for the management of visitors and resources, such as LAC, VIM and VERP (Graefe, Kuss and Vaske, 1990; Stankey et. al, 1985; USNPS, 1997), emphasise that if tourism is a desired alternative, then the area's management objectives should explicitly express the desired goals and related conditions, and the management measures should be directed toward achieving them. These desired goals and conditions are potentially conflictive issues that must be agreed on by the relevant parties. Table 2.1 presents an overview of these frameworks and their key characteristics.

**Table 2.1.** Main features of the LAC, VIM and VERP frameworks for the management of visitors and natural resources (modified from Stankey *et al.*, 1985; Graeffe, Kuss and Vaske, 1990; USNPS, 1997)

FRAMEWORK	LAC	VIM	VERP
OBJECTIVE	Identify and establish appropriate resource and social conditions in recreational settings, and maintain those conditions through management	Reduction of visitor impacts in natural areas by identifying problem conditions, determining causal factors, and selecting management strategies that correct unacceptable impacts	Continuous management of visitor use in protected areas, allowing the reduction of impacts on visitors' experience and park resources
MAIN FEATURE	Focus on achieving and maintaining desired conditions rather than visitor numbers	Recognises that effective management involves both scientific and judgmental considerations, and that many alternatives are available to manage visitors	Focuses on impacts on visitors' experience and park resources created by visitor use, and proposes public involvement in management process
KEY STEPS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify area issues</li> <li>2. Define Opportunity Classes</li> <li>3. Select condition indicators</li> <li>4. Inventory conditions</li> <li>5. Specify standards for indicators</li> <li>6. Identify alternative Opportunity Class allocations</li> <li>7. Identify management alternatives</li> <li>8. Evaluate and select management alternatives</li> <li>9. Implement and monitor</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review data base</li> <li>2. Review management objectives</li> <li>3. Select key impact indicators</li> <li>4. Select standards for key impact indicators</li> <li>5. Compare standards and existing conditions</li> <li>6. Identify probable causes of impacts</li> <li>7. Identify matrix of alternative management strategies</li> <li>8. Implement management measures</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assemble project team</li> <li>2. Develop a public involvement strategy</li> <li>3. Develop statements of park purposes</li> <li>4. Analyse resources and visitor experiences</li> <li>5. Establish potential zones of desired resource and social conditions</li> <li>6. Allocate potential zones to specific locations</li> <li>7. Select indicators, standards and implement monitoring</li> <li>8. Monitor resources and social conditions</li> <li>9. Implement management actions</li> </ol>

One of the pioneer approaches that acknowledged the weaknesses of the carrying capacity concept is the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) framework (Stankey *et al.*, 1985). It was the first to propose the management of a natural area by objectives, these objectives being related to desirable social conditions and natural resources that are to be achieved through specific management actions. This framework calls for public consultation in its initial stage in order to define what constitutes the objectives and the desirable conditions to be achieved through the area's management. It also seeks feedback during the intermediate step of defining standards for the indicators

used to assess the condition of the resource and the social conditions, and for the final step of selecting management alternatives. The authors of this framework have recently argued (McCool and Stankey, 2001) that it offers adequate scope to involve stakeholders in the decision-making process, but in reality this involvement is not clearly articulated, and the whole process is likely to be largely manager-led. In the stages that require public participation, this framework suggests this will be achieved either through consultation, most notably when identifying and prioritising the issues or problems to be solved, or through feedback on decisions that the managers have already made.

The Visitor Impact Management (VIM) framework (Graeffe, Kuss and Vaske, 1990) recognises the importance of both scientific and judgmental considerations for effective visitor management in natural areas, and it also emphasises the importance of considering several strategies other than visitor quotas to reduce visitor impact. Like its LAC counterpart, this framework gives much priority to identifying acceptable conditions through the formulation of management objectives. According to its authors, this initial and critical step *"might include public consultation"* (p.11), with the use of focus groups and surveys being suggested as adequate means of collecting the stakeholder inputs. However, and in a similar fashion to the LAC framework, the process as a whole is largely conducted by managers. Indeed, it has a stronger expert-led orientation than LAC, with the public being consulted merely to inform the decisions taken by the managers or 'experts', or else simply to ratify the decisions that have already been made.

According to Pretty's (1995) typology of participation, the public participation processes of both VIM and LAC frameworks would appear to be located between his consultation and functional participation categories, where most of the information is controlled by the managers, and where the stakeholders tend to inform the decisions rather than make them. At best the stakeholders' participation would involve some interaction and some influence on the making of decisions, but the risk exists that some managers would invoke their participation only after having already taken major decisions, or

they would simply co-opt the stakeholders in order to make the process appear to be 'participative' to external funding or supervisory agencies.

The main motivation behind the design of the Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) framework (USNPS, 1997) is the protection or enhancement of both the quality of a protected area's resources and the experience of its visitors. According to its authors, VERP is an adaptation of the LAC framework intended to address a wide variety of resource settings and visitor experiences, but placing greater emphasis on the involvement of stakeholders in the development of management decisions. Its authors contend that public participation is the only way to avoid the occurrence of disagreements and conflicts that would hinder or impede the implementation of management measures.

The VERP framework suggests that a range of concerned stakeholders should be included in the management exercise, particularly in the formulation of the goals to guide the process, and the framework also lists issues to consider when identifying and selecting possible participants from the public. However, it does not suggest a mechanism to organise stakeholder participation in the decision-making process, nor does it propose how to incorporate the results of this participation into the overall management process. Additionally, it prioritises the identification and participation only of those stakeholders that possess the knowledge or the resources either to support the process or to derail it. Thus, this framework implicitly leaves out those stakeholders that lack the knowledge, resources or power to enable them to participate and to support or hinder the management exercise. In principle, these weak and less influential stakeholders (such as local communities and tourists) tend to be those that are most affected by the decisions taken in the management process, and thus VERP may encourage the exclusion specifically of those groups who should be more involved. Presumably, this management framework would lead to functional participation in the public participation process, based in the categories in Pretty's (1995) typology.

In sum, several alternative tourism and resource management frameworks have appeared in response to shortcomings in the practical application of carrying capacity concepts. These frameworks are commonly used to manage visitors and resources in natural areas, and they all give some prominence to public participation as an element to be incorporated into their decision-making processes. Table 2.2 reviews the main characteristics of the public participation mechanisms suggested by these frameworks, and it also highlights the problems that might inhibit effective and appropriate participation.

**Table 2.2.** Key features of the public participation mechanisms suggested by the LAC, VIM and VERP frameworks for the management of visitors and natural resources.

FEATURES	FRAMEWORK		
	LAC	VIM	VERP
GOAL OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify desirable conditions</li> <li>To provide feedback on manager decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify acceptable conditions</li> <li>To inform experts' decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To formulate goals for the management process</li> <li>To review and validate management decisions</li> </ul>
MAIN FEATURES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-binding consultation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-binding consultation, with some functional participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Functional participation</li> <li>Decisions validated with stakeholders</li> </ul>
MECHANISM TO IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None proposed, as it relies on manager perceptions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None proposed, as it relies on manager perceptions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It suggests potential stakeholders, selected according to manager perceptions</li> <li>It suggests the exclusion of weak or disadvantaged stakeholders</li> </ul>
MECHANISM TO INCORPORATE STAKEHOLDERS' INPUTS IN DECISION-MAKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None proposed, although stakeholders' concerns should inform management goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None proposed, although stakeholders' concerns should inform management goals and stakeholders should provide some feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders' concerns should inform management goals</li> <li>Stakeholders review management decisions</li> </ul>
DRAWBACKS OF PROPOSED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is manager-led</li> <li>It is non-structured</li> <li>Managers own the information and processes</li> <li>There is limited stakeholder influence on the process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is manager and expert-led</li> <li>It is non-structured</li> <li>Managers own the information and processes</li> <li>There is limited stakeholder influence on the process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is manager-led</li> <li>It is loosely structured</li> <li>Managers own the process</li> <li>There is limited stakeholder influence on the process</li> </ul>

Table 2.2 demonstrates two potential drawbacks in all of the reviewed management frameworks. The first drawback is that a clear method is not provided to establish and develop public participation into management processes. Second, a mechanism is not suggested for translating participation into meaningful management inputs. Thus, these frameworks may prevent stakeholders from having a real influence on key decision-making, as none of them provide a systematic mechanism that allows for the identification of potential stakeholders and for the inclusion of their views in the management process, with these steps being left to the discretion of managers.

So neither the LAC nor the VIM frameworks propose any structured mechanism that allows for the identification of stakeholders in a consistent way and the manager is given the responsibility of deciding who is important and who to incorporate into the process. Thus, Stankey *et al.* (1985) point out that "*the selection of a preferred (management) alternative will reflect the evaluation of both managers and concerned citizens*" (p.18), but they never detail how to identify those citizens, or how the selected management alternative will include their views about the proposed alternatives. Similarly, Graeffe, Kuss and Vaske (1990:11) suggest the incorporation of "*public consultation*" through focus groups and surveys to define management objectives, but without suggesting how to select potential stakeholders, and without involving them in the selection of management alternatives. By contrast, the VERP framework is somewhat more specific, as it suggests the general characteristics of groups to target and to engage. However, it also suggests that those stakeholders with low power or influence over the management process can be excluded, thus in effect ignoring the stakeholders who could potentially be affected the most by management decisions. The information and processes in all three frameworks are led and owned by the managers conducting them, with the stakeholders having limited influence on decision-making, with their level of participation located between consultation and functional participation (Pretty, 1995).

These commonly used tourism and resource management frameworks do advocate greater stakeholder participation, but they also appear to encourage an expert-led approach to decision-making, where public

involvement is mostly used to inform and validate decisions made previously by these experts, rather than to shape those decisions. In these frameworks, the managers and public representatives still take the place of the wider society in deciding which alternatives are best suited for the stakeholders they are representing, thus reducing the input that the public at large might have over processes directly affecting their lives.

### **2.3 The importance of stakeholder involvement in natural resource management**

Several researchers have noted that in the course of making evaluations or taking decisions about the management of resources, public representatives have to make value judgements and choices that affect various stakeholders (Finn, 1996; Gregory and Keeney, 1994; Keogh, 1990). Sometimes these judgements and choices do not reflect the views or interests of the affected stakeholders, and the public representatives may not adequately define the scope of the issues that should be discussed during policy formulation. Hence greater stakeholder involvement is often advocated in tourism and resource planning, not only as a way to increase the number of policy options likely to be generated, but also as a way to avoid the rejection of the proposed plans and the re-negotiation of previously agreed policies with stakeholder groups who had felt inadequately represented (Gray, 1989). Other arguments for the involvement of multiple stakeholders in the planning process are the identification and incorporation of participants who, due to their power or influence, could broaden the identified planning options and could increase the available resources for the process (Gray, 1989; Warner, 1997).

Beside the practical reasons for stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes, some authors argue that there are also moral reasons to justify wider public involvement. For example, Donaldson and Preston (1995:67) argue that *"the interests of all stakeholders are of intrinsic value. That is, each group of stakeholders merits consideration for its own sake and not merely because of its ability to further the interest of some other group"*. Stakeholder participation can be seen as a tool that advances social justice in planning, as

well as the empowerment of the well-off groups that, according to Mark and Shotland (1985), should be the main beneficiaries of stakeholder-led planning exercises. Tacconi and Tisdell (1992) argue that planners have a moral duty to open up a participation space to the stakeholders affected by planning projects. They go on to suggest that the participation of various stakeholders in decision-making not only increases their empowerment and self-reliance, but also greatly increases the possibility that the project outcome would be sustainable. Drake (1991) also argues that the sustainability of projects is increased through a wider participation of affected stakeholders, with the variety of stakeholders being more likely to promote the varied economic, social, environmental and political concerns of sustainable development.

Increasing emphasis is being placed on involving the multiple stakeholders affected by tourism development in the tourism planning process (Jamal and Getz, 1995, Jamal and Getz, 1997; McCool and Moisey, 2001; Yuksel, Bramwell and Yuksel, 1999). This involvement might help to identify a shared planning vision which is more politically legitimate, and which includes and responds to stakeholder views about appropriate tourism management and planning decisions for the destination. However, the inclusion of multiple stakeholders in a planning process will rarely result in a total consensus among them, even within collaborative planning frameworks. Bruton (1980) and McArthur (1995) argue that public participation will inevitably produce conflicts, especially if it involves resource distribution, and the participation mechanisms should provide a framework to articulate and mediate these conflicts rather than to seek some unachievable 'consensus'. The application of stakeholder theory can help to identify and articulate the different types of conflict, and it might help participants in collaborative arrangements to reach some 'common ground' upon which to accept each other's positions, while still accepting their differences and related tensions.

In places where there is no tradition of joint working between stakeholders (particularly between planning authorities and local communities), it may be important to pay attention to the conditions required to be met before stakeholders are likely to become included within a management process (Finn,

1996; Gray, 1989). These preconditions to participation might include stakeholder 'targeting' (Warner, 1997), whereby those stakeholders who have legitimate and important views but who lack the capacity to participate in collaborative processes, can be provided with the means to enable them to participate on a more equal footing in negotiation and decision-making. According to Warner's (1997:418) normative position, addressing the conditions required for effective stakeholder participation is necessary in order *"to create an equitable basis for collaborative negotiations"*. In less developed countries, where planning processes have traditionally been managed in a top-down, non-participative fashion often by a strongly centralised government (Tosun, 2000), the recognition of other stakeholders along with their concerns and values could be an important precondition that increases their participation in decision-making processes affecting their lives.

Finn (1996) provides a different argument in support of a wider participatory approach when attempting to solve difficult, value-laden social issues. He argues that it is difficult for one stakeholder to define a 'problem' on its own when such issues are large or complex and when even partial solutions are out of the reach of any single entity. However, reaching an agreed policy in response to this type of problem is also difficult, due partly to the complexity of ensuring that all relevant actors are involved in the process. This might well be the case when addressing the issue of resource overuse in a tourist destination area. He goes on to argue that stakeholder theory can provide a framework to achieve a clear definition of the problem and to involve the necessary actors in policy-making (Finn, 1996).

This present research is premised on the notion that stakeholder theory can assist in the identification and analysis of stakeholders affected by tourism and resource management proposals, as well as in their eventual involvement in decision-making. Stakeholder theory can be used to understand carrying capacity issues more fully, such as by assisting stakeholders to define the acceptable conditions for resources of a natural area or the types of acceptable uses of those resources. The application of this theory can also help to identify the affected parties, to define the problems to be solved, and to allow

compromises to be achieved between the resource needs of stakeholders and the destination's conservation needs that are 'acceptable' for these stakeholders.

## **2.4 Stakeholder theory as a tool for stakeholder identification and assessment**

Stakeholder theory has been described as a framework to enable an organisation to identify, assess, understand and incorporate the needs and concerns of the individuals and groups affected by its actions. According to Donaldson and Preston (1995), stakeholder theory has three major functions, the first one being descriptive, whereby it is used to describe characteristics of organisations. Secondly, stakeholder theory is instrumental, as it assesses and describes the consequences of using stakeholder management; and, third, it is normative, as it identifies the stakeholders of an organisation on the basis of their interests, and can be used to explain the behaviour of the organisation in regard to its stakeholders.

Stakeholder theory largely originated from the seminal work of Freeman (1984) in the field of strategic management, in which he redefined the purpose of business organisations. He argued that instead of maximising shareholder profits, an organisation's purpose must be to identify and to engage in the concerns of its stakeholders, and to meet its obligations to them. Freeman defined a stakeholder within a management context as *"any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organisation's objectives"* (Freeman, 1984:46). He goes on to argue that an organisation that takes into consideration its stakeholders in its planning framework will increase its chances of success over one that does not, because it will maximise the organisation's opportunities and survivability by avoiding possible threats originating from its stakeholders.

The application of stakeholder theory in a planning process requires the implementation of three separate steps; namely, stakeholder identification, stakeholder analysis, and stakeholder management. The first step refers to the

identification of those individuals or groups that are affected by the actions of the organisation. The second step, stakeholder analysis, is defined as the collection of *"information about groups or individuals who are affected by decisions, categorising that information, and explaining the possible conflicts that might exist between important groups, and areas where trade-off may be possible"* (Brown *et al.*, 2001:17). The third step of stakeholder management refers to the implementation of those strategies that allow an organisation to achieve its objectives, while also trying to meet in the best possible way the expectations of its stakeholders. Of course, some stakeholders may choose not to behave in altruistic ways and they may simply strive to optimise their own benefits.

Stakeholder theory has been applied to tourism, for example to provide a more ethical background to decision-making and as a guide to management decisions in relation to sustainable development goals (Robson and Robson, 1996). It has also been used as a planning and management tool in order to identify stakeholders affected by management processes and sometimes also to involve them in decision-making (Jamal and Getz, 1995; McCool and Moisey, 2001; Sauter and Liesen, 1999; Yuksel, Bramwell and Yuksel, 1999).

The next section briefly describes the conceptual background for each of the three steps of stakeholder analysis, and it explains how they relate to each other and might be incorporated into a tourism and resource management framework.

#### **2.4.1. Stakeholder identification**

If public participation is a necessary characteristic of a tourism and resource management framework, then it is desirable that a structured mechanism is provided that allows for the identification of stakeholders potentially affected by management proposals for resources they depend on. Freeman (1984) argues that any group who could affect or be affected by the actions of an organisation is considered to hold a 'stake' in that organisation and thus must be taken into account. However, for the purposes of this research the stakeholder definition of Bryson and Crosby (1992:65) will be employed,

where a stakeholder is defined as *“Any person, group, or organisation that is affected by the causes or consequences of an issue”*.

Since the concept of stakeholders is so wide and all-encompassing, it is obvious that it is necessary to have a systematic approach to identify them in specific situations. Otherwise, this could easily become an inadequate and oversimplified short-listing of convenient parties, or even a never-ending task where the identification of those affected by a given process becomes an infinite spiral, with stakeholders continually being identified and considered (Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997).

Several approaches to stakeholder identification and selection have been suggested. Some approaches put the responsibility on the manager tasked with managing an issue, who then selects the groups that they consider relevant for an effective resolution of the issue. The criteria used by the manager to select these stakeholder groups could be geographical, such as according to the location to be managed and how potential stakeholders relate to the location, or perhaps socio-demographic, such as according to age, previous education, income and similar criteria (Boiko, Morrill, Flynn, Faustman, van Belle, Omenn, 1996). Other authors propose that this selection is carried out based on the manager's own personal perception of stakeholder importance, rather on the manager's use of other perhaps more 'objective' criteria (Carroll, 1993; Gregory and Keeney, 1994; Rowe, Mason, Dichel, Mann, Mockler, 1994).

Finn (1996) and Rowley (1997) argue in favour of a less manager-based approach to stakeholder identification, basing the selection process instead on the perceptions of the stakeholders themselves. In this approach the stakeholders are usually identified by applying a 'snowball' technique (Bryson, 1988), which consists of selecting an initial or core group of stakeholders affected by an issue, and then proceeding to interview this group in order to identify those individuals and organisations which, based on their own perceptions, are also affected by the issue. This process is repeated until few

new stakeholders are nominated, when it is assumed that all stakeholders affected by the issue have been identified.

#### **2.4.2. Stakeholder analysis**

The analysis phase of stakeholder assessment is oriented toward considering how the previously identified stakeholders can participate in the management process, as well as the benefits or threats that their participation (or lack of participation) can bring to that process. A particularly useful approach to stakeholder analysis is to assess the needs and interests of participating stakeholders, in order that these can be considered in the making of policies. The end result of most stakeholder classification frameworks is the production of a normative or prescriptive classification of stakeholders, and then actions subsequently are taken to manage the stakeholders in order to achieve the outcomes considered desirable. All the stakeholder analysis frameworks identify the potential stakeholders and then they try to determine what stakes they have in the relevant issues, and how they might affect a given process or its possible outcomes. Hence, invariably these frameworks are used to attempt to influence the outcomes of the process.

The most common approaches to stakeholder analysis are based on assessments of two stakeholder attributes: power and legitimacy. Stakeholder power can be defined as the ability of a given stakeholder to bring about the outcomes it desires, even in the context of opposition from other stakeholders (adapted from Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997). Similarly, legitimacy may be defined as the *"generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions"* (Suchman, 1955, cited in Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997:866). Most stakeholder analysis frameworks have in fact been limited to considerations of these two characteristics, which, however, tends to constrain stakeholder assessments to the weighing up of either the ability of different actors to influence a process, or else of their right to participate in the process.

Several authors (Bryson, 1988; Bryson and Crosby, 1992; Carroll, 1993; Harrison and St. John, 1994; Rowe, Mason, Dichel, Mann, Mockler, 1994) have formulated similar frameworks for analysing and managing stakeholders, mostly based on the two attributes of power and legitimacy. In these frameworks, the stakeholders are first identified and classified, and they are then analysed in terms of the opportunities and obligations that they create for an organisation or for an issue. Alternatively, they are classified according to the threats and advantages that they represent for the achievement of a certain outcome. Table 2.3 provides a summary of some key frameworks for stakeholder analysis.

**Table 2.3.** Main considerations and steps involved in key frameworks for stakeholder analysis (Developed from discussions in Bryson, 1988; Bryson and Crosby, 1993; Carroll, 1993; Harrison and St. John, 1994; Rowe, Mason, Dichel, Mann, Mockler, 1994).

	AUTHORS			
	BRYSON, 1988; BRYSON AND CROSBY, 1992	CARROLL, 1993	ROWE <i>et al.</i> , 1994	HARRISON AND ST. JOHN, 1994
<b>Main conside- rations or steps</b>	Identify stakeholders	Who are the stakeholders?	Identify stakeholders	Stakeholder identification
	Identify the organisational performance of stakeholders	What are their stakes?	Map the significant relations among the stakeholders	Stakeholder classification according to their stake and their influence
	Identify their stakes in situations and the possible outputs	What opportunities and challenges do the stakeholders present?	Assess the opportunities and threats presented by the stakeholders	Stakeholder prioritisation
	Assess the influence and importance of stakeholders	What responsibility does the organisation have for them?	Identify all stakeholder assumptions for generation of the strategy	Assessment of the needs of stakeholders and of the collection of ideas
	Identify the resources needed from the stakeholders	What strategies or actions should be taken to deal with them?	Evaluate the importance and certainty of stakeholder assumptions	Knowledge integration in the management process
	Stakeholder prioritisation	-	-	-
	Stakeholder classification	-	-	-

Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997) depart from the more traditional use of power and legitimacy as the attributes to analyse stakeholders. They propose the use of a third attribute, this being the urgency of a stakeholder's claims, in

order to examine the importance of an actor in the context of a particular issue. This attribute is defined as "*the degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate attention*" (p.864), and they couple this with the issues of time sensitivity (the degree to which delay is unacceptable to the affected stakeholder) and of criticality (the importance of the claim to the affected stakeholder). Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997) assert that the addition of this attribute enhances stakeholder identification by differentiating those stakeholders who are likely to be more affected by an issue or process. As discussed subsequently, this research uses the attributes of legitimacy, power and urgency in its analysis of stakeholders.

### **2.4.3. Stakeholder management**

According to Carroll (1993), the goal of stakeholder management is for an organisation to secure the objectives considered important by all the primary stakeholders, and these objectives should also be achieved in ethical and effective ways. He also argues that stakeholder management should assist in gaining improved knowledge about stakeholders, and this knowledge can then be used to predict their future behaviour. Other definitions are possible, however, which may be less altruistic or more instrumental (Brown *et al.*, 2001).

Carroll (1993) proposes classifying stakeholders as either supportive or non-supportive of the goals of an organisation, as an initial consideration for stakeholder management. This classification is achieved through the use of a potential threat and co-operation matrix. This matrix, originally proposed by Nutt and Backoff (1987, cited by Bryson, 1988:268), is used to classify the intentions and interests of other stakeholders in relation to the goals of an organisation, and it is intended to assist in the prediction of who will support or oppose that organisation's objectives.

Like Carroll (1993), Eden (1996) argues that the aim of stakeholder management is to anticipate and manage the dynamics of stakeholder attitudes and actions. This may be achieved by identifying those actors that may support the achievement of a given desired goal and then by strengthening their power of advocacy, or it could be achieved by reducing or managing the power of

those actors that may resist the sought-after goal. Eden's classification is based on consideration of the power of different stakeholders to influence the management goals of an organisation, as well as consideration of the level of interest that the stakeholders have in securing these management goals. Based on these two characteristics, he develops a two-dimensional matrix of a stakeholder's potential influence on the achievement of a management goal, categorising the stakeholders as either 'crowd' (low interest and low power), 'subjects' (high interest and low power), 'players' (high interest and high power) or 'leaders' (low interest and high power).

Once all stakeholders have been classified according to their power and interest, Eden (1996) suggests that the focus of the analysis should shift to identifying potential coalitions among the stakeholders. The objectives should be to encourage the formation of stakeholder coalitions that support an organisation's goals, and to block any potential oppositional coalitions. Coalitions that could be oppositional might be blocked by anticipating the attitudes that coalitions could take, by manipulating the potential coalition partners, or by attempting to re-focus these coalitions. In the case of those stakeholders whose behaviour could be predicted but not influenced ('leaders'), it is advised that they should be included in an environmental monitoring process. According to Eden's approach, the potential influence of the 'players' and 'leaders' must be addressed if an organisation is to achieve its goals. However, he also argues that the other stakeholders still need to be taken into account.

This brief review suggests that the incorporation of stakeholders into any tourism and resource management proposal will require at a minimum the consideration of two definite stages, these being the identification and the analysis of stakeholders. However, to realise the full potential and usefulness of these steps it is also necessary to include a third stage, that of stakeholder management, which allows the incorporation of stakeholders' needs and interests within the management process. Although the use of stakeholder theory in tourism and natural resource management is very scant and recent, it has been applied quite widely in the fields of business administration and

management, and this section has reviewed the quite extensive body of this literature that spans three decades.

This review has shown that stakeholder theory can be advantageously used within the context of decision-making processes for tourism and resource planning and management. These advantages come from the improved assessment of impacts created by policies and projects and from the more accurate assessment of stakeholders' opinions and preferences, thus providing a well-informed base upon which decisions can be taken. As one of the keys of stakeholder identification is the assessment of stakeholder power, it potentially can also facilitate the empowerment of disadvantaged groups, thus helping to maximise collaboration and diminish conflicts during decision-making processes. Within the context of natural resource management, Grimble and Wellard (1997) suggest that stakeholder theory can be used to identify and discern between multiple objectives and concerns and between the different interests and preferences of stakeholders. They go on to argue that stakeholder theory provides a way in which the needs and interests of the less powerful and under-represented can be highlighted, thus providing a tool for stakeholder empowerment.

## **2.5 Stakeholder consultation and collaboration in tourism and resource management**

In most natural areas that attract tourists in less developed countries it is common to find that there are several government institutions as well as diverse NGOs and business interests involved in the area's use. Each of these stakeholders has its own particular objectives and agenda. Thus, deciding who should be involved in management decision-making processes in these areas becomes a complex problem for any lead organisation.

Shelby and Heberlein (1984) contend that in the determination of the social carrying capacity of an area the most important precondition is that the affected stakeholders agree on the potentially conflicting objectives that should guide regulatory measures intended to manage the area within its capacity.

These objectives often revolve around deciding on the type of experience that the area should provide for its visitors, as well as deciding on 'adequate' capacity levels for the area's activities. Shelby and Heberlein also indicate that the formulation of management measures to implement the social carrying capacity of an area calls for a degree of consensus among the affected stakeholders, hastening to add that this consensus is usually difficult to achieve.

Some authors argue that consultation could help to guide the process of creating management alternatives that are acceptable to most stakeholders (Long, 1993; Medeiros de Araujo and Bramwell, 1999; Mowforth and Munt, 1998), thus reducing stakeholder conflicts and helping to create more consensus. Consultation is located on the lower end of the typology of participation described by Pretty (1995), because stakeholders participate by providing information, but process managers define problems, gather information and control analysis, thus giving stakeholders little influence over the decisions being made. In this sense, consultation has been criticised because it has been argued that participants hear and are heard, but they lack the power to ensure that their views will be heeded (Arnstein, 1969). Nevertheless, consultation still represents a useful form of public participation in the management process. As Medeiros de Araujo and Bramwell (1999) argue, it may not always be necessary to establish complex forms of participation, such as collaboration, in order to achieve relatively meaningful stakeholder participation in tourism planning, as continuing consultation with stakeholders during various stages of the planning process may provide opportunities for a two-way interchange of information between the tourism planners and stakeholders. However, some authors stress that consultation can easily fall short of involving the stakeholders sufficiently so as to avoid substantial conflicts, or to produce management options that adequately reflect the concerns of all affected stakeholders.

Collaboration has been proposed as an approach that can overcome the shortcomings associated with other less participative approaches. Thus, in contrast with consultation, during collaboration there usually is a face-to-face dialogue between all participants, giving opportunity for mutual learning and

shared decision-making (Carr *et al.*, 1998). In a collaboration process it is necessary for each stakeholder to provide resources over which they have exclusive control in order to achieve the desired goal. This creates interdependence between stakeholders, promotes each stakeholder's ownership of the process and its results, and potentially leads to mutual benefits for all participants (Gray, 1989; Selin and Beason, 1991). Further, the goals pursued in collaborative arrangements tend to be so complex that no single party on its own could achieve them (Gray and Wood, 1991; McCann, 1983; Wood and Gray, 1991). In a collaboration process a range of stakeholders participate in the formulation of goals, and their views constitute the base upon which those goals are framed. Within this process, problems that are common to each stakeholder can be formulated and delineated and attempts made to resolve them. Other characteristics of collaborative processes include the "*formulation of shared rules, norms and structures*" (Wood and Gray, 1991:146), thus suggesting that formal relationships and structures develop between stakeholders participating in these types of arrangements.

The search for consensus-building tools has been the focus of attention for many authors in the public policy and tourism fields, and several have argued that collaboration theory could provide a framework to achieve greater consensus around tourism planning issues (Getz and Jamal, 1994; Jamal and Getz, 1995, Jamal and Getz, 1997; Selin and Chavez, 1995; Simmons, 1994). In particular, collaborative frameworks could be an important step to avoid conflict in the allocation and use of resources (Gray, 1985; Gray and Wood, 1991; McCann, 1983). Thus, collaboration theory could be used to develop a practical framework for the formulation and resolution of tourism management issues related to resource allocation, including the associated conflicts over values.

In the specific case of a resource management problem, the goals sought by those involved in a collaborative process might include achieving a more efficient allocation of resources and agreeing the rules for access to the resources (Bramwell and Sharman, 1999; Brandon, 1993; Keogh, 1990; Selin and Chavez, 1995; Simmons, 1994). The potential benefits of involving multiple

stakeholders in collaborative arrangements in the field of tourism planning are now receiving increased recognition. For example, Bramwell and Lane (2000:1) argue that *"stakeholder collaboration has the potential to lead to dialogue, negotiation and the building of mutually acceptable proposals about how tourism should be developed"*. Some authors (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Murphy, 1985; Timothy, 1999) argue that such arrangements can increase democratic participation in decision-making through a better representation of the stakeholders who are affected by the decisions. Collaborative arrangements might be difficult to manage, but they potentially can bring *"democratic empowerment and equity, operational advantages, and an enhanced tourism product"* (Bramwell and Lane, 2000:2).

Robson and Robson (1996) have also argued that in an ethical approach to tourism, stakeholders should be identified and the relationships among them enhanced. Their concerns, values, goals and responsibilities should also be analysed and incorporated into management strategies. They go on to suggest that this is the only analytical framework within which sustainable tourism is likely to be delivered effectively in the long term.

It has been argued here that tourism and resource management processes are complex problems, with resolutions that tend not to be attainable by any single party. Thus, if such processes are to achieve some degree of success, it is necessary to involve a wide range of stakeholders in defining the causes of problems and in developing policy responses. The identification and involvement of diverse stakeholders through consultation and collaboration processes appear to represent useful yet complex tools that might contribute to successful consensus-building, and they may help to promote stakeholder empowerment and the democratisation of decision-making processes. Stakeholder assessment, consultation and collaboration can be seen as interconnected, but increasingly complex ladders of stakeholder involvement, where at the bottom rung (stakeholder assessment) the interests of the actors can be easily asserted, but their control over processes is minimal, to a much higher rung (collaboration) where stakeholder involvement and ownership is very high, but attaining results can be a complex and challenging process.

Deciding which process shall be used to gain stakeholder involvement and consensus will be subject to many factors, such as the context where decisions are made, or the degree of previous participation that stakeholders have experienced.

## **2.6 Common problems of natural resource management in less developed countries**

The design and implementation of management proposals for natural resources and visitors in natural areas are traditionally fraught with problems and obstacles, which is perhaps unsurprising as many stakeholders are involved. However, such proposals for natural areas in developing countries tend to present additional difficulties that are relatively unique. These problems can hinder the implementation of management strategies, sometimes severely restricting the results or even derailing management efforts. The discussion reviews some of these problems and the consequences they may have for the design and implementation of tourism and resource management strategies.

Common problems for natural resource management found in many developing countries, particularly in tropical areas, are the high levels of poverty, high rates of population growth, and the predominance of primary sector economic activities (Hannah *et al.*, 1998). Hence, the majority of the population depend on natural resources for their subsistence, and the population pressure on these resources is continually increasing. This situation often creates conflicting interests whereby relatively untouched natural resources are perceived as valuable tourism assets, but also as a ready source of much needed income for local populations through more direct uses (Cater, 1993). Poverty also tends to promote an orientation to resource exploitation for short-term economic returns.

Many natural areas in developing countries are designated as protected areas in order to satisfy the needs of conservation and tourism interests, but often this is done without consultation with local populations. This disregard of the needs of the host population makes the adoption of management measures

more difficult and unpopular as it often restricts their use of the natural resources, particularly if it is perceived that the management restrictions favour visitors, who are perceived as outsiders by the local population (Cater, 1993; Crandall, 1994). However, when these local communities are 'open' ("*those that foster all sorts of exchanges and want to get hold of new technologies*" Schluter, 1994:256) and they also benefit directly from tourism, then there can be strong support for increased tourism, even at the expense of substantial social, cultural or environmental change. In such cases this may result in the degradation of national parks if it is felt that their protection might involve limiting tourism development.

Mowforth and Munt (1998) provide striking examples of how some conservation programs have been implemented to satisfy the needs of the tourism industry and of government at the expense of local populations. They recount how, through the creation of protected areas in Kenya, the Maasai have been gradually excluded and restricted from their own land to curb their 'detrimental' effects, while tourism has been stimulated in these areas, often with far more detrimental consequences. They discuss how Maasai dwellings have been removed from areas which were later specifically assigned for tourist accommodation, and how their cattle have been excluded from areas deemed as 'archeologically sensitive'. Further, the tourists were later allowed to visit these areas, causing much more damaging effects than the Maasai's cattle.

Often tourism development in natural areas in less developed countries is brought about in the interests of developers and tourists from more developed countries (Cater, 1993; Mowforth and Munt, 1998; Olsen, 1997). Thus, outsiders with limited knowledge of local circumstances may decide on the characteristics of these developments, which can impose unrealistic demands on the natural resources and on the managers of the areas designed to protect these resources (Schluter, 1994; Olsen, 1997). Schluter (1994) argues that many tourism management initiatives in Latin American countries are the result of foreign initiatives and are largely funded by industrialised countries, and that these outside interests tend to require the use of external advisors. Since these advisors often lack local knowledge and are required to assist in many

countries, she argues that this often leads to *"the phenomenon of 'if it's Tuesday this must be Panama and if it's Wednesday it must be Zimbabwe'."* (Schluter, 1994:254), and that this results in the application of recipes with few alternatives and limited flexibility and adaptation to local circumstances. In relation specifically to tourism planning, Tosun and Jenkins (1998) similarly argue that most contemporary planning approaches were developed in the context of the socio-economic, political and human resource conditions of developed countries, and that the transfer and implementation of these approaches in developing countries may be wholly inappropriate without elaborate and complex adaptations to the particular conditions of these countries.

A common occurrence in developing countries is that government institutions that are supposed to protect and manage natural resources actually encourage their overuse, supporting tourism development at the expense of resource overuse and often doing so in ignorance of their own management policies. In the case of the development of beach tourism facilities in Jamaica, Olsen (1997) argues that the government has a history of subverting the good intentions of environmentalists, often opposing their attempts to protect fragile natural areas from development. Henderson (2000) describes how government policies in many less developed island nation states create barriers to sustainable tourism management, such as through the absence of political will, the lack of appropriate planning mechanisms, and the prioritisation of growth over adverse resource effects. She adds that with less developed nations it is essential to consider the role of the political system, because these systems and their *"official economic and social policies generate particular tensions and determine the context within which decisions are taken and policies made"* (Henderson, 2000:260).

Schluter (1994) suggests two significant reasons why governments in Latin American countries can be the key reason why plans for environmental management in tourist destinations often fail to succeed. First, she argues that with few exceptions the most senior public officials with authority over tourism are appointed for political reasons, their term in office being subject to the will of the person who appointed them. Thus, in many cases *"they are expected to*

*provide political responses and not technical ones...they consider it more important to sign an agreement than to carry out a project"* (Schluter, 1994:255). Secondly, technical experts in the public administration are often subordinated to the political authority, and they run the risk of not being promoted or even being fired if they disagree with the official guidelines or with the wishes of political appointees or of politicians. Thus the technical experts tend to avoid decisions or actions that might be perceived as critical of government priorities or ideology.

Several authors note that the substantial differences of power among stakeholders in less developed countries is a pervading issue that frequently affects the character of tourism management (Alipour, 1996; Few, 2001; Horochowski and Moisey, 2001; Morah, 1996; Mowforth and Munt, 1998; Richter, 1984; Tosun, 2000; Twyman, 2000). For example, in developing countries it can be very difficult to encourage individuals and groups with a common interest to collaborate with each other for the purpose of building a consensus. A significant reason for this might be a traditional mistrust between different parties, where past 'collaboration' attempts have been used as pretences by each party to further their own agenda at the expense of others (Alipour, 1996). In such countries, both consultation and collaboration with stakeholders may also be discouraged because there is little political tradition of joint working between the public and private sectors and between central and local government (Alipour, 1996; Richter, 1984). In an analysis of obstacles to urban development policy implementation in Nigeria, Morah (1996) argues that key influences distorting the objectives for the development of the country's new capital were *"the non-participatory character of the process...and the then military government's attitude toward public participation in decision making"* (Morah, 1996:98).

Among the factors hindering the promotion of more sustainable tourism, Mowforth and Munt (1998) highlight the manipulation of participation and the take-over of decision-making processes by local elites. The effects of manipulated participation are also highlighted by Twyman (2000), who found that when a conservation management project in Botswana appeared to have a

sound participatory approach, it was seen on closer study to be "essentially a planner-centred form of participation", in which "few choices are available to the community and they are encouraged to follow government recommendations" (Twyman, 2000:332). Mowforth and Munt (1998) highlight several factors commonly found in less developed countries that hinder the promotion of more sustainable forms of tourism, and these are summarised in Table 2.4.

**Table 2.4.** Factors that may hinder the attainment of sustainability in tourism development in less developed countries (adapted from Mowforth and Munt, 1998).

FACTOR	EXPLANATION
Manipulated participation	Proposals for local or community participation are imposed and directed by government officials or consultants, leaving little room for genuine inputs or real decision-making power with the locals.
Local elite asserting control over the decision-making processes	The representatives of political and economic elites in relation to tourism issues will seek to increase their benefits and strengthen their power through further development of the activity, including marginalising the participation of less powerful stakeholders.
Conflicting interests among government institutions	In less developed countries there may be several government institutions with overlapping responsibilities and different priorities for tourism development, which can result in conflicts and inadequate management.
Economic factors having precedence in decision-making processes	Governments in less developed countries are eager to increase their income in hard currency and tourism is perceived as an easy and fast way to achieve this. Thus, the maximisation of income may take precedence and override any concerns about the social or environmental effects of tourism.

Tosun (2000) also describes how community participation in developing countries is limited by factors inherent to these societies, which appear to act at operational, structural and cultural levels, and that are beyond the control of local communities (Table 2.5). One of the main operational factors highlighted by Tosun is the centralised structure of government in most developing countries, where a central government office may resist attempts to implement participative approaches, as this will entail sharing power and resources with other stakeholders. He also contends that limiting factors of the structural type tend to be self-sustaining, and thus, for example, privileged economic and political elites in developing countries tend to be the main beneficiaries of 'democratic' governance. Further, they tend to use that power, already built-in within the legal system, to protect their interests while excluding the less

advantaged from any participation in decisions that might threaten their hold on power.

**Table 2.5.** Limitations to community participation in tourism planning in less developed countries (adapted from Tosun, 2000).

LIMITING FACTOR	CONSEQUENCES OF THIS LIMITATION
<b>A. OPERATIONAL</b>	
Centralised public administration of tourism	Central government does not want to share power with other stakeholders and is too bureaucratic and divorced from local conditions to respond efficiently to planning needs.
Lack of co-ordination	Planning processes are very fragmented, with many institutions dealing only with small parts of complex, large issues. Bureaucratic jealousy exists among institutions that block co-operative efforts.
Lack of information	Collection and dissemination of tourism information is poor, thus creating uninformed and non-participative stakeholders and decision-makers.
<b>B. STRUCTURAL</b>	
Attitudes of professionals	Technocrats and professionals see public participation as a time- and money-consuming, politicised process from which no solutions better than the one already proposed could emerge.
Lack of expertise	There are few adequately trained personnel with expertise in tourism planning, and even fewer with knowledge and experience of public participation in planning and management processes.
Elite domination	Democratic principles and benefits are only shared by business and government elites, who are unwilling to share power with the disadvantaged that comprise the majority of the population, creating clientelistic relations based on their own interests at the expense of the majority.
Inappropriate legal system	Legal structures discourage participation and are complex and difficult to use and understand by lay people, and this usually reinforces the rights and privileges of the elite.
Untrained human resources	The minimum degree of skills and knowledge required to work in tourism is usually lacking in most of the population, thus limiting local participation to low paid, undesirable jobs, and thus local people have only limited influence over the industry.
High cost of participation	Stakeholder participation requires considerable resources in terms of money, time and skills, all of which are in short supply, thus straining the scarce resources of both institutions and communities and making it a less desirable option than more short-term, less costly solutions.
Lack of financial resources	Local communities rarely have the financial backing to invest in and own tourism operations, making it harder for them to have any real control over the industry.
<b>C. CULTURAL</b>	
Limited capacity of poor people	Most local communities in tourist destinations tend to be poor, making day-to-day survival the main challenge in which they invest all their time and energy. Participation in decision-making is thus a luxury they cannot afford to engage in.
Apathy and low awareness in local communities	Long-term exclusion from participation in decisions creates a strong belief that local communities' ideas would not be considered. This in turn creates a further disincentive to participate, and past retribution can make them fearful that raising objections would be used against them later.

Tosun (2000) also mentions cultural limitations that might affect participation in developing countries, a major one being the limited capacity of many people to participate and to influence decisions affecting their lives. He

argues that the biggest challenge for many people in developing tourist destinations is *"mere survival, which occupies all the time and consumes their energy"*, thus making participation in tourism development decision-making *"a luxury that most communities can not afford"* (Tosun, 2000:625). He contends that these operational, structural and cultural limitations *"may be an extension of the prevailing social, political and economic structure in developing countries...and...thus, it may be naive to suppose that (a) participatory tourism development approach will change the existing structure of a local tourism industry in a developing country without changing (the) dominant socio-economic and political structure of that locality"* (Tosun, 2000:626).

In an analysis of community involvement in planning processes for protected areas in Belize, Few (2001) discusses how the imbalances of power between planners and communities, as well as the persistence of top-down patterns of decision-making, had resulted in participation processes that were manipulated and tokenistic. He advances the concept of containment, understood as *"the strategic management of public involvement in planning so as to minimise disruption to preconceived planning goals"* (Few, 2001:112). He goes on to suggest that containment can be applied by managers of participation processes in developing countries for the purposes of avoiding conflict, excluding dissent, and controlling knowledge and procedures. The use of containment strategies *"ensures that a project ostensibly engaging local involvement progresses to completion on time and within pre-defined parameters"* (Few, 2001:112), thus avoiding deviation from predetermined objectives and from the expenses of cost and time of more engaged participation.

Some commentators argue that the particular circumstances of less developed countries highlight the need for management frameworks able to adapt to the particular social and cultural conditions in which they are to be implemented (Hunter, 1997; Munt, 1992). Such management frameworks should give consideration to stakeholders' needs and involve them in decision-making processes to the extent that is practical and viable given the particular social and cultural characteristics of each destination. Hence, Hunter

(1997:851) argues that the concept of sustainable tourism is *"an adaptive paradigm which legitimises a variety of approaches according to specific circumstances"*, and as such it should be adapted to the particular characteristics of tourism development in different cultures. Thus, management strategies should be able to encompass the world-views and ethical stances of the cultures within which they are to be applied. As Hunter (1997:858) argues, *"different interpretations of sustainable development may be appropriate for developed and developing countries"*, as in developing countries the need for greater economic development might be an imperative if they are to overcome some of their debt and poverty problems, even if this development comes at the cost of some degree of environmental degradation. On the issue of who should be involved in deciding the priorities and paths that tourism development should follow to be regarded as sustainable, Hunter also notes that different levels of stakeholder involvement in decision-making might be appropriate or possible in different circumstances. These differences may arise from the fact that local communities would not always necessarily support conservation objectives if they clash with their needs or development preferences, and, even if that is not the case, these stakeholders might not have access to participation mechanisms that allow them to express their preferences.

The effects that the particular circumstances of developing countries can have in relation to tourism planning and resource management are numerous and complex. This section has shown that some of these effects arise from specific social, economical and political characteristics in these countries, while others can be the product of trying to implement and adapt largely western, developed world management practices which are not well suited to these countries. These problems are further compounded by the poor public participatory tradition that tends to exist in these countries, with many having authoritarian regimes and paternalistic and centralised governments that tend to take decisions at all levels of public life, without much or any participation from affected stakeholders. These circumstances require tourism and resource management frameworks that can adapt to the particular goals and participatory conditions that may be encountered in less developed nations.

## 2.7 New approaches to tourism and resource management

Tourism researchers have remarked on the need for increased participation by the public and other interest groups in the management of natural resources affected by tourism development, with particular emphasis often put on involving local communities affected by the increased resource use (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Brown *et al.*, 2001; Boselman *et al.*, 1999; Hardy and Beeton, 2001; Moisey and McCool, 2001; Sautter and Leisen, 1999). Consideration is given here to selected new approaches to stakeholder participation in the management of tourism, including how they incorporate wider participation in the policy and management decision-making processes. Attention is also directed at the potential problems and hidden drawbacks that these approaches may encounter in practice.

McCool and Stankey (2001) argue that any method for managing tourism access to a natural area must be culturally appropriate, as otherwise it will not be judged as socially acceptable and the area's managers will be unable to enforce policies for access regulation in the long-term. They consider that all such policies *"are a political rather than a scientific question"*, and their value-laden character suggests that they really are public choices (McCool and Stankey, 2001:396). Gaining social acceptance for management decisions is an important reason why the public should be involved. McCool and Lime (2001) also maintain that the public has an essential role in determining the objectives for a protected area, because their values, beliefs and priorities must underpin these objectives. They argue that setting management objectives is a process of social judgement, which needs to be informed by science but ultimately it has to be made in the realm of politics and values. Hence, one of the most significant questions to be answered in the process of setting management objectives is how to choose which perceptions count the most. They conclude that systems established for the management of tourism and natural resources should focus on establishing a mechanism that will allow the affected stakeholders to *"gain a legitimate, constructive foothold in the planning process"* (p.385) and give them a *"voice to articulate the concerns and values involved"* (p.386). Further, Moisey and McCool (2001:350) argue that only through the involvement of affected and interested stakeholders is it possible to achieve "a

*clear vision of sustainable development goals*" that is required to successfully guide tourism development.

Krumpe and McCool (1997:18) argue that in any protected area planning process *"there are numerous occasions where values play directly in the decision making process"*, and that *"these decisions are intrinsically subjective and political"*. Thus, the planning process becomes embedded within a politicised context, where there are fundamental disagreements about decisions to be made, and where the potential exists for stakeholder groups to block the implementation of management proposals that do not match their values and expectations. If the implementation of management measures is to have practical success within these politicised contexts, then it is necessary for participants from all affected groups to be involved in a dialogue that allows them to learn and which ensures that their interests are represented. Furthermore, they should also be encouraged to deliberate on controversial issues so that informed judgements can be made, and they must be assisted to reach a high degree of consensus about the proposed actions.

McCool and Lime suggest even in a 2001 paper that the well established methods of LAC, VIM and VERP provide adequate vehicles for public participation in planning to take place. While these management proposals are quite well-known and the LAC method has been extensively used for some time (Borrie, McCool and Stankey, 1998; McCool, 1994; Sidaway, 1995), a number of new management approaches have been advocated more recently in the specialised literature of tourism and resource management. These new approaches try to address the issues of public participation and the social values supporting decision-making in more explicit and fully developed ways, giving more prominence to the issues of participation, power sharing and consensus building than is the case for LAC and the other common visitor management methods.

One new approach to management that incorporates increased public participation is the Environmentally Based Tourism Development Planning Model developed by Dowling (1993), which proposes a management framework

that seeks to integrate conservation and tourism development at a regional scale. This framework for tourism and environmental conservation attempts to identify and promote those tourism attributes that are environmentally compatible, and it emphasises the role of people as an integral and essential part of the ecosystem. Hence, the framework incorporates the opinions of managers, tourists and the host community within the management process. However, in terms of its application this model is very much planner-led, as the manager leading the planning procedure is responsible for guiding the overall process, informing its objectives, and putting together and assessing the management proposals. In this model, the interaction with potential stakeholders is mostly based on consultation, with the results of this consultation informing the decision-making process, although there is no necessary requirement for the manager to be swayed by the opinions thus identified. Another potential drawback of this planning proposal is that the identification of the objectives that guide the process is *"carried out by literature review, discussions with government, regional and local managers as well as by informal discussions with residents and tourists"* (Dowling, 1993:21), thus suggesting that traditional centres of power are given more consideration than local communities during the objective-setting stage.

A few authors (Few, 2001; Krumpke and McCool, 1997; Twyman, 2000) note that some planning processes which advocate participatory approaches have built-in mechanisms that allow traditional centres of power to retain much of their decision-making authority while claiming to be 'participative', thereby they mask tokenism or manipulated participation by other stakeholders. This exclusion of less powerful stakeholders might be the result of inadequately conceived planning processes that give greater weight to planning or technical agencies (Twyman, 2000), or it might occur through such complex mechanisms as consensus seeking among unequal partners or containment processes. Seeking consensus sometimes *"implies that the planner identifies like-minded citizens who can agree with the planning decision and form the nucleus of support for a consensus to occur"* (Krumpke and McCool, 1997:18), while containment seeks *"to minimise social conflict, dissent and overall disruption to*

*the primary goal of producing and completing" a management programme (Few, 2001: 116).*

In a discussion of one attempt to establish a comprehensive visitor management framework for the Banff-Bow Valley area in Canada, Ritchie (1998) explains how the approach relied heavily on defining the level of 'appropriateness' of certain activities, and how this led the decision-making process into a number of 'value traps'. He argues that these value traps were created by the wide range of views held by the stakeholders in this environmentally sensitive area, these being based largely on personal value systems that in principle have equal validity but would lead to strongly differing and even opposing management options. He concludes that in order to achieve a viable management plan, *"all stakeholders must make a genuine effort to reach a consensus concerning how best to develop and implement the policies and the kind of management system that will enable, encourage and facilitate the achievement of an acceptable balance"* (Ritchie, 1998:310). In his view, this consensus should strive to balance the various development possibilities for this sensitive area and if this consensus did not emerge through negotiation then it will have to be resolved through a ballot or through litigation. Similarly, Moisey and McCool (2001) highlight the requirement that all stakeholders achieve a consensus about what the management system is trying to achieve in a tourist destination, while admitting that *"this is a daunting task, for economic and social systems are filled with competing claims as to desired goals and methods, conflicting ideologies...and ill-defined judgements about what is important"* (p.344).

In this context, one new approach specifically attempts to help stakeholders to agree about the fundamental question of what is important in an area and why. This approach uses the concept of Environmental Capital (CAG Consultants, 1997) and it is based around the guiding principle of 'what matters and why' in relation to the environmental resources in an area. It hinges on the identification of those specific characteristics that make a place important for the sustainability of an area, and of how that place should be managed in order to improve on its sustainability, or at least not to detract from it. Significant

emphasis is put on the need to understand and respond to the views and values of the public, particularly at the local level, a level where the decision-maker is perhaps most likely to fail to understand the systems of belief and values in relation to the area's environmental resources. However, as with other participatory management methods, the public consultation step is fully left to the discretion of the decision-making manager who leads the process, with this manager deciding what level of public involvement is adequate, who should be involved, and how they will be involved (CAG Consultants, 1997).

Farrell and Marion (2002) argue that while the more common visitor management methodologies (LAC, VIM, VERP and VAMP) have several advantages for their successful application, they tend to require long time scales and demand extensive financial and personnel resources in implementation. They argue that these particular characteristics tend to disqualify them for application in the majority of Central and South American countries where the authorities in natural areas tend to be understaffed and poorly financed, and where visitor pressures can sometimes be so great that there is a need for immediate action. To overcome these limitations, they propose an alternative approach that they call the Protected Area Visitor Impact Management (PAVIM) framework. In the PAVIM framework, Farrell and Marion propose that the steps of indicator selection, monitoring and standard selection that are found in the LAC technique should be replaced by the use of an expert panel. They suggest that this will make the management process faster and cheaper than is the case with LAC, but it also has similar strengths that help to produce viable and relevant management proposals.

Farrell and Marion (2002) argue that the PAVIM framework specifically incorporates public participation at several stages of the management process. They go on to identify who this public might be and they suggest how they might be involved during the steps of identifying the value of the area, the adverse impacts on the area, and the management objectives for the area. According to these authors, the participants should include *"local residents, visitors, and other stakeholders wanting to participate in decision-making"* (p.40), and these stakeholders should be assembled according to *"the number of people involved*

*and the contentiousness of the issues being considered"* (Farrell and Marion, 2002:40). However, they do not propose any structured way in which this process might be accomplished, and they give significant weight to the decisions of managers in the selection of participants, arguing that *"managers play a significant role in developing public participation programmes since they are charged with balancing the needs and interests of...stakeholders with resource protection mandates and management constraints"* (p.40). This would suggest that, in spite of advocating the importance of public participation, this framework is based on a manager-led process where the risk remains that consensus will be imposed rather than developed or built interactively, and where disagreement and conflict are contained.

Sautter and Leisen (1999) suggest that Stakeholder Theory can be used as a normative planning tool for tourism development that can help in the identification of stakeholders affected by a tourism proposal, and that it can promote the incorporation of their views into the planning process. They go on to argue that for organisations to be able to manage their stakeholders effectively, they must be capable of identifying their stakeholders and the stakes they hold, as well as managing their relationships with them in ways that balance their interests with those of their own organisation. However, the practical application of Stakeholder Theory to facilitate decision-making processes in tourism and environmental management is relatively new. Hence, Gregory and Keeney (1994) are among the first authors to advocate the systematic identification of multiple stakeholders and of consultation with them as a means of increasing the available options in relation to tourism decisions involving trade-offs. However, their suggestions remain within an expert-led management approach.

As with many other researchers on the fields of tourism and business management (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Mark and Shotland, 1985; Robson and Robson, 1996; Tacconi and Tisdell, 1992), Sautter and Leisen (1999) take a moral stance to the value of using Stakeholder Theory to encourage wider stakeholder participation in tourism decision-making. They argue that all possible stakeholders should be identified, and that all these stakeholders

should be integrated into the management process. During this process *"the basic premise (is) that all stakeholders' interests have intrinsic value"*, irrespective of other assessments of the value of these particular interests or stakes (Sautter and Leisen, 1999:316).

In order to involve all stakeholders in a tourism planning process, Sautter and Leisen (1999) propose a multiple stakeholder identification process. This would involve an historic analysis of tourism developments in order to identify previously interested parties, and also a *"proactive scan"* to consider interest groups who might be affected in the future by the planning process and who could contribute to its success. However, they do not identify whether some cut-off procedure should be used in this stakeholder identification, or how the identified stakeholders would be integrated into the management process. Further, they do not explain how to avoid the problems of control and direction that collaboration theorists such as Gray (1989) warn about in relation to working with several stakeholder groups. While advocating participation by as many stakeholders as possible, Sautter and Leisen also suggest that the process should be managed and directed by the perceptions of the planner, who in the end should still decide who and what 'really counts'. In their concluding remarks, these authors argue *"that planners must proactively seek to include those stakeholders agreeing with the planners' strategic orientation"* (Sautter and Leisen, 1999:325), which might suggest that their management approach could be based largely on tokenism and manipulated participation.

The identification and involvement of multiple stakeholders in management processes and decision-making appears to be the direction in which most tourism management approaches are converging. Yuksel, Bramwell and Yuksel (1999) argue that the incorporation of stakeholders' views increases the chances of success in tourism planning by reducing the conflicts and costs associated with poor planning and limited implementation. In a review of approaches that can be used to identify the stakeholders affected by tourism development, Medeiros de Araujo and Bramwell (2000:290) argue that stakeholder identification and involvement is *"likely to promote consideration being given to the diverse issues affecting sustainable development"*. They

further contend that stakeholder identification and involvement *"is important for inclusive collaborative approaches to planning, such as the development of partnerships"* (p.292). They also suggest five different approaches that can be used in assessments of the stakeholders who are affected by tourism development and who might participate in collaborative planning arrangements, and they advocate the use of specific approaches according to the objectives sought from the planning process.

Hardy and Beeton (2001) make the case that the identification of stakeholders and assessments of their perceptions are key approaches that can facilitate the attainment of sustainable tourism objectives in natural destinations. However, these authors do not put forward a specific structured method by which these stakeholder assessments could be implemented systematically so as to inform management decisions, thus weakening the value of their proposal.

Brown *et al.* (2001) present perhaps the most valuable of the recent frameworks for the inclusion of stakeholders in resource-management decision-making processes, this being related to resource management in coastal areas. It is particularly valuable as it does indicate specific ways of incorporating stakeholder analysis and inputs into management processes. In their framework, they also propose the application of trade-off analysis, which is described as *"a tool that can help decision-makers understand resource use conflicts and stakeholders' preferences for management"* (p.8). Stakeholders are considered within the management procedures in relation to the following steps or stages:

- The identification and classification of the stakeholders and of their interests.
- The identification of alternative future development scenarios that should be assessed by the decision-makers.
- The identification of the main issues and concerns of the stakeholders, and these issues and concerns are then used to formulate the management criteria that guide the decision-making process.
- The making of estimates about how each alternative development scenario affects the management criteria previously formulated.

- The involvement of stakeholders in assigning priorities to the management actions that need to be taken.
- The building of consensus among the stakeholders in order to find management scenarios and actions that are acceptable to all, and this involves the use of the information and management priorities identified previously.

In order to identify stakeholders affected by a management proposal, Brown *et al.* (2001) propose the use of written information sources to establish a continuum of stakeholders at different geographical scales. This approach to stakeholder analysis is similar to that proposed by Boiko *et al.* (1996), as it relies on the perceptions of the manager in order to identify those actors considered to have a stake in the management proposals. They also suggest a mechanism for stakeholder classification that is fundamental in deciding who should participate in the management process. This framework is based on the influence and importance of the stakeholders in relation to the process. This stakeholder importance is defined as *"the degree to which the stakeholder is considered a focus of a decision to be made"* (Brown *et al.*, 2001:24), and the stakeholder influence is related to the level of power that the stakeholder is perceived to have. Although the process of trade-off analysis proposed by Brown *et al.* (2001) promotes the participation of the many stakeholders affected by a management decision, the initial steps of stakeholder identification and classification still rely mostly on the perceptions of the process manager, and thus this leaves room for distortions to take place in the selection and inclusion of stakeholders in the management process.

Although there is significant convergence in the tourism literature about the advantages of involving stakeholders in participative arrangements, a note of caution has recently been raised by Lovelock (2002), who asserts that for some stakeholders there are instances in which it may be more advantageous not to participate in consensus-building approaches. If these stakeholders are perceived to be less powerful or less legitimate than their counterparts, and if they hold significant differences in values and goals, Lovelock argues that they can gain more by not participating in co-operative arrangements. He contends

that by being conflictual in their approach, such as by rejecting other stakeholders' claims, and by forcing change in line with their own beliefs, with, for example, lawsuits or legal proceedings, these stakeholders are more likely to succeed in incorporating their particular goals than in a co-operative arrangement. Lovelock views counter the prevailing notion that consensus building is the best way for stakeholders to achieve their objectives, instead endorsing the benefits of conflict and dissent in democratic societies.

This brief review of more recent tourism and resource management approaches suggests that greater priority is now being placed on identifying and involving stakeholders whose interests are affected by either the use of natural resources in protected areas or by the regulations established to manage the visitors in these areas. Tourism and resource management is moving into a paradigm of enhanced stakeholder participation, where it is considered necessary to involve all the actors affected by tourism development within the planning and management processes. However, in spite of this advocacy of greater stakeholder participation, almost all the approaches reviewed here fall short of giving detailed suggestions as to how such participation could be engendered, managed and incorporated effectively within the planning process. None of the contributions establish a normative framework within which such participation might be managed. These recent proposals also continue to give much weight to the perceptions of the process manager, such as in relation to deciding who is affected and what is important within the decision-making process. In effect this limits the value of stakeholder participation by constraining it within the insights, understanding and prejudices of tourism and environmental managers.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

One of the key objectives of this study is the identification and assessment of stakeholders related to tourism and resource management proposals. Hence, this chapter reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of some well-established approaches used to manage visitors in natural areas, including carrying capacity, Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC), Visitor Impact

Management (VIM) and VERP (Visitor Experience and Resource Management Programme). The review established that visitor management in natural areas has moved from a search for fixed visitor numbers to a focus on identifying management objectives and resource conditions considered adequate for an area. This shift has also emphasised the need for greater stakeholder participation in decision-making processes. While many tourism and resource management studies advocate this approach, details of how it is to be structured and operationalised are relatively less common.

This chapter also showed that the tourism and management literature is increasingly arguing that affected stakeholders should participate in decisions that affect their lives. Stakeholder Theory is also being proposed as a systematic means to identify and involve the parties affected by these decisions. The involvement of stakeholders in decision-making in visitor and natural resource management is now often regarded as important for these processes to be successful, and this review identified the main reasons why this is considered to be the case.

This chapter highlighted the influence of the political and socio-cultural context on the character of management objectives and it identified some of the challenges faced by managers implementing proposals for the management of tourism and natural resources in less developed countries. It was also argued that management frameworks need to be adapted to the particular circumstances of the participation practices and of the development priorities of less developed countries.

This chapter also reviewed more recent literature on tourism and resource management, and on stakeholder participation to promote more sustainable outcomes from tourism development. Finally, the chapter evaluated different proposals for the involvement of stakeholders in tourism and resource management decision-making, and it was concluded that there are few proposals that provide detailed, structured and consistent frameworks for stakeholder identification and participation in such decision-making.

## **Chapter 3**

### ***The Los Roques National Park***

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#### **3.1 Introduction**

Developing countries are complex places where the management of tourism and natural areas faces characteristic problems, particularly regarding the participation of stakeholders in decision-making processes. The management of these areas has traditionally been done with little, if any, consultation with affected stakeholders, and involving them in decision-making requires the development and application of management frameworks that are adapted to these conditions. This context provided the background for this study's approach and the ensuing frameworks that constitute one of this study's key objectives. These frameworks, which are explained in Chapter 4, were developed taking into account the characteristics and difficulties of stakeholder participation in developing countries, and their application is particularly suited for these countries. It is felt to be important to explain this context before describing the conceptual framework in Chapter 4 as the context of the problems of stakeholder participation in national park management in developing countries is so influential in the development of the framework.

The aim of this present chapter is to describe the characteristics of the area chosen as a case study to assess the applicability of the conceptual framework. The Archipelago Los Roques National Park, off the central coast of Venezuela, was chosen as the case study. The reasons why this natural area was chosen are examined in detail in section 4.3.2 of Chapter 4, while section 2.6 of Chapter 2 provides an in-depth examination of the problems faced by resource managers in less developed countries. This present chapter presents background information on Venezuela and on Los Roques National Park.

This chapter begins with a brief review of planning and management issues in national parks, highlighting the problems associated with the management of tourism in protected areas. It then explains the development of planning policies in Venezuela and shows how political and economic factors

have hindered land-use planning and related implementation work. It also briefly recounts how the management of natural resources in Venezuela has been affected by these factors. It then describes Los Roques National Park, highlighting characteristics that have made it attractive to human settlers, explaining why and how the park was designated, and describing how tourism has developed in the park. The discussion also explores the distribution of management responsibilities between the park's authorities, describing how there has been a succession of management institutions, culminating in the current and sometimes conflictive relationship between the Venezuelan National Parks Institute (INPARQUES) and the Los Roques Central Coordinating Authority (CCA). Finally, the chapter examines how policies are formulated and implemented in Los Roques National Park, with an emphasis on how tourism and natural resources are managed.

### **3.2 Tourism management in national parks**

Tourism is increasingly becoming the most common form of public use in national parks. Protected areas have experienced a considerable increase in the number of visitors during the last decade, both in developed and developing countries (Eagles and McCool, 2002). For example, the Costa Rican national park system has registered a visitor increase from 250,000 in 1985 to 860,000 in 1999, while Tanzania saw a shift from 50,000 visitors in 1983 to 318,000 in 2000. The US National Park Service had 287 million visitors in 1999.

The trend of increased tourism use in most national parks has forced managing institutions to give particular consideration to the management of visitors and the host of impacts associated to tourism. National parks are usually managed to produce a desirable social impact, with benefits accruing at three levels: park visitors, park stakeholders and managers, and society at large (Eagles *et al.*, 2002). However, park visitors, managers and stakeholders will have preferences over the type of benefits that they wish to gain from a protected area, and of the impacts that they are willing to accept to achieve those benefits (Butler and Boyd, 2000).

Some protected areas are managed to encourage tourism, and use the funds provided by this activity to further develop and enhance the protected area and benefit local communities. For example, the Madikwe Game Reserve was created by the South African Parks Board to restore derelict farmland into a savannah ecosystem, and thus they provided the park infrastructure and management, but all tourism development was leased to private sector stakeholders, who provided the funds to develop the Reserve's tourism potential, while using the local communities as their main source of labour (Eagles and McCool, 2002).

On other instances, such as in the Soufriere Marine Management Area in St. Lucia, management is oriented toward the protection and restoration of the park's natural assets. The park was created after extensive negotiation with local stakeholders, with employment opportunities in tourism partly replacing near-shore fishing practiced by local communities, which were also provided with other economic incentives to support the park. The park's goal was to protect its natural resources, and coral reef in particular, from the use pressures caused by different activities, with this goal reflected both in the management strategies and the zoning applied to the park. Hence, an active education and interpretation programme was coupled with restricted mooring and better management of divers and snorkellers, with the park's monitoring programme already showing improvements in coral reef conditions (Eagles and McCool, 2002).

Park managers in developed countries are often confronted with congestion and overuse issues, and the ensuing need to protect or restore resources damaged by visitors. Lime *et al.* (1996) claim that the US National Park System is suffering of chronic congestion and crowding, and that the number of visitors will continue to increase with time, while the resources available to park managers to deal with these issues lag behind or remain static. They go on to suggest that national park overuse can only be dealt with through the efficient use of public policy making, planning and management that address the causes and issues associated with congestion, tourism development practices that involve stakeholders and address their concerns,

and appropriate research that supports these three management areas (Lime *et al.*, 1996). Manning and Lime (1996:51) contend that the application of the Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) system “*should be pursued aggressively*” through the US National Park System as the best way forward to reduce resource overuse and protect the visitor enjoyment of protected areas.

This brief review of planning and management issues in national parks underline some of the difficulties associated with the management of tourism in protected areas, and also the need to take into account the goals and objectives sought by park managers and stakeholders when considering the management issues that exist in a protected area. The next section will review the particular issues and policies directing the use of natural resources and protected areas in Venezuela.

### **3.3 Politics and management in Venezuela**

#### **3.3.1. Policy-making in Venezuela**

After the dictatorial period that ended in Venezuela in 1935, the country increasingly turned to planning in order to secure economic development and prosperity. This planning tradition gained a firm status in 1958, with the creation of CORDIPLAN, the Central Co-ordinating Planning Office, which focused all economic decisions on one national planning agency. Several studies on Venezuelan planning practice during the 1960s and 1970s (Allen, 1977; Friedmann, 1966) praised this system and its resulting regional development and co-ordination, reflecting great optimism at that time about the country's potential for development, particularly due to Venezuela benefiting from booming oil revenues due to rising oil prices during the 1970s.

However, the success of the Venezuelan planning effort has been severely curtailed. As early as 1977, Allen noted that in spite of its huge growth, the Venezuelan economy and society continued to rely heavily on government spending, and in turn the government was greatly dependent on oil revenue, so that the implementation of long-term planning depended critically on decisions made by other oil exporting countries. This problem was further

complicated by the inextricable and long-standing association of planning with politics in Venezuela. The undertaking of some projects and neglect of others due to the personal preferences of leaders, the appointment of political *protégés* without adequate qualifications in key technical positions, the dependence of most activities on the approval of key political figures, and the lack of compromise and disregard of differing views by the political faction in power, represented major hurdles that limited the success of the best planning efforts (Allen, 1977). Thirty years after Allen described this situation, planning in Venezuela is still affected, albeit to a greater or lesser extent by the same factors, resulting in the persistence of environmental, economic, social and cultural problems (Arraiz-Lucca, 1995; Barroso, 1997). Venezuelan planning has been characterised by a succession of planning proposals from each new government, with previous government proposals being abandoned by the next administration and with the new policies usually not fully implemented before the cycle was repeated (Barroso, 1997).

### **3.3.2. Natural resource planning and management in Venezuela**

The first specific law (the Forest Law) regulating the use of natural resources in Venezuela was decreed in 1910, but it was only in 1965 that natural resource and protected area management was integrated in one institution, the Ministry of Agriculture (Buroz, 1998). Responsibility for managing these resources initially rested with the Superintendence of Natural Resources in this ministry, and this Superintendence formed the basis of the new Ministry of Environment in 1976. This Ministry was created in order to integrate the dispersed responsibilities for natural resource management, and to encourage their rational use in order to promote the country's development (Azpurua, Buroz and Useche, 1975; cited by Buroz, 1998). The main planning tools of the Environment Ministry are the Environment Law of 1976, which established the requirement to plan and regulate the use of government-owned lands, and the Law for Territorial Organisation (Venezuela, 1983), which granted the Ministry legal authority to establish "special administration regime areas". These areas are subject to specific laws, and they include national parks and other protected natural areas (Buroz, 1998; MARNR, 2001).

The first institution in Venezuela charged with managing national parks and other protected areas was the National Park Service, established in 1958 as a Division of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure (Amend 1992; Delgado, 1992). The management of these areas was later affected by the Law of the National Parks Institute, which created the National Parks Institute (INPARQUES) in 1973, with the specific mission to administer the "special administration regime areas" with a protective purpose, namely national parks and natural monuments (Fundambiente, 1998; MARNR, 2001). INPARQUES was originally created by the then National Parks Service Division within the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, but it was subsequently attached to the Environment Ministry after its creation in 1976, although it was a semi-autonomous or arms-length organisation (Amend 1992; Delgado, 1992).

Hence, the responsibility for managing the national parks was allocated to a specific institution in 1958 (a Division in the Ministry of Public Infrastructure), but the country's natural resources as a whole were not specifically managed until 1965, and then only by a different institution (a Superintendence in the Ministry of Agriculture). These authorities were not integrated within one institution until the creation of INPARQUES in 1973, this being attached subsequently in 1976 to the Environment Ministry. However, the national parks were not formally defined and regulated in Venezuelan law until the decree of the Law for Territorial Organisation in 1983 (Venezuela, 1983), which created the "special administration regime areas" that included national parks. This complex history has meant that the management of protected areas in Venezuela has suffered from a dispersion of institutional responsibilities, a succession of institutional reorganisations, and an inadequate legal framework to support government action.

Several commentators argue that the administration of Venezuela's natural resources suffers from the same political, technical and financial problems that permeate other aspects of Venezuela's governance (Ammend, 1992; Buroz, 1998; Matus, 1987; Vitalis, 2000). A study carried out by the Environment Ministry into its own effectiveness (MARNR, 1980) concluded that their internal organisation and distribution of responsibilities had not produced

the expected results, with projects not being fully implemented or deviating from their original objectives. The report attributes this shortcoming to internal technical inconsistencies, lack of inter-departmental co-ordination, and technical deficiencies in their own staff.

There has been an acute lack of continuity in the policies and administration of Venezuela's natural resources. During the three years of the current government's administration there have been five Environment ministers, two of whom initiated a 're-organisation' of the Ministry before they were removed, in turn removing key technical personnel and disbanding or regrouping several departments. Over this short period there were three different INPARQUES Directors. The Venezuelan NGO Vitalis (2000) concludes from a review of the country's environmental situation that the main environmental management problems are the weak governmental administration, which has resulted in particular in the degradation of protected areas, along with the Environment Ministry constantly being reorganised in recent years. They interviewed government, NGO, business, press and university representatives who are familiar with Venezuela's environmental policies, and they found that 81% of them considered that the effectiveness of government's environmental management was poor to average (Vitalis, 2000). This suggests considerable dissatisfaction with the government's management of natural resources, and it is indicative of the persistence of these problems in Venezuela.

The shortcomings in Venezuela's management of natural resources led Matus (1987:219) to conclude that *"planning inefficiency favours and stimulates a governmental style dominated by irrelevancy and improvisation, where the more significant actions are associated with spasmodic and late reactions to the problems that explode in front of our eyes"*. He concludes that improvisation is a substitute for planning, with efforts made to repair damage which sometimes cannot be repaired, instead of preventing the damage in the first place. According to Zambrano (1988:156), these problems are increased by the lack of public participation in decision-making: *"a good deal of the population is not interested in taking part in deciding the issues that affect them, choosing*

*instead to delegate decision-making without any checking as to how that delegation is used".* But Zambrano (1988) contends that the government *status quo* is also at fault as it has not developed the mechanisms to encourage more participative behaviour among the public.

In sum, in Venezuela there are severe problems that prevent the effective design and implementation of policies for natural resource management. These problems include a lack of continuity associated with constant government reorganisation, a lack of co-ordination and technical expertise among key personnel, an improvised and largely reactive management style, and a lack of public participation in decision-making.

### **3.3.3. Tourism management in Venezuela**

The Venezuelan government first formalised its tourism responsibilities in 1936 within a newly created Ministry of Agriculture, this involving the setting up of a Direction for Tourism and Sport (MARNR, 1997). In 1938 the country's first Tourism Law was approved, being superseded in 1973 by a second Law that established a Ministry for Information and Tourism (CORPOTURISMO, 1993; MARNR, 1997). However, this Ministry was soon reorganised, with the information role moved to a separate Ministry and with tourism responsibilities being transferred to a 'Venezuelan Corporation for Tourism' (CORPOTURISMO) with the rank of a Ministry and with a Director who is directly appointed by the President. The current Tourism Law was passed in 1992, with this legal framework reflecting the increasing importance attached to tourism by the Venezuelan government (CORPOTURISMO, 1993). In 1992 tourism was, after oil and industrial production, the country's third most important economic activity in terms of foreign currency earnings, it employed 5% of the labour market, and the government was seeking to develop it into the country's second most important source of hard currency (CORPOTURISMO, 1993).

Venezuela's tourism industry had been quite modest before 1983, when a currency devaluation made it one of the cheapest tourist destinations in the Caribbean (CORPOTURISMO, 1993). The number of tourists entering the

country increased three-fold from 1983 to 1986, and by 1988 the country received 700,000 international visitors. However, Venezuela lacked the infrastructure to handle this sudden increase and, in spite of the country's ambitious tourism projects and optimistic projections about tourism growth (Mendelovici, 1999), visitor numbers have never surpassed the 800,000 attracted in 1990 (CORPOTURISMO, 1993; Dvorak, 2000). In recent years there has been a steady decline in tourist arrivals due to Venezuela's deteriorating economy and its growing reputation for political instability and for the left-leaning 'revolutionary' tendencies of the current administration (Dvorak, 2000; Grau, 2000). There has been a 40% drop in tourist arrivals between 1998 and 2001, with a fall from 685,000 to about 400,000 visitors (Salmeron, 2000; www.eluniversal.com, 2002).

Turning to tourism management in Venezuela's national parks, it was only in 1993 that INPARQUES officially recognised the increasing importance of the national parks for tourism development and the diversification of the country's economy, as well as the increasing risks of degradation brought about by increased tourist use (INPARQUES-MARNR, 1993). In 1993 a policy document established INPARQUES policies for tourism and recreation in national parks, and it recognises their legal responsibilities to provide opportunities for public enjoyment in the parks, while also *"taking care not to affect the integrity of the natural resources contained in them"* (INPARQUES-MARNR, 1993:4). It acknowledges the inherent tension between these two responsibilities, but suggests that this could be resolved adequately using their legal powers for park management. These powers are contained in the 1956 Soil, Water and Forest Law, the 1983 Law for Territorial Organisation, and also each park has a individual management plan and use regulations. Further, there are *"the discretionary measures that can be established by the park's superintendents...and the Institute president"* (INPARQUES-MARNR, 1993:6).

According to INPARQUES guidelines, public use should only be allowed in a national park if it meets at least one of three characteristics. The first is that it has natural attractions of sufficient public appeal, such as beaches; second, that the park is near a large urban centre; and third, that the park has a local

population that can benefit from tourism as an income source. These guidelines dictate that the permitted recreational activities in the parks are those that both *"promote the enjoyment of the park through a direct association between visitors and resources...and which are consistent with the protection of those resources"* (INPARQUES-MARNR, 1993:8). However, this public document does not explicitly spell out what goals are sought by the promotion of public use of the parks, and although the word tourism is included in its title, it always focuses on recreational uses. It is also notable that local populations are only briefly mentioned as one of the reasons why public use might be allowed, but it does not take them into account when deciding if and what uses are appropriate for the park.

Several commentators have noted (Amend, 1992; Filatov, 1997; Gutic, 1993; La Rotta, 2001) that INPARQUES has lacked the financial and human resources to adequately manage the vast territory included in the national parks. These resource deficiencies have worsened in recent years as INPARQUES budget has been reduced and it has suffered a drain of technical personal and a constant rotation of its top managerial staff. INPARQUES is currently trying to supplement its budget by granting tourism concessions for 'sustainable developments', but their ability to adequately supervise those concessions must be questioned given the recent failures to implement the World Bank agreement of 1995, through which they were loaned US\$ 95 millions to improve the management and infrastructure of 20 national parks. Because of INPARQUES's inability to implement their own proposals, in 2001 the World Bank reduced the loan to US\$ 37 millions. By then INPARQUES had also scaled down the planned improvements, and these only benefited two national parks and they were to cost much more than originally anticipated (La Rotta, 2001).

Hence, it was only in 1976 that responsibility for tourism management was assumed by an specific institution, and is only after 1983 that the country attracted substantial numbers of international visitors. Thus, the international tourist industry in Venezuela is relatively recent and the government has only had a short experience in its management. The government experience of

tourism management in national parks is even shorter, with the first policy document only produced in 1993 by an INPARQUES response to increasing tourism pressure in its protected areas. INPARQUES does not appear to have clear goals for the public use of national parks, and past and recent experience suggests that INPARQUES lacks adequate capacity to manage these protected areas.

### **3.4 Los Roques National Park**

#### **3.4.1. General development of Los Roques National Park**

A 1967 report by the Los Roques Scientific Foundation to the Venezuelan government requested the long-term protection of the Archipelago Los Roques due to its ecological importance and fears about excessive pressure on its fishery resources and about the uncontrolled development of holiday houses in some areas of the park (Amend, 1992). The decree establishing Los Roques National Park was passed in 1972. It was the first marine park of the current 43 within the Venezuelan national park system, and it remains the only one not to include continental mainland within its limits. The park's limits form a square covering 221,120 Hectares, mostly ocean. The archipelago has an ovoid shape, being about 36 km long and 25 km wide (Amend, 1992; AUA, 1998; Payne, 2001). As it is located 160 km. north off the Venezuelan coast, it is relatively isolated and free from the perturbations generated by human activity (Figure 3.1). The Archipelago comprises more than 50 islands and 200 cays and sandbanks, which were formed by the growth of coral on a deep rock platform. It is Venezuela's largest coral reef ecosystem (Amend, 1992). There are two extensive barrier reefs, in the North and South of the park, and these enclose all the islands making up the archipelago within a shallow water lagoon, 1 to 5 metres in depth. The reefs and islands support abundant fish and bird life as well as extensive mangrove forests (Gutic, 1996). The park has an important lobster fishery, producing about 90% of all lobster consumed in the country (Payne, 2001). The park also boasts extensive beaches of white, powdery sand, surrounded by crystal-clear waters. The beaches and shallow lagoons of the archipelago provide refuge for 92 bird species, 50 of which are migratory and use it as a mid-route rest point (Gutic,

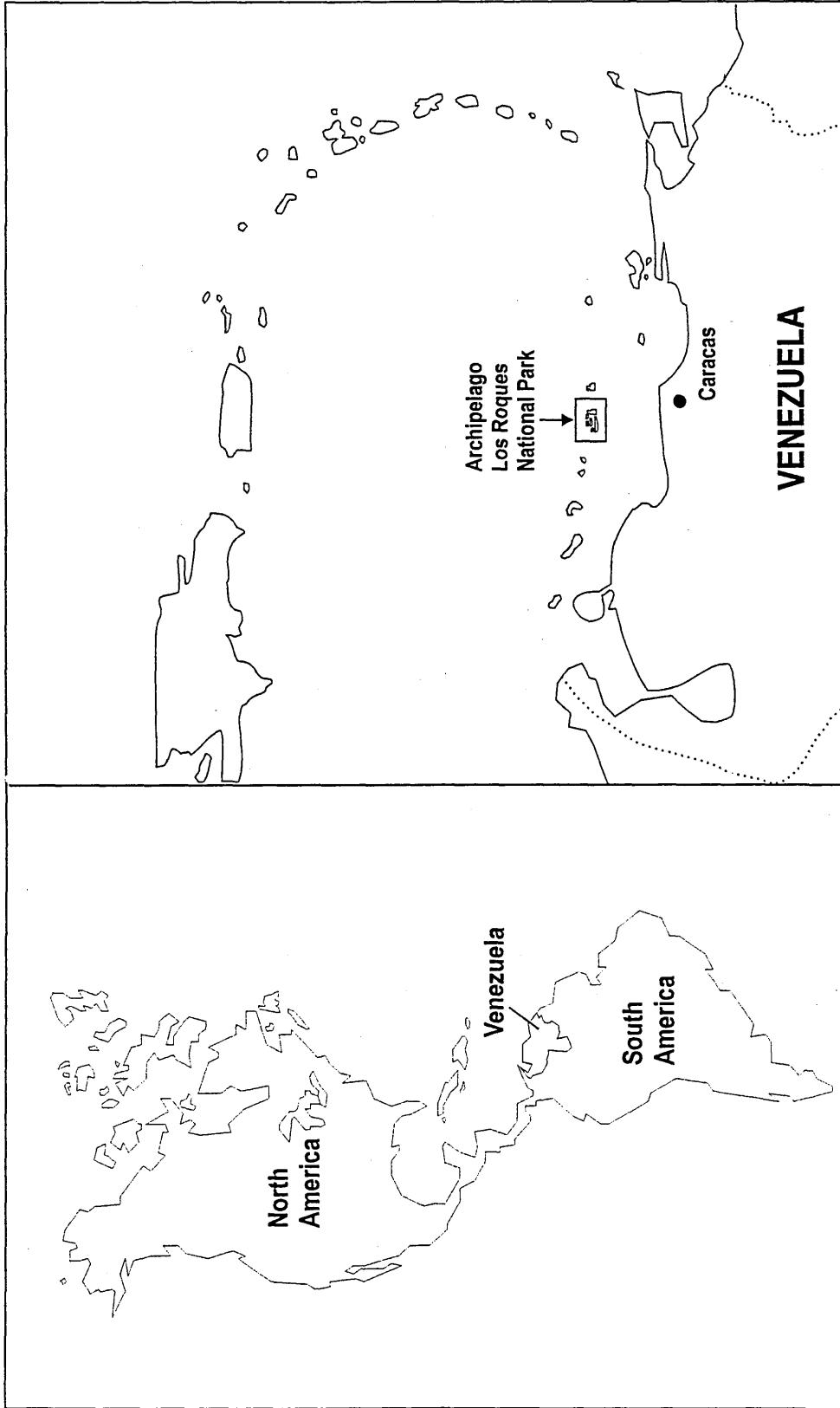


Figure 3.1: Location of Venezuela and the Archipelago Los Roques National Park

1996). For this reason the archipelago was designated a RANSAR site for international wetland protection in 1996 (AUA, 1997). Access to the park is by plane or boat. The public airport is in the Northeast, on Gran Roque island, where the local population and all tourism facilities are concentrated. There is another landing strip for private use at a scientific research station on Dos Mosquises Island, in the Southwest. Most visitors come by plane from Caracas, Venezuela's capital, and from Margarita island on the East coast (Gutic, 1993). Besides Gran Roque village, the only other permanent settlement is on Madrisky island, and this consists of a small group of privately-owned holiday homes. Most tourism activity is concentrated around Gran Roque island, particularly on the beaches of nearby Francisky island (Amend, 1992) (Figure 3.2).

There was no permanent human settlement on the islands until approximately 1936, when a small group of fishermen who travelled there periodically from Margarita island, about 500 km away on Venezuela's North coast, decided to settle there (Amend, 1992). This population experienced a gradual decline due to the harsh living conditions, but the subsequent development of tourism reversed this trend, with the population growing from 586 in 1988 (Amend, 1992) to an estimated 1500 in 1999 (Sanchez, personal communication), of which about two-thirds are descendants of the original settlers. This local population, known as Roquenos, is concentrated on the largest island of the Archipelago, Gran Roque, which initially was a small fishing village and which has since kept many of its traditional ways. This community was practically isolated from the mainland and lacked the most basic facilities until about 1970 when the park started to become a popular tourist destination (Ammend, 1992; Gutic 1993).

The management of Los Roques National Park is based on geographical zoning, which sets out the objectives and types of activities that can take place in each zone, and which divides the park along a 'use gradient' according to local resource fragility and uses deemed appropriate (Delgado, 1992; Payne, 2001). The park zoning comprises 5 management areas (Figure 3.3 and Table 3.1), each with a specific level of resource protection and allowable activities.

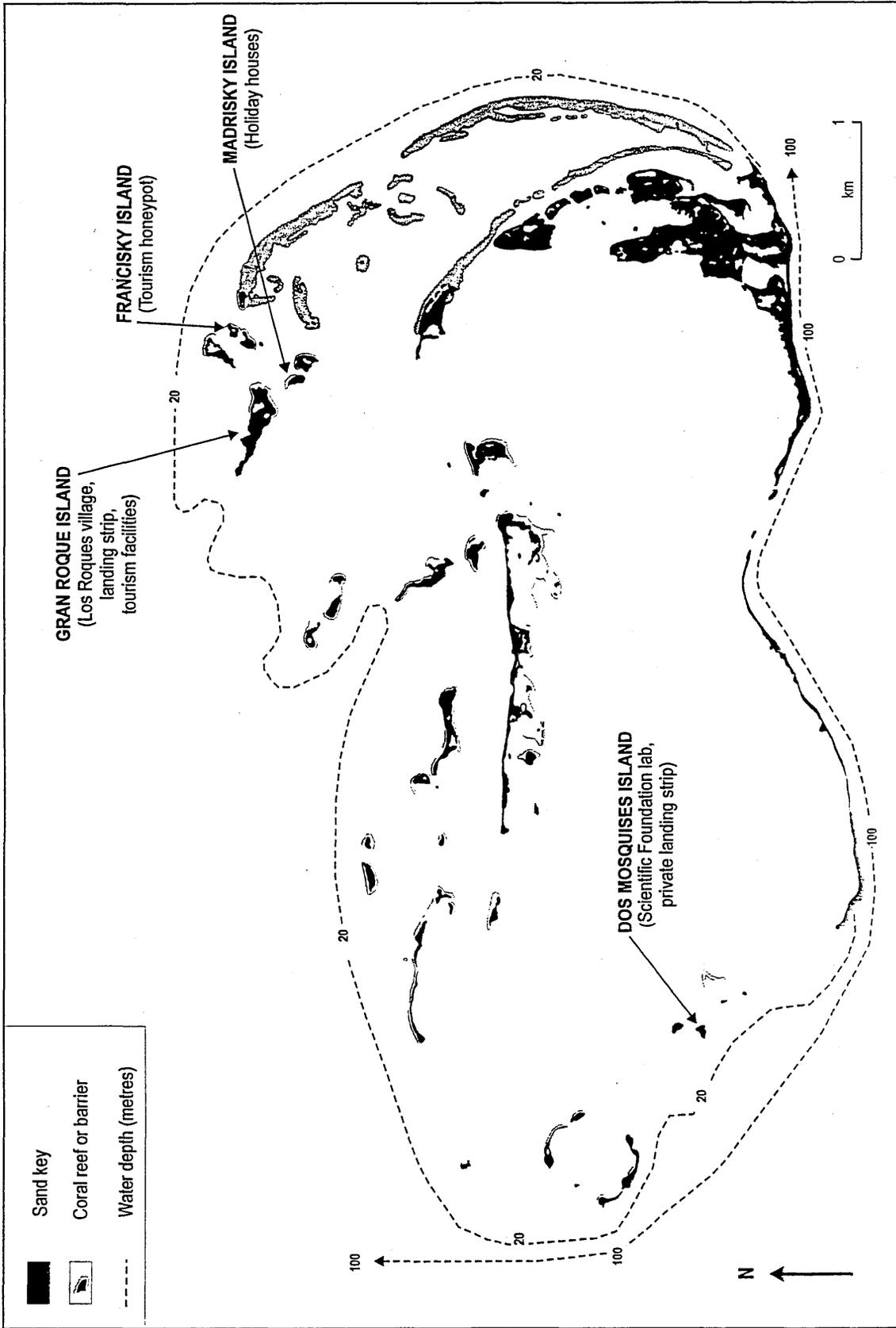


Figure 3.2: Physical Resources of the Archipelago Los Roques National Park

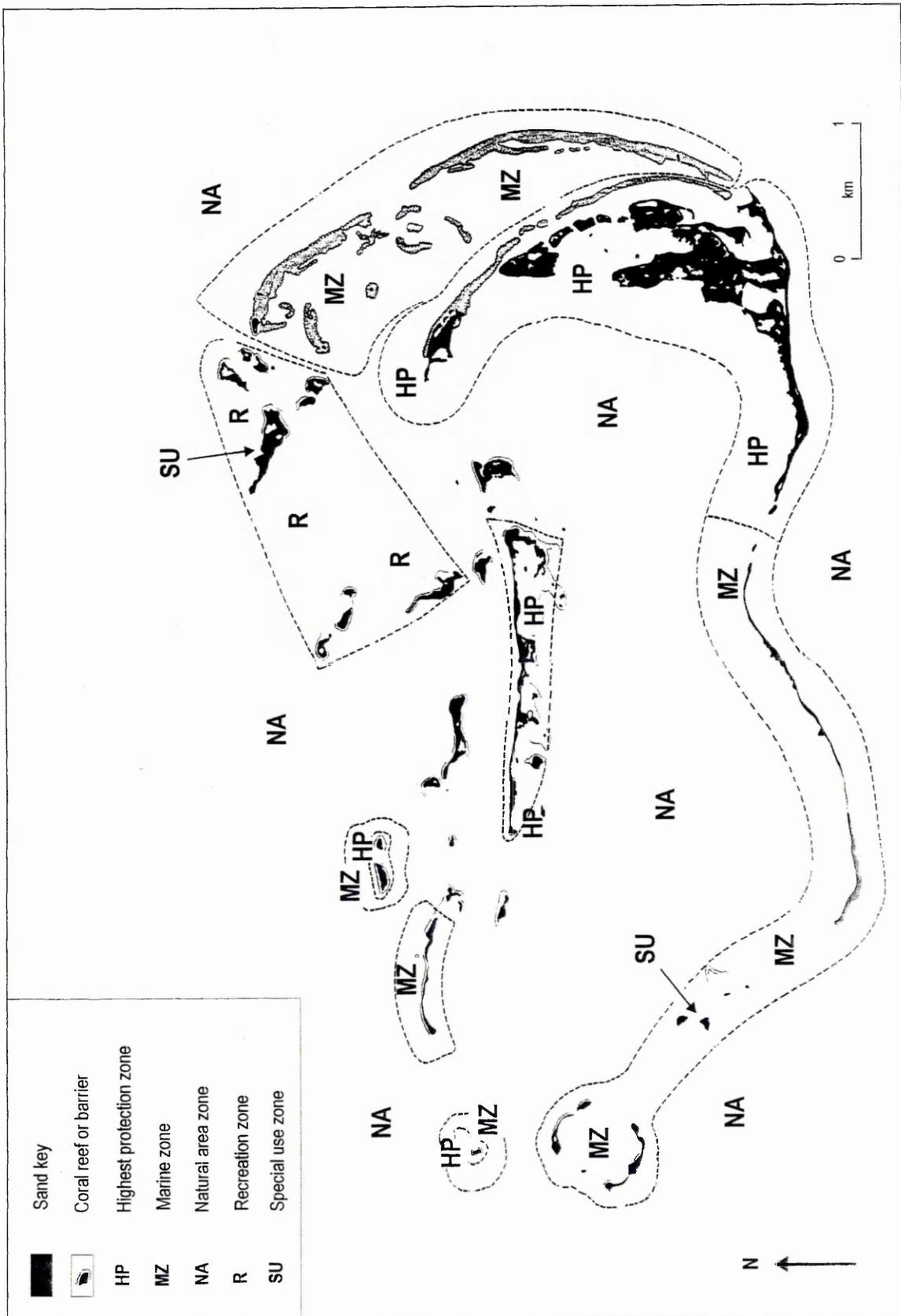


Figure 3.3: Management Zones of the Archipelago Los Roques National Park

Most tourism activities take place in the Recreation zone around Gran Roque island and on cays in the Natural Area zone, although some diving and visitor activities also take place in cays on the Marine zone under more stringent regulations (Payne, 2001). These INPARQUES regulations for cays in this area include the need to obtain a daily permit prior to a visit, the party size is limited to a maximum of 15 people, and there is a maximum daily number of people per cay. However, the number of people per cay is not controlled *in situ* by INPARQUES because the regulations apply only to commercial tour operators and it excludes visitors who go there on their own boats (Payne, 2001).

**Table 3.1** Management zones of Los Roques National Park (Venezuela, 1990).

ZONE NAME	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS
Highest Protection	No activities are allowed other than research or vigilance, and no infrastructure is permitted unless for these uses and of provisional character. This zone gives the highest level of protection, and it is for areas deemed to be fragile and ecologically valuable.
Marine	Limited tourism and recreation is allowed but only for groups no larger than 15 and under restrictions established by the park's managers. Resource protection takes precedence over other uses in this area.
Natural Area	Recreation, tourism and fishing activities are allowed in this area. The construction of basic support infrastructure for tourism and vigilance is allowed. Resource protection is moderate in this zone.
Recreation	All recreational and tourism activities are allowed, along with the construction of related support infrastructure. Although resource protection is minimal in this zone, it only allows for activities that are deemed not to be harmful to the park's resources.
Special Use	This encompasses areas with significant human presence and human alterations, including Gran Roque and Dos Mosquises islands. Resource protection might not be optimal due to the specific circumstances.

The current park's management plan was approved in 1990 (Venezuela, 1990). It was developed from a zoning project started in 1986, and it includes previous proposals from 1973 and 1976 that were not then implemented. According to Delgado (1992), the design of this plan involved three stages. The first stage was a 'pre-workshop', where the zoning proposals were established and areas with potentially conflicting uses were identified. The second was a 'public consultation workshop', convened by INPARQUES, and which included parties deemed to be interested in the park and its management, with comments being invited on the previously prepared proposals. This led to the production *"in a short time of an acceptable document which collects the opinions of all participants"* (Delgado, 1992:151, **bold** by the author). The last

stage was a 'post-workshop', where INPARQUES drew on the comments made in the workshop about the management plan. This considered comments "*which are deemed valid and compatible with the Park's Law, [and] discarded those that raised situations not compatible with the park's original objectives*" (Delgado, 1992:151, **bold** by the author). The final version of the management plan was then passed to the government for approval. As highlighted in Delgado's remarks, the development of the current management plan was not participative, and stakeholder inputs were limited to a fairly tokenistic consultation, particularly so given that interviewees for this present study explained that the 'public consultation workshop' took place over only two days. The initial implementation of this management plan also appears to have been carried out in a fairly authoritarian fashion. This helps explain Delgado's remark that immediately after starting to implement the management plan relationships between INPARQUES and other park stakeholders became "*immensely eroded due to conflicts between those with political interests and the technical regulations imposed by INPARQUES*" (1992:151, **bold** by the author). More recently it has been asserted that the lack of participation by the local community in decision-making was a serious problem for the park's management (AECI Consultant Group, 1998; Ananda, 1998; Arreaza, 1998; Asoproraque, 1999; Gutic, 1997; Ornat, 1997). The need to create participatory mechanisms has also been highlighted by several commentators, as well as more recently by the park's Central Co-ordinating Authority (CCA) (AUA, 2000; AUA, 2001).

One requirement of the 1990 management plan was that plan implementation should be reviewed and revised accordingly by INPARQUES every five years. However, the review and revision process might have been affected by conflicts surrounding the park's management. A review has only taken place once, and the resulting plan modifications, which were ready in 1998, have not yet been adopted (Duran, Matani, personal communications). In Ornat's review of park management in 1997 he notes that there were fundamental disagreements between INPARQUES and CCA and that these were delaying the adoption of the revised management plan.

In sum, Los Roques National Park is a natural area of significant ecological importance and fragility, which has a recent history of both protection and tourism development. This development is being managed through a geographical zoning system which divides the park according to perceptions of the fragility and of adequate uses for each area. A management plan adopted in 1990 is the other main tool used to regulate activities in the park. Several commentators have highlighted how the plan's development and implementation was non-participative and authoritarian, and they argue that mechanisms to promote local community involvement in park management should be developed.

#### **3.4.2. Tourism development in Los Roques National Park**

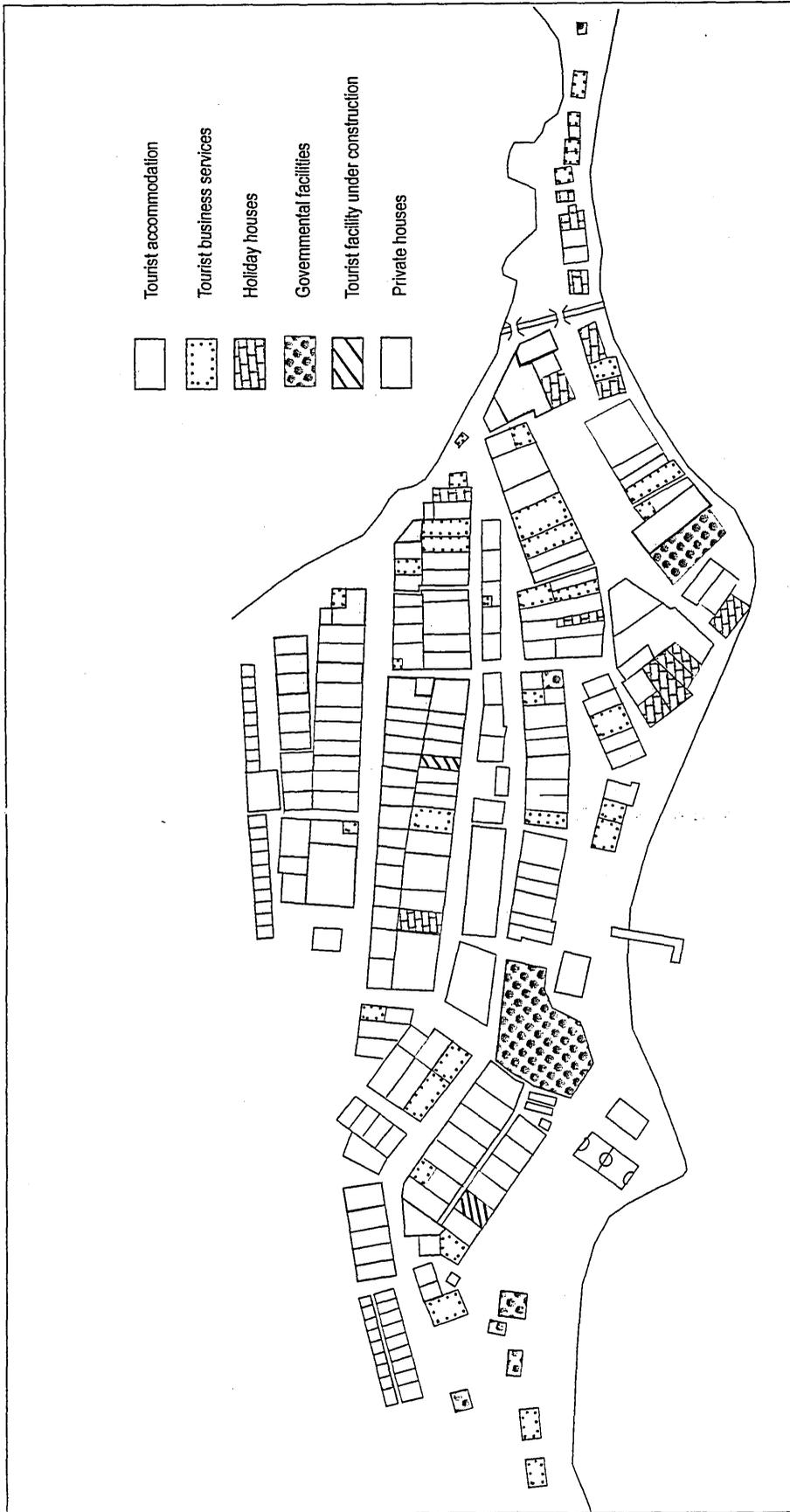
Tourism developed in Los Roques relatively recently, initially slowly and later more rapidly. Drawing on Butler (1980), it is possible to suggest four or possibly five tourism development stages (modified from Amend, 1992):

- A pioneer stage during the 1940s and 1950s, when there were only a few fishermen's huts, which lacked any facilities, and visiting Los Roques was considered an adventure. This would be equivalent to Butler's 'Exploration' stage.
- A wealthy tourism stage, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, when wealthy plane and yacht owners started to visit and then persuaded the Roquenos to build a rudimentary landing strip in Gran Roque in exchange for free transportation. At this stage some private holiday homes were built on Gran Roque and on several islands in the Northeast of the park. This would equate with Butler's 'Involvement' stage.
- A sell-out stage in the early 1980s when visitors coming from the mainland or abroad started to buy houses of the Roquenos to transform them into "posadas". After having sold their properties and not having physical space to rebuild their houses, this led to a crowding of the Gran Roque urban area, and the migration of some Roquenos from the park. The tourist influx greatly increased during this stage, mostly due to an airline occasionally bringing tourists to the park. However, there was still no regular air link between the park and mainland, mostly due to opposition from the wealthy holiday-home owners. This is similar to Butler's 'Development' stage.

- A mass-tourism stage, starting in 1988 with regular daily commercial flights to the park bringing day-tour and long stay package tourists. Two airlines started regular services between the park and two destinations on the mainland (Caracas and Margarita island), and the number of companies offering flights and lodging and tour service packages has increased ever since (Gutic, 1993). The number of posadas has increased subsequently from about 20 to more than 60, along with substantial growth in the number of supporting tourism businesses. This stage might be described as a mix of 'Development' and 'Consolidation' stages.
- Possibly there is also an 'Stagnation' stage. It may be that Los Roques National Park has already reached a phase of stability or early decline, with the number of posadas having diminished slightly to 56, some businesses becoming firmly established while others have failed, and the number of visitor arrivals becoming stable. Visitor arrivals have even experienced some unexpected, but possibly temporary decline (Author's own survey and data from INPARQUES, 2001).

Tourism facilities are concentrated on Gran Roque island, which has 56 "posadas" or hotels, totalling around 1100 bed-spaces (Figure 3.4). There are also 37 businesses that partly or wholly support tourism activities in the park, including souvenir shops, cafes, restaurants, convenience stores and diving shops. Nowadays, most tourists are brought to the Park by five airline and tourism companies that also transport the bulk of tourists (INPARQUES, 2001). On a typical peak season day, there will be about 1500 visitors using Gran Roque as a service and accommodation centre (Gutic, 1993; 1996).

A more or less reliable record of international and domestic visitor numbers was started by INPARQUES in 1996 (Table 3.2). These records suggest that during the period 1996 - 1998 park visitation increased at a rate of about 10,000 additional visitors per year, growing from around 43,000 in 1996 to almost 64,000 in 1997. However, from 1999 onwards visitor numbers appear to be declining. Several interviewees for this study attributed this to factors external to the park and unrelated to tourism operations, such as the condition of the economy and a widespread perception of political instability in Venezuela.



**Figure 3.4: Location of tourist accommodation and businesses in Gran Roque village**  
 (Source: Author's survey, February 2001)

It is also possible that these figures underestimate visitor numbers, as the data is collected by a park ranger at Gran Roque airport, who is not always there, and by boat captains voluntarily reporting their arrival at the INPARQUES offices on Gran Roque island. There are indications that such under-reporting might be happening in the Central Co-ordinating Authority reports and in the Tourist Operator Association claims that 68,000 visitors came to the park in 1997 and more than 70,000 in 1999 (Asoproroque, 1999; AUA, 1998; AUA, 2000). It has been estimated that 10% of all international visitors coming to Venezuela actually visit Los Roques, thus making it the country's third most important tourist destination after Margarita island and Canaima national park (Asoproroque, 1999).

**Table 3.2.** Visitors to Los Roques National Park, 1996 - 2000, according to method of transportation and origin (Source: INPARQUES, 2001).

TYPE OF TRANSPORT YEAR/ORIGIN	AIRCRAFT		YACHT		TOTAL VISITORS PER YEAR
	VENEZUELAN	FOREIGN	VENEZUELAN	FOREIGN	
1996	12526	26097	1119	3657	43399
1997	20017	32608	2711	1778	57114
1998	22277	35300	2829	3372	63778
1999	20797	28366	2572	3730	55647
2000	32768	21185	3069	2470	59492

To summarise, tourism development in Los Roques has been a relatively recent phenomena. Tourism activities are concentrated in the only large populated area in the park, Gran Roque island, from which virtually all activities take place. Visitor numbers to the park are around 50,000 to 70,000 each year, with the latest statistics showing signs of slight decline, although collection methods might not be reliable. This decline appeared to be unrelated to the park and its tourism operations, and was likely to be caused by the country's political and economical instability.

### **3.5 The Management of Los Roques National Park**

#### **3.5.1. Institutional Responsibilities**

During the 1930s the Los Roques archipelago, along with all islands off the North Venezuelan coast, was under the jurisdiction of the Federal

Dependencies Office, first under the Ministry of Defence and since the 1940s under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. For Los Roques this organisation was solely concerned with the Gran Roque's population, and it has not intervened in natural resource management issues (Sanchez *et al.*, 1996).

Between the designation of Los Roques as a national park in 1972 and the creation of the CCA in 1990, INPARQUES was the authority with most influence in the area's management (Delgado, 1992). INPARQUES is represented in the park by a superintendent and ranger staff, who are charged with ensuring that the management plan and park regulations are complied with (Amend, 1992; Venezuela, 1990). Their responsibilities include protecting and managing the park's natural resources, management of the local community, regulating fishing activities (together with the Fishing Resources Service of the Agriculture Ministry), and dealing with infractions of regulations and with emergencies (along with the National Guard) (Gutic, 1996).

However, since the creation in 1990 of Los Roques Central Co-ordinating Authority (CCA) and since implementation work began on the park's management plan, INPARQUES has been legally bound to share its management responsibilities with the CCA (Venezuela, 1990b). According to Buroz (1998:155), the Law for Territorial Organisation (Venezuela, 1983) established the rationale for Central Co-ordinating Authorities as being *"for the environmental management of those areas with particularly critical problems...where the functional complexity of implementing their specific management plans and programmes makes them necessary"*. The fact that the Venezuelan government chose this particular organisational form to implement the park's management plan suggests they expected this work to be complex and to lead to conflicts. The Los Roques CCA is a government agency specifically created for the park, in principle representing the Environment Ministry, and whose main mission is *"to direct, co-ordinate, implement and supervise the (park's) Management Plan"* (Venezuela, 1990b:49). The CCA is charged with co-ordinating the work of all other government agencies with responsibilities in the park, including those providing public utilities and services to the park's permanent population and tourists (AUA, 1996). However, instead

of facilitating the work of other institutions through its co-ordinating role, in practice the CCA has conflicting responsibilities with INPARQUES.

There are at least 10 other governmental institutions besides CCA and INPARQUES that have a role in the park. Notable among these are the National Guard (a militarised police force), the Coastguard, the Fishing Resources Service of the Agriculture Ministry (SARPA), and the Venezuelan Tourism Corporation Ministry (CORPOTURISMO), with the latter just starting to operate there when the fieldwork research was undertaken. The Ministries of Environment, Education, Health, Transport and Communications, Internal Affairs (equivalent to the UK Home Office) and Urban Development also have specific roles in the park, mostly in relation to the local population located in the village of Gran Roque. Representatives from all these institutions constitute the CCA's Directive Council, and they are required to meet regularly to review policies guiding the CCA's actions. The Directive Council has had a history of less than regular activity, and of being subject to the differing outlook of each Central Co-ordinating Authority Director, with meeting frequency ranging from virtually never to monthly meetings under the current Director. Two semi-autonomous institutions, for electricity and drinking water provision, are supposed to operate in the park, but in practice the CCA has assumed their functions.

The discussion has shown that the two institutions currently with the most authority in the park are INPARQUES and the Central Co-ordinating Authority (CCA), with their management roles augmented by various other government institutions.

### **3.5.2. Policy-making and the management of tourism and natural resources**

Prior to the approval and implementation of the park's Management Plan in 1990, the powers of INPARQUES personnel were limited to those set out in the National Parks Law and the decree which designated the park. But these only gave a general outline of areas of responsibility for INPARQUES in the park, and they did not give specific objectives for resource management, public

access or for population control (Matani, personal communication). The development of policies are still carried out from the Caracas office of INPARQUES in a centralised fashion, and before the mid-1980s there was also very little interaction with personnel in the field (Gutic, 1997; Ornat, 1997). However, the development of the 1990 Management Plan implemented in 1990 did involve participation and input from field personnel.

In the past, and particularly during the 1980s, the INPARQUES personnel in the park lacked even the most elementary resources and they had a mainly token presence and this was largely limited to Gran Roque island. They performed patrol duties on rare occasions when they had petrol and their boats were in working order (Amend, 1992; Gutic, 1993). Thus, enforcement of park regulations was lax during this period, with regular infractions of resource use regulations, particularly with respect to fishing. While INPARQUES has legal powers in relation to the local population, other governmental institutions have taken a more active role, and their needs have not been given sustained attention until the creation of the Central Co-ordinating Authority (Amend, 1992). Other government institutions operating in the park have fulfilled their responsibilities only occasionally at best, either due to lack of local presence or resources, limited interest, or due to the area's isolation (Amend, 1992; Arreaza, 1998; AUA, 1996; AUA, 1997).

The approval of the park's Management Plan in 1990 meant that INPARQUES had powers for the first time in relation to the management of all park activities. The plan created specific management zones according to their natural resource characteristics and the human activities considered appropriate (Payne, 2001; Venezuela, 1990). But at the same time that this Plan was enacted, the Central Government also created the Los Roques Central Co-ordinating Authority (Venezuela, 1990b).

The CCA was established to ensure there was co-ordination between INPARQUES and the other government institutions in the park, and also to oversee the implementation of the park's Management Plan (AUA, 1996; Venezuela, 1990b). The justification given for the creation of the CCA was the

existence of inter-institutional conflicts and opposing interests in relation to the park's resources, which could have made it difficult to implement the Management Plan (AUA, 1996). While INPARQUES has the theoretical legal authority to co-ordinate the actions of all government institutions in the park, which in principle are obliged to report and agree with INPARQUES on all their activities, in practice there have been severe institutional conflicts in the park, such as institutional quarrelling over responsibilities and functions. These conflicts have resulted in duplication of effort, neglect of responsibilities, intense rivalries, as well as disorganisation and antagonism among park institutions (AUA, 1996; Delgado, 1992). The creation of the CCA has diminished the level of conflict between INPARQUES and other institutions, but it also created a new institutional conflict between the CCA and INPARQUES (Delgado, 1992). The main causes of this new conflict relate to the CCA's jurisdiction to implement management actions and, particularly after 1994, its assumption of responsibilities from other government institutions with less influence in the park.

Delgado (1992:152) argues that *"the establishment of the CCA originated a singular situation within the Venezuelan national parks system, in which for the first time another institution was assuming some of the responsibilities that have been the sole jurisdiction of INPARQUES"*. According to Delgado, these usurped responsibilities include the ability to authorise new land uses and to issue permits to carry out some activities in the park. He argues that this situation diminished the role of INPARQUES and excluded them from some of the duties that they should carry out.

During the research period the conflict between INPARQUES and CCA was being handled locally by their representatives in Los Roques having what one interviewee described as a *"gentleman's agreement"*. Nevertheless, this issue has been identified in two reports as a significant obstacle to the park's management (AECI Consultation Group, 1998; Ornat, 1997). Ornat (1997:4), concludes that it *"results in ambiguities and a legal overlapping between INPARQUES and the CCA, which leads to institutional disagreements and ill feelings"*. However, the conflict seemed to have abated over the research

period due to INPARQUES gradually losing its decision-making authority compared with the CCA.

Turning to the park's environmental condition, this is considered to be generally good (Gutic, 1993; Gutic, 1997; Ornat, 1997; Payne, 2001). However, Ornat (1997:4) concludes from an assessment of the park's future management scenarios, that *"the future scenarios for Los Roques gives cause for concern...the main threat for the park's future is tourism growth"*. He regards the park's most pressing environmental problems to be the waste water and garbage generated by tourists and residents, which depending on the tourist season amount to between 1.5 to 4 tons of solid waste each day, and the intensive use of some park areas (AUA, 1996; Gutic, 1993; Ornat, 1997; Payne, 2001). This intensive use is leading to increasing degradation, particularly of the most fragile resources, such as the shallow coral reefs and the grassy areas subject to pedestrian traffic. Private and commercial tourist boats anchoring over the coral reefs and seaweed fields are also perceived to be a significant environmental threat (Gutic, 1993; Ornat, 1997; Payne, 2001).

The overuse of popular spots is considered to be a serious environmental problem by the park authorities, and measures have been introduced to restrict their use on peak days, but with no apparent success so far (Gutic, 1993; Ornat, 1997; Payne, 2001). Both INPARQUES and the CCA are increasingly concerned about how much more tourism growth the park can absorb (AUA, 1997b; INPARQUES, 1998; Ornat, 1997; Payne, 2001). This concern has resulted in a project to implement a rudimentary tourist "capacity limit" for a popular location in the park (Sanchez, personal communication), as well as INPARQUES and CCA proposals to monitor changes originating from human activities in the park. Both of the latter proposals are oriented to establishing some level of "adequate" park visitation, but neither of the two main management authorities have a clear plan of how this visitor level will be established or maintained (AUA, 1997b; INPARQUES, 1998).

In summary, the main powers to deal with activities in the park, and particularly with tourism, arise from the 1990 management plan. Responsibilities

for implementing this plan are split between INPARQUES and the CCA, with these institutions having most management authority in the park. Although the CCA was created to deal with the complexity of managing an area with multiple actors, in practice it has led to new conflicts between the CCA and INPARQUES. The park's current condition is generally good, although several commentators have expressed serious concern about threats originating from uncontrolled development and growth of tourism activities. Both management authorities are concerned with how much tourism growth the park can accommodate, but concrete policies or effective actions have yet to result.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has shown that planning and management in most national parks is increasingly facing pressures and difficulties associated with the management of tourism. It also underlined how the specific goals and objectives sought by park managers and stakeholders shape the management issues in most national parks, and thus must be taken into consideration to understand how specific areas are managed to meet specific goals.

This discussion also highlighted that planning in Venezuela has been affected by the country's dependence on oil revenue and by personal and political influences. It is a society where planning problems tend to persist and are entrenched by the process of political reorganisation that occurs frequently. Planning efforts often result in a series of planning proposals from successive governments, with previous policies being discontinued and new ones never being fully implemented. Natural resource management in Venezuela suffers from similar problems. Other related planning problems include constant government reorganisations, a lack of co-ordination and technical expertise among key personnel, a reactive planning style, and a lack of public participation.

It has been shown that the Venezuelan government has had only a short experience of managing tourism. This experience is even shorter in national parks, with the first management policy being proposed in 1993 as a response

to increasing tourism pressure. The institution in charge of managing natural parks, INPARQUES, does not have clear goals for the public use of protected areas and past experience suggests that it does not have the capacity to manage these areas very effectively.

It was shown that Los Roques National Park has significant ecological importance but it is environmentally fragile. Tourism development in the park is being managed using a geographical zoning system and a management plan adopted in 1990. Several commentators have emphasised that the development of this management plan was non-participative, and have argued that local community involvement in park decision-making should be increased. Visitor numbers in the park are around 50,000 to 70,000 per year, with these figures probably having declined recently. This decline, however, is likely to be temporary, due to the country's political and economical instability. Tourism activities are concentrated in the only large populated area of the park, Gran Roque village, from which virtually all activities take place. The two institutions with the most management authority in the park are INPARQUES and the CCA. The CCA was created to deal with the complexity of managing the multiple actors in the area, but it has led to new conflicts. While the park conditions are generally good, several commentators have expressed serious concern about threats due to the uncontrolled development of tourism activities. Both management authorities are concerned with how much tourism growth the park should accommodate, but concrete growth management policies have yet to be developed.

## **Chapter 4**

### **The Conceptual Framework**

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#### **4.1 Introduction**

The objectives of this study include the identification and assessment of stakeholders who are affected by proposals for the management of tourism and environmental resources in a national park. A conceptual framework is required that identifies these stakeholders together with their concerns and needs in relation to park resources. This framework should also establish an analytical process to map the influence of these stakeholders in relation to the management proposals. Hence, a conceptual framework has been developed for the management of stakeholders and resources according to specified objectives. This framework links natural resource management and tourist carrying capacity issues with stakeholder analysis. The resulting framework for Stakeholder and Resource Management (STREM) provides guidance for the formulation of management actions intended to maintain natural resource use at acceptable levels, with these levels defined according to the perceptions of relevant stakeholders. This framework is only partially applied in this study. Its design is one of the research objectives and it constitutes one of the original contributions of the research.

Within the STREM framework, a second conceptual framework was developed to identify, assess and to consult with the stakeholders who are affected by tourism management proposals in natural areas. This Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA) assists in identifying management objectives through the use of stakeholder analysis and consultation, and thus it is a type of 'participation' technique. It was developed specifically for use in situations where there is little tradition of participative planning or where it faces significant obstacles, as is the case in many developing nations. The design and partial application of this framework constitutes another key research objective and represents another original contribution of the study.

The Stakeholder and Resource Management (STREM) and Stakeholder

Assessment (STA) frameworks were developed from existing literature on visitor and resource management, and on stakeholder identification, analysis and management. Both frameworks were largely developed deductively, by integrating existing literature and, in the case of the STREM framework, by integrating these two general bodies of literature. This chapter explains the characteristics and relevance of these frameworks, first discussing the STREM framework and then the STA framework. It then details the first three steps of the STA framework, explaining their relevance, theoretical background, and their characteristics, as well as how they are integrated within the STREM framework.

The main objectives of this study relate to the first three steps of the STA framework, these steps being the identification of stakeholders and likely management scenarios; the assessment of management issues and stakeholder preferences for future management; and the analysis and mapping of stakeholder influence. This concentration on the first three steps strengthens the research focus and adds substantive analytical depth. The fourth step in the STA framework, that of stakeholder management, is beyond the scope of this present research for two reasons. First, stakeholder management is concerned with actions that should be taken by the decision-makers applying the framework. Thus, it is fundamentally decided according to their perceptions and preferences, and the researcher has little role in this process. Second, the implementation of this step has to be framed within the context of specific management proposals and currently there are no such management proposals for the natural area examined in this research. Further, the park authorities in the study area still lack a clear steering vision to guide their approach to tourism management. Hence, the fourth step of the STA Framework was only developed conceptually but not applied in practice in this study.

#### **4.2 Aims and characteristics of the Stakeholder and Resource Management (STREM) Framework**

The Stakeholder and Resource Management (STREM) Framework is a decision-making tool to assist managers in the management by objectives of

tourism and resources in natural areas. The main aim of the STREM framework is to manage natural resources in tourist destinations in ways that avoid their overuse by different users, and particularly by the tourism industry. To achieve this aim, it focuses on the management of the destination's resources according to the perceived needs and the views of its stakeholders, and it seeks to identify potential compromises between these views and the destination's conservation needs, with the compromises sought being those that are acceptable to the stakeholders. The STREM framework addresses this aim by collecting information from the affected stakeholders through a process of stakeholder identification, analysis and interviews. It uses interviews rather than public meetings or collaborative planning meetings. A key purpose of the interviews is to collect opinions and to evaluate preferred management options. By feeding this information into the resource management process, it is intended to manage destinations in more democratic and potentially more sustainable ways, particularly in ways that meet the needs of users and also avoid resource overuse. The STREM framework was developed based on the premise that Stakeholder Theory can assist in the identification, analysis and involvement of stakeholders affected by the management of resources in a tourist destination. Grimble and Wellard (1996:177) contend that Stakeholder Theory can be coupled with the principles of visitor management in natural areas in order to identify the stakeholders who ought to be involved in visitor management, to define the problems to be solved, and ultimately to achieve a compromise between the resource needs of the stakeholders and the conservation needs of the destination.

The STREM framework was constructed around three management issues that were built into its design. First, it acknowledges that the design and implementation of visitor management measures involve both technical and evaluative components, with the latter involving issues of perception and value judgement (Burch, 1984; Shelby and Heberlein, 1984). As highlighted in section 2.7 of Chapter 2, several commentators (Krumpe and McCool, 1997; McCool and Lime, 2001; McCool and Stankey, 2001; Moisey and McCool, 2001; Ritchie, 1998) argue that regulating access to an area must be recognised as a political, more than a scientific issue, which needs informing by science but that

ultimately has to be made in the realm of politics and values. McCool and Lime (2001) also maintain that the objectives and decisions required for such regulations must be underpinned by the values, beliefs and priorities of the stakeholders affected by them. It is argued in this study that a significant strength of the STREM framework is its integration of technical, perceptual and value judgement components in decision-making. The STREM framework integrates subjective value issues in an open, accountable way, where the perceptions and values of relevant stakeholders are researched and then incorporated in the decision-making process.

Second, the STREM framework was designed taking into account the characteristics of natural areas in developing countries, as highlighted in Chapter 3 (Few 2001; Gutic, 1993, 1997; Morah, 1996; Mowforth and Munt, 1998; Ornat, 1997; Richter, 1984; Tosun, 2000; Twyman, 2000). Notably, the STREM framework acknowledges that these areas often provide local communities with access to, and use of resources that are vital for their subsistence. If resource conservation is prioritised without due account of stakeholders' needs in those areas, it is likely that these communities would be seriously affected or disappear altogether. However, because the ecosystem health of natural areas in developing countries is essential to human livelihoods, *"their degradation has a more direct effect on well-being than in rich areas of the First World"* (Hunter, 1997:854). Thus, the use and conservation of natural areas in developing countries can be seen as a finely balanced compromise, where either end of this equation can potentially have negative consequences for local communities. Further, the design of the STREM framework takes into account the problems of stakeholder participation in developing countries, where there is a limited tradition of participation and where policy-makers tend to make decisions without consulting affected stakeholders. The STREM framework is particularly suitable for developing countries because through the use of consultative interviews it can help in identifying and assessing stakeholders in situations where, due to the prevalence of non-participative, top-down planning approaches, stakeholders are not interested in being involved in decisions or have a limited participation capacity.

Third, the STREM framework recognises that sustainability should be addressed as an adaptive paradigm (Henry and Jackson, 1996) composed of ecological, economic, social, cultural, political and managerial priorities that coexist in a delicate balance, and where *"different interpretations of sustainability may be appropriate under different circumstances"*, such as between developed and developing countries (Hunter, 1997:858). Further, the STREM framework prioritises an ethnocentric paradigm of sustainability, where the value attached to natural resources is derived from human perceptions about their usefulness, and where meeting human needs is prioritised over the conservation needs of a natural area irrespective of the consequences for humans (Henry and Jackson, 1996; Hunter, 1997; O'Riordan, 1981; Sharpley, 2000). The framework is pragmatic in recognising that in developing nations it may be necessary to give some priority to economic and social sustainability over environmental and cultural sustainability, and that the use of certain resources may be a more desirable alternative than unaltered conservation. But it accepts this only in the context where the perceptions of the range of affected stakeholders about environmental standards are given adequate consideration. Thus, the STREM framework would be located at the anthropocentric and resource use-oriented end of the continuum along which sustainable tourism arguably can be implemented (Clarke, 1997; Hardy and Beeton, 2001; Holden, 2003).

The STREM framework takes an original approach that combines stakeholder theory - in particular stakeholder identification, analysis and consultation - with specific aspects of certain visitor and natural resource management frameworks. These frameworks include the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) system for wilderness planning (Stankey, Cole, Lucas, Petersen and Frissell, 1985), the Visitor Impact Management (VIM) planning framework (Graefe, Kuss, Vaske, 1990), and the Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) framework (U.S. National Park Service, 1997). These frameworks were already reviewed in Section 2.2 of Chapter 2.

The STREM framework borrows from the VIM management framework the concept of resource management by objectives, with this concept based on

the idea that all management actions should be guided by previously established objectives in a steering vision for the management process. It also incorporates the selection of condition indicators and standards for the resources being managed, an idea first developed in the LAC framework but which is common to all three frameworks. The STREM framework also has some resemblance to the VERP framework in its description of prescriptive conditions for specific areas within the destination. The VERP framework describes Zones of Visitor Experience and Resource Conditions, which are concerned with delimiting zones and resources where certain amounts of use are deemed to be acceptable according to visitor perceptions. In contrast, the STREM framework emphasises the desired condition for the resources within specific geographical zones according to the perceptions of the various affected stakeholders. These zones are called Resource Condition Areas, and they place the destination's natural resources within a specific set of prescriptive or desirable conditions. The STREM framework acknowledges that the process of defining what constitutes a "desirable" condition for certain areas and resources is a subjective and value-laden process. Once such desirable conditions have been defined, the framework guides the process to establish and measure them in a more systematic and also accountable way.

A key innovation in the STREM framework is that it proposes a structured and sequential process of stakeholder identification - the STA framework - where the stakeholders themselves identify the groups and individuals who are affected by, and are relevant to, management proposals, and thus must be taken into account in decision-making. This is a radical conceptual departure from the LAC, VIM and VERP frameworks, as all of them rely on the perceptions of managers to identify and decide which stakeholders have an interest in the management process. While these frameworks recognise that management proposals affect various stakeholders and thus public involvement in decision-making is desirable, the responsibility for deciding who will be involved, as well as the nature of that involvement, is largely left to the discretion of process managers. Both the LAC and VIM frameworks squarely place this responsibility on managers by noting the importance of public involvement but without giving further details of how they might achieve it in

practice (Graefe, Kuss and Vaske, 1990; Stankey *et al.*, 1985). Only the VERP framework provides some general guidance on who to involve, suggesting that the identification of relevant stakeholders can be done through the application of geographical, economic, resource use and resource value criteria (USNPS, 1997:16-17).

Another significant difference between STREM and the LAC, VIM and VERP frameworks is the way in which stakeholders' opinions and preferences are incorporated into the management process. Decision-making in the STREM framework includes a structured assessment of stakeholder perceptions of what is desirable or acceptable for the area's resources. Furthermore, these stakeholder preferences are incorporated into planning decisions through a process of comparison and potential compromise between what is desirable and what is feasible in management terms. By contrast, stakeholder input in both the LAC and VIM frameworks is based on the process manager's interpretation of stakeholder perceptions. Information on stakeholder views is gained through a review of documents or by the use of consultation processes, but the precise means to achieve these are not specified. Moreover, neither of these frameworks provide guidance on what is the scope of the issues that need to be included in management decisions, nor on which information must be provided by the stakeholders and which by the managers. Furthermore, neither of these frameworks specifies the way in which stakeholder views can be incorporated into decision-making, and as both are heavily oriented towards the management of natural resources, they provide little scope for the incorporation of issues of a political or social nature. For example, the VIM framework only suggests that public participation *may* be required when reviewing management objectives, and only indicates that "*additional research may be desirable to provide visitor input to the refinement of management objectives*" (Graefe, Kuss and Vaske, 1990:11). By contrast, in the STREM framework public involvement is guided by clear and specific steps that are explained in detail and that are intended to increase stakeholder influence on the decisions that are taken during all stages of the management process. Thus, it provides a built-in mechanism where social issues are actively sought,

as well as specific steps where these issues can be considered and incorporated into management decisions.

The VERP framework similarly delegates to process managers the responsibility for incorporating stakeholder inputs, but by comparison to LAC and VIM, it gives greater priority to understanding (although not necessarily incorporating) public values and perceptions, particularly of those stakeholders who can promote or block the management proposals. Like LAC and VIM, the VERP framework allows managers much flexibility about how they incorporate stakeholder inputs, and it does not propose a specific structured form of involvement, only suggesting that *"it may be appropriate to ask some [stakeholders] how they would like to be involved, and how often"* (USNPS, 1997:18). Importantly, stakeholder participation in all these frameworks is seen only as part of an initial data collection process, with this data then fed into the decision-making process. Further, in the LAC, VIM and VERP frameworks public input is largely sought as an additional source of information to complement ecological data and as a way to assess the accuracy and desirability of the measures previously generated by the decision-makers. By contrast, stakeholder views are central to the management process in the STREM framework. Great emphasis was given to the design of an iterative approach for the STREM framework, with parties being asked for their views at several stages of the management process. In STREM there are several opportunities for consultation with stakeholders, providing them with the possibility of making new inputs, reviewing previous ones, and modifying their views accordingly at different stages of the process. This in-built iterativeness provides greater reliability to the STREM framework and also facilitates consideration of changes in stakeholder views.

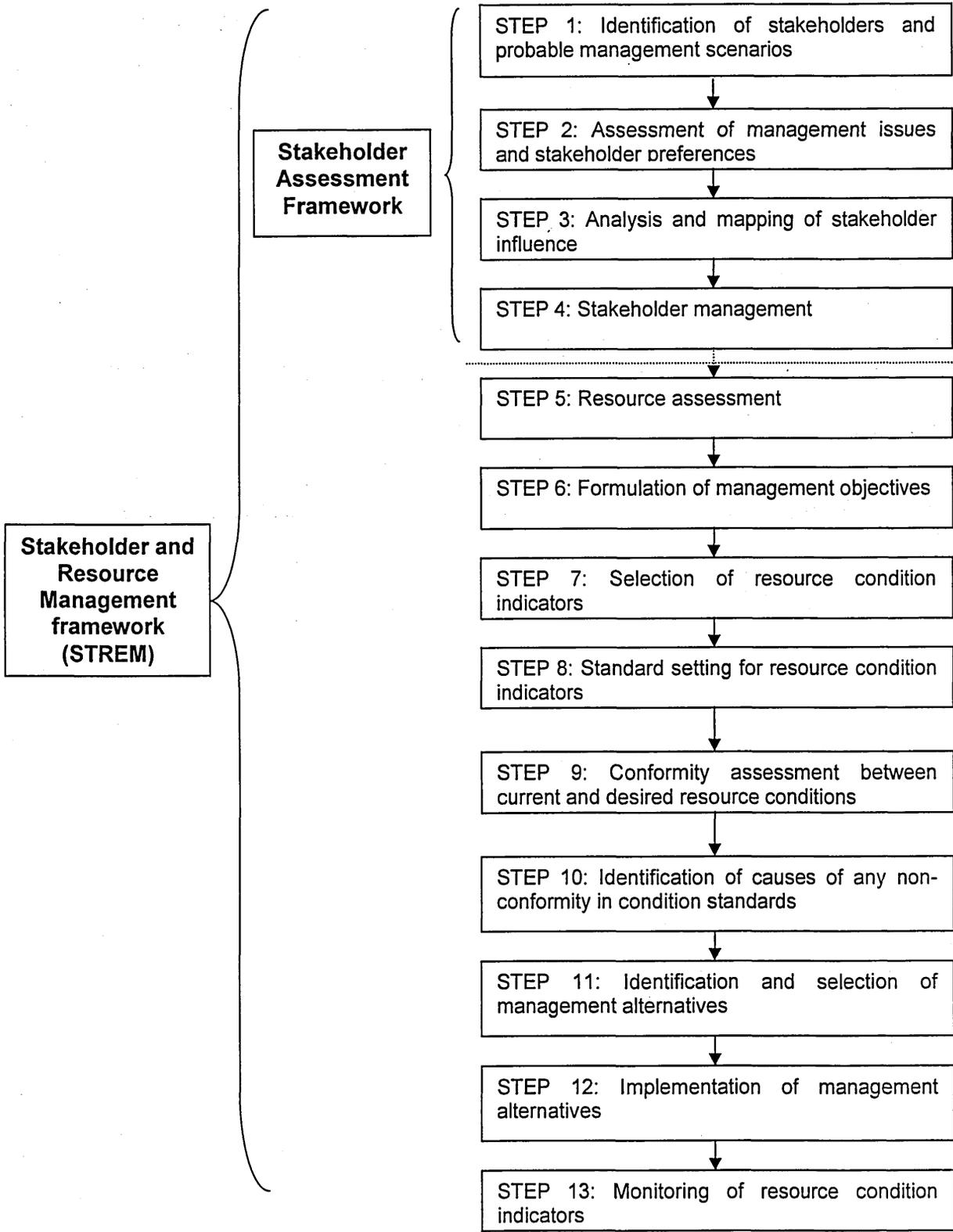
The STREM framework, and in particular its in-built framework for stakeholder identification, the STA, both involve a process of consultative participation by the stakeholders who are affected by resource uses and related management issues in tourist destinations. The term consultative participation is used here in accordance with Pretty's (1995) levels of citizen participation, as discussed in Chapter 2. Consultation is used to define the appropriate levels of

tourism resource use in natural areas. The intention is to provide managers with a fuller assessment of stakeholder views so that potentially they can be taken into account in management decisions. These decisions may be taken either by staff employed by key stakeholders in tourist destinations, or by outside advisers or consultants specifically employed to undertake this assessment, with the latter perhaps being a more advisable option, as such advisers might be seen as more independent and less aligned to the interests of any one stakeholder. While managers will still decide on the final balance between stakeholder needs and between these needs and those of the destination, this would be based on a much more thorough, informed and, hopefully, sensitive process.

The next section outlines the conceptual basis of the STREM framework, briefly explaining each step and reviewing its characteristics, required inputs and expected outputs.

#### **4.3 Conceptual steps in the Stakeholder and Resource Management (STREM) framework**

This section reviews the purpose and characteristics of each of the steps of the STREM framework. The framework's thirteen steps are presented in Figure 4.1. The complete STREM framework will not be evaluated in detail in this study, as the present focus is on the key first three steps of the Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA), which in turn is contained within the STREM framework. The subsequent steps of the STREM framework are intended to be carried out by the managers charged with assessing and implementing the tourist destination's specific management proposals. The STREM framework will only be fully implemented when there are specific management proposals, as indicated in the fourth step of the STA framework. The later stages of the STREM framework involve the lead managers or other specialists in assessing the conditions of specific resources in a natural destination, and the managers or decision-makers establishing their preferences for specific management proposals. The implementation of the STREM framework and the fourth step of the STA framework were thus beyond the scope of this study. Instead, this



**Figure 4.1**

Stakeholder and Resource Management Framework (STREM)

study examines only the first three steps of the STA framework. The author adopted a role similar to a consultant working for the lead managers, and then he identified the affected stakeholders and evaluated their management preferences. It is intended that the resulting findings could be used by the lead managers involved in management decision-making.

The first four steps of the STREM framework identify the stakeholders affected by management proposals for tourism in a natural area, and they assess their resource needs and preferences. The premise is that this information can assist managers to develop management proposals with a greater chance of success and which are less likely to lead to conflict.

The STREM framework adapts the management proposals to address the views of stakeholders so that this increases their likely support, or at least diminishes their likely resistance, to the resulting management initiatives. The first four steps of the STREM framework constitute the Stakeholder Assessment (STA) Framework, which is explained in detail in the next section.

The fifth step of the STREM framework, resource assessment, seeks to establish a base line of the current state of the destination resources and of the legal and policy framework that affects its management. The resource assessment provides a reference point from which to start management actions. The sixth step, the formulation of management objectives, requires the stakeholders to articulate exactly what they are seeking to achieve through the management process. That is, what are the conditions they consider desirable for the destination, and these conditions are expressed as management objectives. The seventh step, the selection of resource condition indicators, requires that lead or process managers establish how the previously formulated management objectives and their associated desirable conditions would be measured, thus providing a way to monitor the efficiency of the management actions. The eighth step, the setting of standards for the resource condition indicators, provides stakeholders with an opportunity to reach a compromise between their resource needs and the conservation needs of the destination through an explicit process, with this process encouraging them to decide what

conditions are deemed acceptable for the area's resources. Steps nine and ten assess for conformity between current and desired resource conditions and identify the causes of any non-conformity in condition standards. These two steps help to determine if the destination's conditions are acceptable and identify the reasons why they may not be so. Step 11, the selection of management alternatives, and step 12, their implementation, seek to identify and implement the specific mechanisms to achieve the desired conditions for the destination. Finally, step 13, monitoring of the condition indicators, assesses the efficiency of the management proposal in achieving its objectives.

#### **4.4 Aims and characteristics of the Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA)**

The Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA) is a framework for the identification and analysis of stakeholders, and it is designed to work within the broader framework of natural resource management by objectives (STREM). The STA framework assists in the identification of resource management planning objectives. It does this by identifying stakeholders relevant to a natural resource management issue and then consulting with these stakeholders through interviews. This consultation can take place at all stages in the process, and in that respect it differs from the public consultation steps of other visitor management frameworks, where consultation takes place only at the beginning or the end of the decision-making process. The application of the STA framework is intended to include those stakeholders affected by the management of tourism and natural resources in areas where a tradition of public participation does not exist, or where there are significant obstacles to this participation. Interviews are easier to conduct than many other forms of consultation, particularly in places where there is little experience of public meetings or of joint working on a steering group. The researcher or consultant conducting the interviews can also ensure that the diversity of stakeholders affected by the issues are involved in the interviewing process, and such involvement may be far less easy to secure with other consultation techniques. Thus, interviews can be an extremely effective form of stakeholder consultation in relation to tourism planning in less developed countries, where other methods

of public involvement are less likely to work. Hence, this framework facilitates the formulation and implementation of tourism and resource management proposals based on the views of various stakeholders. It also assesses the potential influence that the affected stakeholders are likely to have on the planning proposal and on its outcomes.

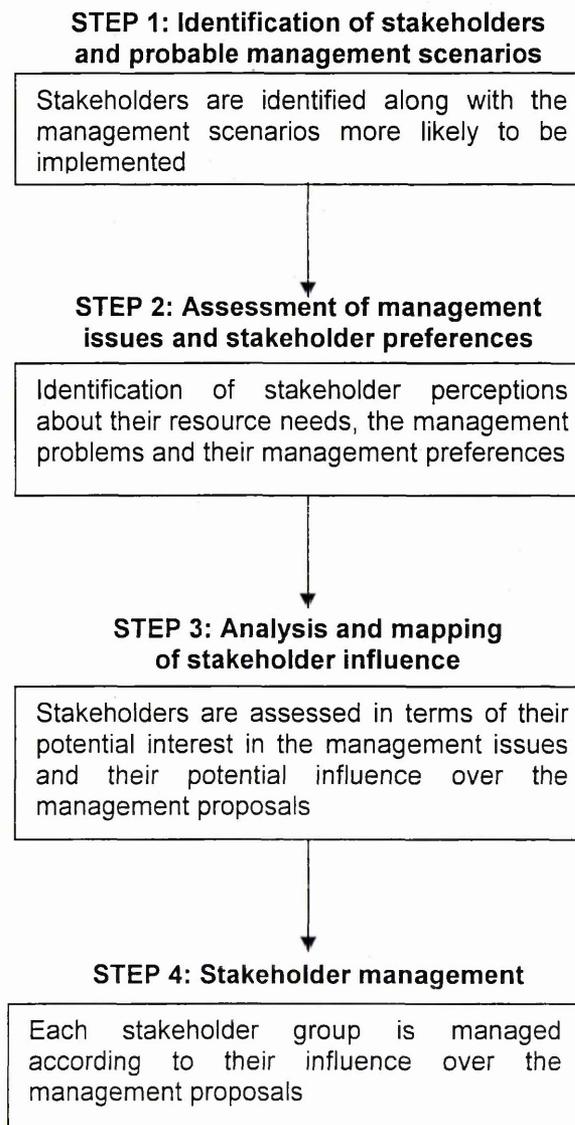
The main goal of the Stakeholder Assessment Framework is to facilitate the application of stakeholder analysis, consultation and management in the context of proposals for tourism and natural resource management. This goal is achieved through four more specific objectives, namely:

- To facilitate the identification of all stakeholders affected by proposals for tourism and natural resource management.
- To identify the needs, interests and preferences of the stakeholders relevant to the management proposals, particularly in relation to the area's natural resources.
- To assess and classify the potential influence of each stakeholder in relation to the management proposals, using a stakeholder influence map.
- To develop management decisions that incorporate the identified stakeholder needs, interests and preferences and to achieve a compromise between them and the destination's conservation needs as perceived by the stakeholders.

This research partially evaluates the STA framework by examining the case of Archipelago Los Roques National Park, thus relating the framework to a specific resource management situation and its related stakeholders. All the objectives proposed for this research are included within the first three steps of the STA framework (identification of stakeholders and likely management scenarios; assessment of management issues and stakeholders preferences; analysis and mapping of stakeholder influence). The STA framework constitutes the first four steps of the STREM framework, but the fourth step of stakeholder management is not discussed at length as it is not central to the study objectives.

## 4.5 Conceptual steps in the Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA)

The Stakeholder Assessment Framework consists of four separate but interconnected steps, which guide the identification, assessment and management of the stakeholders affected by proposals for tourism and resource management. These steps have been labelled here as: 1) identification of stakeholders and likely management scenarios; 2) assessment of management issues and stakeholders preferences; 3) analysis and mapping of stakeholder influence; and 4) stakeholder management. The discussion here considers the conceptual background to the first three of these steps, and it also reviews the goals, required inputs and expected outcomes for each of them. Figure 4.2 summarises the four steps of the Stakeholder Assessment Framework.



**Figure 4.2:** Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA).

#### **4.5.1. STEP 1: identification of stakeholders and likely management scenarios**

This step identifies an initial or core group of stakeholders affected by the management of tourism and natural resources in a destination, who then in turn identify other relevant stakeholders. The identification of additional stakeholders is done through the use of a modified "rolling snowball" technique (Bryson and Crosby, 1992; Finn, 1996; Rowley, 1997). In this process, all stakeholders initially identified by the researcher are asked to name additional relevant stakeholders, who are then interviewed. This step also helps to identify the management scenarios that are most likely to be implemented in the destination, which are then used as a reference to compare the preferred management options of stakeholders. The end goal of this step is to identify the stakeholders affected by management proposals and also the management scenarios that are most likely to be implemented.

There are several arguments for involving the stakeholders affected by management proposals for tourism and natural resource management. According to Gray (1989), involving stakeholders in decision-making increases the opportunities for possible solutions and also the available resources to deal with a common problem. It can also help to eliminate or reduce the conflicts surrounding the problem if it promotes agreement about shared rules to deal with them. Further, several commentators contend that when problems are large or complex, or their solution is out of the reach of any single entity, then defining and resolving the problem can be difficult due to the complexity of ensuring that all relevant actors are involved (Bryson and Crosby, 1992; Finn, 1996). This is often the case for resource overuse issues and resource management proposals in tourist destinations. In order to achieve a clear definition of the problem and to involve all the necessary actors, Finn (1996) suggests identifying stakeholders using a "snowballing" process as an initial step toward then involving them in the problem solving process. Rowley (1997) also proposes the use of a snowball process to identify stakeholder networks and to decide which stakeholders to include in decision-making. This study uses an adaptation of Rowley's proposals for stakeholder identification, as his

proposals could be easily coupled with additional criteria for the determination of a stakeholder network boundary.

When carrying out a snowballing process it may be difficult to decide where to set the limit to halt the stakeholder identification process. Rowley proposes the use of three criteria developed by Knoke (1994, cited by Rowley, 1997:105) to define a stakeholder network boundary, and hence to decide who should be considered a stakeholder. These three criteria are: (1) specific actor attributes, (2) the types of relationships under study, and (3) the central issue or event providing the study setting. The third criterion determines the stakeholders by their relation to a particular event or issue which brings them together, and this criterion is used in the STA framework to define the stakeholder network limits and hence which stakeholders to include. The central issue or event defining the stakeholders in this research is the modification of the management of tourism and natural resources in a natural destination.

This step of the STA framework was initiated by reviewing previous management documents, workshop proceedings, lists of permit holders and registered users, and census information from related administrative authorities. Additionally, interviews were then carried out in order to identify other stakeholders through snowballing. The typical respondents selected for these interviews were area managers, elected officials with authority over the resources, managers of companies using the resources and group representatives with interests in the area. The representatives of institutions with most management authority in the area were also interviewed to identify likely management scenarios. On completion, this step resulted in a list of stakeholders affected by tourism and resource management proposals for the natural area, along with the management scenarios most likely to be implemented.

The implementation of this step has three distinct stages: first, the review of information and initial identification of stakeholders; second, the identification of likely management scenarios; and third, the implementation of a snowballing process for stakeholder identification. The criteria employed to implement each

of these stages are now explained, as well as how these criteria relate to the goals of this step and of the STA framework. The initial identification of stakeholders requires a review of existing management documentation to identify potential stakeholder groups and also the gatekeepers and key actors within them who can help to identify other possible stakeholders using the snowballing process. This stage uses criteria **A1** for stakeholder identification and criteria **A2** for key actor or gatekeeper identification, and these criteria are explained in Table 4.1. During this step's second stage, the gatekeepers who are familiar with the destination's management and resource conditions are interviewed to identify likely management objectives and scenarios. These individuals are identified through the use of criteria **A3** for decision-maker identification (Table 4.1).

After identifying a core stakeholder group, the third stage of this step then proceeds to identify other affected stakeholders using a "rolling snowball" interview, by asking these core stakeholders to identify other actors who are linked to them by specific types of relationships, as set out in criteria **A4**. If further stakeholders are identified during the interviews, these new stakeholders are in turn interviewed until few new actors are nominated, resulting in the construction of a network of relevant stakeholders based on the perceptions of its members. The nominated stakeholders are then screened with criteria **A1** for stakeholder identification and criteria **A5** for stakeholder network boundary delimitation. The snowballing is considered complete when any new nominated actors are screened out by criteria **A5**, and it is then assumed that all stakeholders to the management proposals have been identified. All stakeholders identified at the end of this step are classified as direct or indirect resource users according to the resource dependence criteria **A6**. Criteria **A4**, **A5** and **A6** are presented in Table 4.1.

With the completion of the STA framework's first step it is assumed that all stakeholders affected by the destination's management proposals have been identified and classified according to their degree of resource dependence. The data produced in this step is then fed into the STA framework second step, the assessment of management issues and stakeholder preferences.

**Table 4.1.**Criteria used in step 1 of the STA framework (identification of stakeholders and likely management scenarios).

CRITERIA	PURPOSE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CRITERIA
A1	<p>Criteria for stakeholder group identification (any one or more of the following criteria):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They currently use the resources.</li> <li>• They have authority or legal rights over the resources.</li> <li>• They regulate access to the resources.</li> <li>• They currently derive a benefit (monetary, material or otherwise) from the resources.</li> <li>• They are affected by the use of the resources or any change in their management.</li> <li>• They have a perceived or expressed right or interest in the resources or the activities associated with them (civil groups, NGOs, scientific institutions).</li> </ul>
A2	<p>Criteria for identification of gatekeepers or key actors in each stakeholder group (any one or more of the following criteria):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is an elected official or recognised representative of a user group.</li> <li>• Is the top managing figure of an institution with a mandate or legal right over the resources.</li> <li>• Is the person who sets, distributes or organises access quotas to the resources.</li> <li>• Is a representative of a group with a perceived or expressed right or interest in the resources.</li> <li>• Is the manager or representative of a company whose income depends partly or fully on using the resources, either directly or indirectly.</li> </ul>
A3	<p>Criteria for the identification of key decision-makers that can help identify likely management scenarios (any one or more of the following criteria):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The informant's organisation has a legal mandate over the destination's resources and has used it actively.</li> <li>• The informant's organisation has had a leading role in any planning or decision-making concerning the destination resources.</li> <li>• The informant is a key advisor for an organisation that has a leading role in planning or decision making for the destination.</li> </ul>
A4	<p>Criteria for identifying other stakeholders who are related to the previously identified stakeholders. These are groups with whom the previously identified stakeholders are related, and who are affected by the use of the resources or any change in its management, and meet any one or more of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They depend on goods or services provided by the other stakeholders, or produce goods or services that are mostly consumed by these stakeholders.</li> <li>• They create legal or operational constraints on these stakeholders.</li> <li>• They exchange information with these stakeholders.</li> <li>• They have interacted, or are in alliance with these stakeholders to tackle a problem.</li> </ul> <p>(For the purposes of A4, a person or group will be defined as being affected by the use of the resources or any change in its management if they meet any of the criteria A1 for stakeholder identification).</p>
A5	<p>Criteria for delimiting the stakeholder network boundary (any one or more of the following criteria):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The stakeholder is an end-of-chain stakeholder, that is, their links have already been mentioned by other previously interviewed stakeholders, thus implying that the interviewee is the last stakeholder in that particular link (modified from Rowley, 1997).</li> <li>• The stakeholder is not affected by the use of the resources or any change in their management.</li> </ul>
A6	<p>Criteria for determining direct and indirect resource users, this being a classification of resource dependency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct users are those whose functioning, operations or well-being depend on, or is directly generated by, resource use.</li> <li>• Indirect users are those whose functioning, operations or well-being depend on a third-party who is a direct resource user.</li> </ul>

#### **4.5.2. STEP 2: assessment of management issues and stakeholder preferences**

This step assesses the perceived resource needs and preferred management options of each stakeholder group. This necessitates three distinct stages, the first being to determine the relevant stakeholders' perceptions about which destination resources are valuable *per se* and which are being used by tourism. The second stage establishes stakeholder perceptions of the effects of tourism on the area's resources and what problems exist in relation to their management. In the third stage, stakeholder management preferences are elicited.

The stakeholders' perception about which destination resources are valued and used by tourism is required because managers clearly need to identify these resources before determining what constitutes an appropriate use for them. Trist (1983, cited by Gray, 1989) contends that decision-taking processes in resource management require that it is the stakeholders of the problem domain who define what constitutes the problem or issue to be solved. The STA framework provides stakeholders with an opportunity to determine which resources are important and should be managed. Further, it also provides an opportunity for the problem domain to be defined at the beginning of the process in a sufficiently broad way that it might accommodate the various interests and preferences of the diverse stakeholders (Gray, 1989; Gregory and Keeney, 1994).

In order to determine which are the valued resources in a destination, the STA framework builds on the concept of environmental capital (CAG Consultants, 1997), by conveying the concept of the environment as a collection of assets that can provide a continuous and sustainable flow of benefit or services for human well-being. The environmental capital approach assesses the services that natural or environmental resources can provide based on human perceptions, as distinct from an approach that evaluates resources in terms of them having some innate or inherent value independent of human perceptions. This approach attempts to establish which characteristics or attributes of a place matter in terms of human perceptions of sustainability. It asks how important these place attributes or resources are thought to be, to

whom and why, how they might be replaced or substituted, and how much of those attributes should be available in the future. The analytic criteria developed for this step builds on the concept of environmental capital (CAG Consultants, 1997) and shares its technocentric approach (Henry and Jackson, 1996; Sharpley, 2000), as in the STA framework the resources of a natural area are valued according to the perception of the stakeholders, most of which are also the area's resource users. However, instead of looking for a single, manager-led, definition of which destination resources are valued and should be preserved, the STA framework uses the objectives and values of the various stakeholders to guide the formulation of the preferred management scenarios. This builds on the approach suggested by Gregory and Keeney (1994), as stakeholders are consulted in order to identify their various values and preferences, and these are used to establish the planning options for decision-making. This step also accords with Ritchie's (1998) assertion that all stakeholders' views about valued resources have validity as they are based on their individual value systems.

This step is implemented by interviewing relevant stakeholders previously established in the first step of the STA framework. Each stakeholder is asked to identify the destination's resources, which resources are being used and affected by tourism, which are the tourism-related issues and problems to be solved, what are their own resource needs, and what are their preferred management options. There are several outputs of this step, the first being a list of the destination's attributes that are perceived as valuable or important by the stakeholders, as well as information about which of these attributes are being used and affected by tourism. This step also identifies stakeholder perceptions concerning the issues or problems arising from tourism's use of the area's resources, as well as views on their own resource needs. Finally, this step also identifies the preferred management options or scenarios for the destination. The criteria used to establish this information are now detailed.

Using criteria **B1** to **B4** as guidance (Table 4.2), each stakeholder is asked to identify the destination resources considered valuable and those used by tourism, along with the problems related to their use. The stakeholders'

resources needs are also identified. The destination's resources are identified with criteria **B1**, the resources used by tourism with criteria **B2**, the resource management problems with criteria **B3**, and the stakeholders' resource needs are identified with criteria **B4** (Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2.** Criteria used in step 2 of the STA framework (assessment of management issues and stakeholders' preferences).

CRITERIA	PURPOSE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CRITERIA
B1	Criteria for resource identification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The perceived importance and value of the destination.</li> <li>• The physical, biological and social attributes that contribute to the destination's perceived importance and value.</li> <li>• The perceived importance and value of the destination's physical, biological and social attributes.</li> <li>• Assessment of the reasons why stakeholders perceive these attributes as important or valuable.</li> </ul>
B2	Criteria for identification of resources used or affected by tourism activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The perceived importance and value of the destination for tourism.</li> <li>• The physical, biological and social attributes that contribute to the perceived importance of the destination for tourism.</li> <li>• The perceived importance and value of the destination's physical, biological and social attributes for tourism.</li> <li>• Attributes perceived as being used or affected by tourism.</li> </ul>
B3	Criteria for the identification of issues or problems related to resource use or the effects of tourism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The perceived conflicts between tourism and the perceived importance and value of the destination.</li> <li>• The perceived conflicts between the conservation of destination attributes and their current use, including the effects of tourism.</li> <li>• The perceived conflicts between tourism and other activities using or affecting the destination attributes.</li> <li>• The resource management problems as perceived by the stakeholder.</li> </ul>
B4	Criteria for the identification of stakeholder resource needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The perceived advantages and benefits for stakeholders of the current resource use situation.</li> <li>• The perceived disadvantages and costs for stakeholders of the current resource use situation.</li> <li>• Stakeholder patterns of access to the resources (e.g. timing, seasonality).</li> <li>• Stakeholder access to alternative resources.</li> <li>• Stakeholder ability to accommodate change in their resource access and use.</li> <li>• Local and regional availability of resources used by stakeholders.</li> </ul>
B5	Criteria for the identification of stakeholders' preferences on resource management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder perceptions of what constitutes an undesirable or adverse management situation.</li> <li>• Stakeholder formulation of preferred management scenarios, based on their objectives and values.</li> <li>• Perceived conflicts between the destination's likely management scenario and the stakeholder's preferred management scenario.</li> </ul>

Criteria **B5** (Table 4.2) is used to identify the stakeholders' preferred management options, as well as any potential conflict between these preferences and the likely management scenarios obtained in the previous step. The application of these criteria helps to identify stakeholders' perceptions

about resources, tourism-related problems and associated trade-offs, resource needs and preferred management options.

The information generated in this step constitutes a vital input for the third step of the STA framework, where stakeholders' preferences are analysed and mapped. This information is critical to define what constitutes a stake in the resource management proposal and the problems or issues to be addressed. Part of the information generated in this step, on resource dependence and needs, is also required to assess the stakeholders' legitimacy, a key component of the next step. The information about resource needs and preferred management options is also an essential input for the generation of resource and stakeholder management measures.

#### **4.5.3. Step 3: analysis and mapping of stakeholder influence**

This step provides an assessment of the attributes of previously identified stakeholders, and assists in developing a matrix of their potential interest and influence over the destination's management proposals. Each stakeholder group identified in Step 1 is assessed in terms of three attributes: their 1) legitimacy; 2) the urgency of their claims in relation to the destination resources, and 3), their power to influence the management proposals. Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997) argue that legitimacy and power constitute the core attributes of the stakeholder identification process, but they see these as complementary or intersecting attributes. They suggest that urgency, defined as the degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate attention, should also be accounted for when identifying stakeholders. Hence, they suggest that a stakeholder can only be classified as such after its legitimacy, power and urgency attributes have been analysed. These three criteria are adopted for stakeholder analysis in the present framework. Table 4.3 summarises the specific criteria used in this research for stakeholder analysis.

**Table 4.3.** Criteria used for stakeholder analysis in this research.

<b>LEGITIMACY</b>	Generalised perception or assumption that the actions of a stakeholder are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions.
<b>POWER</b>	The ability of a given stakeholder to bring about the outcomes they desire, even with the opposition of other stakeholders.
<b>URGENCY</b>	The degree to which a stakeholder's claims call for immediate attention.

The STA framework applies the concept of legitimacy as used by Suchman (1995, cited by Lawrence, Wickings and Phillips, 1997), who defines this stakeholder attribute as the appropriacy or desirability of the actions of an individual within a socially constructed system of norms or values. Mitchell, Agle and Wood's (1997) definition of power is also used in this framework. It is considered to be the ability of an actor who possesses this power to bring about the outcomes it desires, or the ability to get another actor to do something that otherwise it would not do. For the purposes of the STA framework, legitimacy is considered to be the dominant or most influential attribute, followed by power. This decision is based on the argument that stakeholder analysis should lead to the empowerment of its participants, particularly those with low power and high legitimacy. This position corresponds with the views of Mark and Shotland (1985). However, the competing and overlapping nature of these two attributes is acknowledged.

In order to produce a stakeholder analysis matrix, the STA framework uses a modified version of the stakeholder classification suggested by Finn (1996) and Eden (1996), where stakeholders are classified according to the importance of their stake and their interest in the issue. Finn (1996) suggests a graphic process to visualise the stakeholders' potential influence, based on concentric circles and lines of influence, which result in an "influence map". Eden (1996) also uses interest and power criteria to assess the characteristics of a stakeholder related to its potential attitudes on an issue. The purpose of his analysis is to identify those actors who can support or sabotage a strategic intent, and then to identify the strategic options that arise for managing the issue in relation to the anticipated stakeholder dynamics.

The STA framework builds on proposals by Eden (1996) and Finn (1996) to produce a stakeholder influence and interest matrix, as this provides a meaningful categorisation of stakeholders affected by resource management proposals. The matrix proposed in the STA framework uses stakeholder attributes and their relationships with the destination resources as indicators of the stakeholders' interest in, and influence on the management proposals for the area. In turn, this matrix can be used to design management measures directed at individual stakeholder groups, according to their potential influence and interest over the management proposals. It can also be used as an empowerment tool with those stakeholder groups with high legitimacy but who, on their own, lack the power to influence management proposals. This empowerment can take the form of selective analysis, targeting, capacity building or selective involvement of less powerful groups.

The main input for this step is a list of stakeholders affected by the tourism and resource management proposals, classified according to their level of resource use and the number of stakeholder attributes that they meet. This step provides two significant results, the first being an assessment of the stakeholders' legitimacy, urgency and power attributes, along with their relationships with the resources and other stakeholders. The second product is a stakeholder influence map, which describes each stakeholder's position within a matrix of interest and potential influence. This step uses specific criteria for the assessment of the stakeholder attributes of legitimacy, power and urgency, for the classification of all stakeholders according to their interest and influence, and for their positioning in an interest and influence matrix. Details are now provided of these criteria, and of how they relate both to the specific goal of this step and to the STA framework.

The attributes of each stakeholder are assessed according to criteria **C1**, **C2** and **C3** for legitimacy, urgency and power (Table 4.4). These criteria assess how each stakeholder relates to the destination's resources and other stakeholders, as well as how much they depend on those resources and other stakeholders. The criteria **C4** for the assessment of stakeholder interest relates to whether a stakeholder's claim has significant urgency or whether the

stakeholder is a direct resource user, thus assessing the stakeholder's degree of interest in the management of a natural area (Table 4.4). The characteristics of direct resource use and urgency were chosen as the two indicators of stakeholder interest because the urgency attribute is usually linked to a high degree of dependency on the area's resources, and this characteristic makes stakeholders more dependent and vulnerable to any change in the resources or their management.

**Table 4.4.** Criteria used in step 3 of the STA framework (analysis and mapping of stakeholder influence).

CRITERIA	PURPOSE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CRITERIA
C1	<p>Criteria for assessment of stakeholder legitimacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The stakeholder is currently using the resources.</li> <li>• The stakeholder has a long history or tradition of resource use.</li> <li>• The stakeholder use is accepted in current managerial, legal or cultural resource use practises.</li> <li>• The stakeholder has legal rights to the resources, even if they do not currently enforce them.</li> <li>• The stakeholder currently derives a benefit from the resources (monetary, material or otherwise).</li> <li>• The stakeholder has a perceived or expressed interest in the resources, or activities associated with them (civil groups, NGOs, scientific institutions).</li> </ul>
C2	<p>Criteria for assessment of stakeholder urgency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is difficult for the stakeholder to accommodate changes in resource access and use.</li> <li>• It is difficult for the stakeholder to access alternative resources.</li> <li>• The stakeholder depends on specific resources with limited local and regional availability.</li> <li>• The stakeholder is highly dependent on the resources during a particular time or season.</li> <li>• The stakeholder's livelihood or functions will be rapidly and negatively affected if the current resource use patterns are not modified.</li> </ul>
C3	<p>Criteria for assessment of stakeholder power:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The stakeholder has legal control of the resources, even if they do not enforce this control.</li> <li>• The stakeholder has in the past set access or use quotas for the resources, or currently does so by legal, indirect or coercive means.</li> <li>• The absence or behaviour of this particular stakeholder affects the livelihood or well-being of other stakeholders.</li> <li>• The stakeholder has been or is involved in an aspect of resource management (consultation, decision-taking, overseeing or regulation).</li> <li>• The stakeholder has ignored or sabotaged management measures in the past, or threatens to do so.</li> <li>• The stakeholder has influenced legislation or resource use patterns in a way that gives them privileges over other stakeholders, or potentially can do so.</li> <li>• The stakeholder has encouraged other stakeholders to support their claims, or is capable of doing so.</li> <li>• Other stakeholders perceive a particular stakeholder as powerful, or non-accountable in their actions or behaviour.</li> </ul>
C4	<p>Criteria for assessment of stakeholder interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A stakeholder is considered to have high interest if they meet at least one urgency attribute or is a direct resource user.</li> <li>• A stakeholder is considered to have low interest if they do not meet any urgency attribute and is an indirect resource user.</li> </ul>
C5	<p>Criteria for assessment of stakeholder influence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A stakeholder is considered to have high influence if they meet more than 3 power attributes and more than 3 legitimacy attributes.</li> <li>• A stakeholder is considered to have low influence if they meet 3 or less power attributes or 3 or less legitimacy attributes.</li> </ul>

Criteria **C5** (Table 4.4) identifies stakeholder influence by linking it to the possession of legitimacy and power attributes. For a stakeholder to be considered capable of influencing the management of a natural area and its resources, then it needs to meet more than three power and legitimacy criteria. The attribute of legitimacy was chosen as indicative of potential influence over a management proposal because it includes the legal right of a stakeholder to use the area's resources or to participate in its management. The fact that an area's legal framework grants stakeholders the ability to participate in their management is likely to give them the ability to influence its decision-making processes. Likewise, the stakeholder attribute of power describes a stakeholder's ability to participate in, and to influence the management process, even if such participation is not recognised by the legal framework regulating the natural area. For the purpose of this study, a cut-off level of three power and legitimacy criteria was arbitrarily chosen before a stakeholder was considered to be influential. The reason for selecting this cut-off level was simply that it is half the total number of six legitimacy criteria that any given stakeholder potentially can meet. In the opinion of the researcher, a stakeholder meeting a minimum of three legitimacy and three power criteria is likely to have the capacity to influence the management processes of a natural area. The capacity of a stakeholder to influence these processes relates to their power attributes, that is according to the stakeholder's political or economic impact on decision-making processes; or in the case of their legitimacy, by the stakeholder's legal influence on an area's management, as granted by the area's regulations.

In order to assess each stakeholder's potential influence on the management process, a matrix of potential influence and interest was developed according to criterion **C6** (Table 4.5 and Figure 4.3). For the practical purposes of applying the matrix, a high interest stakeholder was defined as having a high stake in the management of the area. In practice, high interest stakeholders perceive themselves as open either to gain or lose important economic, political or social assets, or else perceive their well-being to be at risk as a consequence of the management proposals. In contrast, low interest stakeholders do not perceive themselves or their well-being to be at risk

because of the management proposals or their consequences. In turn, a high influence stakeholder was defined as one that has enough power and legitimacy to affect the formulation and implementation of an area's management proposals, either by supporting or opposing the plan and its intended goals. Conversely, a low influence stakeholder would lack both the power and the legitimacy to have an effect over the management proposals for an area. Criteria C6 thus classifies stakeholders into four possible categories, these being A) participant-active; B) participant-dependent; C) non-participant-passive; and D) non-participant active. These categories, modified from Eden's (1996) stakeholder classification, name those stakeholders with high interest as participants, and those with high influence as active. Those stakeholders with low interest are denominated non-participants and those with low influence are referred as either dependent, if they have high interest, or passive if they have low interest. These categories can be represented in a modified version of Eden's matrix of stakeholder collaboration, which is presented in Figure 4.3. below.

**Table 4.5.** Criteria C6 for stakeholder classification in an interest and influence matrix (Modified from Eden, 1996).

STAKEHOLDER INTEREST AND INFLUENCE CATEGORY	CATEGORY CHARACTERISTICS
Participant-dependent	Stakeholder with high interest but low influence
Participant-active	Stakeholder with high interest and high influence
Non participant-passive	Stakeholder with low interest and low influence
Non participant-active	Stakeholder with low interest but high influence

**Figure 4.3.** Interest and influence matrix for stakeholder classification within the STA framework.

HIGH INTEREST	PARTICIPANT-DEPENDENT	PARTICIPANT-ACTIVE
LOW INTEREST	NON PARTICIPANT-PASSIVE	NON PARTICIPANT-ACTIVE
	LOW INFLUENCE	HIGH INFLUENCE

At the end of this step all relevant stakeholders are assessed in terms of their attributes and potential influence on the destination's management proposals. The description of stakeholder characteristics produced in this step is a critical input for the design of resource and stakeholder management measures.

#### **4.5.4. STEP 4: stakeholder management**

The fourth step of the STA framework, stakeholder management, consists of the design by managers of stakeholder and resource management strategies for a tourist destination. In this step, both the stakeholders' management preferences and the area's management proposals are integrated to achieve a compromise between the needs of the area and those of the stakeholders. Although this step was conceptually developed in the STA framework, its methodological development is considered to be outside the scope of this study, as it should be carried out by the decision-makers applying the framework. For this reason this step is not examined here. However, an outline of its design is provided in order to help the reader in placing the framework for stakeholder assessment (the STA framework) into the wider framework for resource management (the STREM framework).

The aim of this step is to establish a set of management objectives and measures to be applied in the destination in order to avoid the overuse of its resources by tourism, whilst also producing the least adverse consequences for the stakeholders. A related goal is to generate alternative management approaches that could help to enlist maximum stakeholder support or at least to reduce their opposition to the management proposals.

The design of this step assumes that the destination's management proposals are to be directed toward the sustainable use of resources by tourism, or at least toward reduced resource over-use, in a way that will maximise stakeholder support. It is assumed that this support is most likely to be gained by proposing management options that, according to the perception of the stakeholders themselves, are intended to maximise benefits and

minimise adverse consequences. However, differing management alternatives can still be generated to achieve those goals and these may gain differing degrees of stakeholder support or opposition. This step proposes a strategy for the identification of resource and stakeholder management alternatives that resembles the approach suggested by Harrison and St. John (1994), in which the current management situation is compared with the proposed management options. This comparison assesses which of the stakeholders' resource needs and management preferences are currently being met, and which needs and preferences could be met by the new, more sustainable, management proposals. Then, strategies and options are devised that will help in meeting the stakeholders' unsatisfied needs and preferences, while those management aspects that enable stakeholders to satisfy their current resource needs are revised and strengthened.

Ideally the management options generated in this step of the STA framework should avoid adverse consequences for the destination's resources, ensure the continuation of most stakeholder activities and solve perceived problems. However, the STREM framework, and indeed this step of the STA framework, is fundamentally manager-led. Although there are numerous consultation inputs by the stakeholders during the application of the framework, the overall management emphasis of both the STA and STREM frameworks is directed toward the promotion of sustainable resource use, and there must be recognition that this priority may override individual stakeholder preferences. This step also proposes the generation of stakeholder management measures in order to increase stakeholder support and reduce their opposition to the management proposals, using an approach similar to that of Nutt and Backoff's stakeholder management strategies (1982, cited by Bryson and Crosby, 1992).

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has developed a conceptual framework for the identification of stakeholders affected by tourism and resource management proposals, and for the assessment of their needs and preferences in relation to the destination's resources. In addition, this framework establishes a process to

analyse, classify and map the influence of these stakeholders in relation to the management proposals. The design of this conceptual framework combines natural resource management and visitor management issues with stakeholder analysis. The resulting STREM framework provides guidance on the formulation of management actions directed at maintaining natural resource use at acceptable levels, with these levels defined according to the perceptions of relevant stakeholders.

Within the STREM framework, a second related conceptual framework was developed to identify and assess the stakeholders affected by the tourism and resource management proposals. This Stakeholder Assessment (STA) framework uses stakeholder identification and analysis as its primary mechanism to identify the stakeholders relevant to the management proposals for a natural area and it includes their concerns in the design of the management objectives for the area. The approach used in the STA framework for the identification and analysis of stakeholders is a radical departure from the public involvement strategies used in other visitor planning and management frameworks. Both the STREM and STA frameworks were developed deductively by integrating existing literature on carrying capacity, resource management and stakeholder identification, analysis and management.

It is thought that the frameworks will have practical value for stakeholders with an interest in tourism planning and natural resource management in natural areas, such as Los Roques National Park. They should also have particular relevance for other tourism areas in developing countries where consultation and collaboration is limited and where attention needs to focus on developing the conditions to encourage these processes. The STA framework is intended to be of particular value for planners who want to identify the stakeholders affected by a planning issue and their views of that issue, and to take into consideration those views in the planning process. Table 4.6 summarises the main characteristics of the STREM framework, as well as the related processes of public participation in the decision-making process.

**Table 4.6.** Overview of the main characteristics of the STREM framework.

OBJECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To manage natural destinations in ways that meet the needs of users and that are more likely to avoid resource overuse by focusing management on the views and needs of destination stakeholders. It does this by seeking compromises between the stakeholders' views and the conservation needs of the destination in ways that are acceptable to the stakeholders.</li> </ul>
MAIN FEATURES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It provides a structured process of stakeholder identification, where the stakeholders themselves identify the parties that are affected by the proposals for management in the natural area.</li> <li>It increases consideration of stakeholders' views in decision-making in places with limited potential for participation, such as in less developed countries.</li> </ul>
GOALS OF STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It identifies the stakeholders affected by proposals for the management of the natural area.</li> <li>It identifies the resource needs and management preferences of the relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>It incorporates stakeholder needs and preferences in the decision-making processes.</li> </ul>
MAIN FEATURES OF STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depending on the approach taken by the process managers, it can range from non-binding consultation to functional participation, with decisions validated with the affected stakeholders.</li> <li>A process of stakeholder identification, analysis and interviews replaces the less structured forms of consultation used in similar approaches.</li> </ul>
MECHANISM TO IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders are identified through a structured process of snowballing, with this involving interviews and with the interviewees deciding which stakeholders are relevant for the management process.</li> </ul>
MECHANISM TO INCORPORATE STAKEHOLDER INPUTS IN DECISION-MAKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews are used to identify the resource needs of stakeholders and to evaluate their preferred management options.</li> <li>Resource needs and management preferences are compared with the feasible management options, and a compromise is sought between them.</li> </ul>
DRAWBACKS OF THE PROPOSED STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is manager-led.</li> <li>Managers own the information and processes.</li> </ul>

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the methodology developed and implemented for this research. It starts with a general perspective on the adequacy and suitability of the different methodologies available in tourism research, particularly in relation to qualitative methods, and it then reviews the specific methods employed in this research. The subsequent section discusses the application of case study methodology, with specific reference to the selection of the study area, this being the Los Roques National Park. Then there is a review of the use of in-depth interviews as the primary research instrument. Consideration is then given to the sampling framework used in this research, with the application of the snowball interview technique being explained. The way in which the interviews were carried out and the selection of the respondents are discussed also here. There is also an examination of the other data sources used in this study, namely the decision pathways questionnaire and various secondary information.

A later section of the chapter details the analysis of results, focusing on the general analytical approach adopted, the analysis of the results using a computer-based approach and the interpretation of the results. Finally, possible methodological limitations that may have affected the study outcome are discussed.

### 5.2 The research approach and strategy

#### 5.2.1. The scope and applicability of qualitative methods in science

Two approaches have traditionally been used to undertake research in social sciences. The most conventional approach is that of scientific method, which is based on assumptions that data in a scientific inquiry "*must yield proof or strong confirmation, in probability terms, of a theory or hypothesis in a research setting*" (Burns, 2000:4). Within this approach, the researchers'

ultimate goal is to formulate laws that account for a phenomenon and provide the basis for prediction and control, while assuming that it does so in an objective and reliable way, and which holds true in every instance and explains every occurrence of the phenomenon (Neuman, 1997; Robson, 1993). Conversely, the qualitative approach moves away from the search for generality and consistency of the scientific method, by stating that reality cannot be subsumed within a numerical classification, and it thus shifts the focus to the individual, and it stresses the validity of multiple meanings and holistic analysis (Babbie, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Stake, 1995). Qualitative research hinges on recognising the importance of the subjective, experiential perception of the world that human beings have. This approach attempts to understand events from the viewpoint of the participants by capturing what people say and do as a consequence of how they interpret the complexity of their world.

These two approaches to research in social science have generally been treated as rivals in the literature, with researchers using qualitative methods often finding themselves *"having to defend their methods because of the resistance posed by researchers that are ideologically committed to quantitative methods"* (Burns, 2000:11). Quantitative researchers often assume that, by being more 'accurate', their's is the best method to use in all research situations. They often expect that a qualitative inquiry should meet the same criteria of verifiability and replicability as quantitative research, and that it should thus demonstrate the reliability of its claims and the generality of its findings. Given that in qualitative research the participants' 'lifeworld' constitutes the field of inquiry, and that 'truth' within this context is bound to the perception and interpretation of each subject, then it can be argued that any attempt to emphasise the imperatives of science place unrealistic constraints on this type of research (Babbie, 1998; Goetz and LeCompte, 1984).

In fact, both qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry have potential advantages and disadvantages depending on the context where they are applied. These advantages and disadvantages are reviewed in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1.** Key advantages and disadvantages of qualitative and quantitative methods. (Modified from Allan and Skinner, 1991; Babbie, 1998; de Vaus, 1996; Goetz and LeCompte, 1984; Jamal and Hollinshead, 2001; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Moser and Kalton, 1971; Nachmias and Nachmias, 1981; Neuman, 1997; Rist, 1975; Robson, 1993; Shipman, 1997; Stake, 1995; Veal, 1997).

CHARACTERISTIC	QUANTITATIVE METHODS	QUALITATIVE METHODS
<b>ADVANTAGES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apparent precision and control</li> <li>• Lend themselves to statistical analysis and generalisation</li> <li>• Provide statistical reliability to the results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can deal with multiple, interacting influences</li> <li>• Deal with processes rather than consequences, and wholeness rather than independent variables</li> <li>• Enable the researcher to gain an insider's view and allow observation and documentation of the interactions, subtleties and complexities of subjects</li> <li>• They highlight possible relationships, causes and effects, and facilitate understanding of dynamic processes</li> </ul>
<b>DISADVANTAGES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not cope well with multiple, interacting influences</li> <li>• The focus on control and precision may lead to a loss of meaning and of understanding</li> <li>• An objective 'aura' is imposed on subjective choices</li> <li>• Rely on a fragmented and compartmentalised evaluation of issues, causing a simplification and distortion of reality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conditions and interactions that they assess can rarely be replicated</li> <li>• Generalisations cannot be made with any confidence.</li> <li>• Extensive time is required for all the stages of data collection and analysis</li> </ul>

After an initial period in which the characteristics of the qualitative and quantitative paradigms were debated, by the end of the 1970s a situation of understanding developed, where proponents of both approaches began to agree that neither is ideal, since on their own they cannot provide answers to all questions. This prompted Cronbach (1975) to suggest that there is more than one way to gain understanding of an issue and that, although qualitative and quantitative approaches offer different perspectives, neither of them exhaust the realm of 'truth' in relation to an issue. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches can have great value but can also present significant difficulties in their application to scientific inquiry. Thus it is suggested that it is up to the

researcher to decide, according to the issues studied and the research questions pursued, which approach is best suited to achieve the particular goals and objectives of the inquiry.

This study is focused on tourism and natural resource management issues, which are largely human and social phenomena, where most decisions are based on values and politics, and where the values and perceptions of actors might be influenced by their life story and past experiences. Some commentators have suggested that this type of situation, where the research deals with both formal and unstructured decision-making processes and relationships among individuals and organisations, can best be addressed with the use of qualitative approaches (Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Stake, 1995).

In this study the use of a qualitative approach, including a case study and in-depth interviews, had particular advantages over the use of quantitative methods. Some of these advantages arise from the *holistic* nature of the qualitative approach. By being case-oriented, it developed the contextuality of the issues under study, which helped to understand rather than to compare its subject matter. Another reason to take a qualitative stance in this study was that it provided an *empirical* approach, where the research was field-oriented and non-interventionist, and it emphasised observable phenomena, including observations by informants. Furthermore, by being *interpretative*, the approach allowed the researcher to be intuitive, which allowed for the recognition of relevant events and emerging issues that might otherwise have been lost. By being *emphatic*, the approach provided the researcher with the opportunity to focus on the actors, enabling the understanding of the values that framed their perceptions. The approach also enabled the researcher to assume an *emergent* and *responsive* attitude, which had a structured focus but that nonetheless was open to new developments and was aware of the risks involved in research with human subjects.

### **5.2.2. The research approach**

In order to adequately understand and interpret the perceptions of its subjects, this study adopted a constructivist approach (Guba and Lincoln,

1989). This approach provided the researcher with epistemological, ontological, and methodological advantages in a study of stakeholders affected by tourism and resource management issues. In terms of *epistemology* -the relationship between researcher and the subjects- this approach meant that the researcher interpreted the reality through the perception of the study's subjects. But at the same time it was recognised that the researcher's own perceptions would influence the way information was perceived and interpreted, and thus there was recognition of the interaction of the researcher with the respondents (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). In terms of *ontology* -the nature of reality- the constructivist paradigm provided the means to understand the different perspectives of various actors about visitor and resource management in the context of a specific area. The ontological posture adopted in this study recognises that different stakeholders will have differing and sometimes opposing perceptions of what constitute desirable management outcomes, as their perceptions will be coloured by the prism of their personal context, background and experience. In terms of *methodology* -the way the researcher develops knowledge- this approach had the advantage that it enabled the researcher to collect information on the perceptions of actors, but also to compare and contrast those perceptions. This allowed for an informed reconstruction of reality which provided answers to the research questions and also a basis from which to develop theory (Guba, 1990). The inherent flexibility of a constructivist approach also facilitated the implementation of different methods of inquiry and the employment of a triangulation approach that allowed the researcher to best conceptualise the respondents' perceptions.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) contend that a constructivist approach is particularly suited for the assessment of stakeholders, as it entails the identification and involvement of stakeholder groups. Arguably, this approach can also be used to empower or disempower stakeholder groups through selective assessment, and by devolving power to the respondents by giving them a voice and decisions over the design, implementation and interpretation of the inquiry and its results. Although this approach was not used in this study, as stakeholder participation mostly takes the form of consultation, some of the frameworks' analytical elements, such as the interest and influence matrix

developed for this study (section 4.5.3 of Chapter 3), can potentially be used to empower weak stakeholder groups with a high degree of legitimacy through selective targeting and involvement.

### **5.2.3. The research design**

Marshall and Rossman (1999) contend that a research design should lay out a plan for the conduct of a study, providing the researcher with direction on how to put into practice the strategies and processes that will allow the research to be operationalised and implemented.

The starting point for research design is to establish the broad research strategy. This could be deductive, where the research process starts with the formulation of theory, and then goes on to establish research propositions and to implement data collection in order to generate explanations about the causes of the phenomena under study (Blaikie, 1993; Sayer, 1992). Alternatively, the research design can take an inductive approach, where the analysis of relevant observations about the phenomena under study leads to the construction of a theory that systematically links such observations in a meaningful way (Blaikie, 1993; Marshall and Rossman, 1999). Thus, research can start by making observations or gathering data in order to develop explanations; or, alternatively, it can begin with a theory, hypothesis or a model which is then evaluated by making observations or gathering data. These different approaches can be described as the generation of theory (induction) or the application of theory (deduction).

The research strategy followed in this study was deductive → inductive → deductive, whereby a conceptual framework was initially developed deductively from the review and synthesis of two separate bodies of literature, these being the research on visitor management and on stakeholder theory. This framework sets out a mechanism for stakeholders to be included in decision-making for tourism and resource management. The study then goes on to assess and further refine this framework through an inductive approach, whereby a case study is selected and analysed in order to apply the framework in a specific visitor management situation. By implementing the framework in a

case study it is then possible to reflect on the results and to use these practical implications to adapt the framework through more conceptual work. However, it is recognised that inductive elements also had an early influence in the development of this study's framework, as the context of the problems of participation in developing countries was influenced by the researcher's own experiences and previous work, and the reading of literature related to the subject of inquiry in this study. Thus, it can be argued that up to some extent the development of the conceptual framework for this study followed a process of "induction → deduction → induction → deduction".

The next section reviews how conceptual frameworks can be used in social research to develop a theoretical body of knowledge, and how case studies can provide a basis for the further refinement and generalisation of these frameworks.

#### **5.2.4. The value of conceptual frameworks and case studies in social science research**

According to Stake (1995), social science research requires some form of conceptual organisation, such as a conceptual framework. This allows ideas to be formulated to advance understanding and to build conceptual bridges from established bodies of theory, and it helps in the formulation of cognitive structures to guide data gathering, interpretation and presentation. In essence, the goal of a conceptual framework is to allow the researcher to understand why certain social phenomena are occurring, and to facilitate this understanding by searching for relationships or causes and effects, and by expressing them through theory (Stake, 1995). The creation of a conceptual framework is based on the formulation of a set of theoretical principles that attempt to explain a particular aspect of a social phenomenon, usually in a way that can be generalised to other social processes that develop under the same principles. A sound conceptual framework should respond to five aspects of research design. These aspects are (1) What are the questions or issues that the research is trying to answer? (2) What theoretical propositions give focus or direction to the inquiry? (3) What is the unit of analysis to be studied? (4) How are the collected data to be linked to the theoretical propositions? And (5) Which criteria are to be

used to interpret the study findings? (Yin, 1993). In other words, the conceptual framework provides a self-contained "theory" of what is being studied. It acts as a guiding "map" for the study, aiding understanding and explanation of the phenomenon being studied. According to Yin (1993), a conceptual framework should provide the framework that defines the appropriate research design and data collection, and it should also be a vehicle for the generalisation of the study results.

In sum, conceptual frameworks function as theoretical extensions of a body of knowledge to facilitate the understanding of social phenomena, and they allow for the development of theory through its evaluation and generalisation in relation to different scenarios. One of the ways in which a conceptual framework can be assessed and expanded is through its application in a case study, where a real life situation is analysed and understood, and the analytical implications can then be used to assess, understand and generalise other similar scenarios. The conceptual framework that constitutes the deductive stage of this study is reviewed in detail in Chapter 4, while the reasons for the selection of the particular case study in the inductive stage are explained in Section 5.3. Background information about Los Roques National Park and Venezuela was provided in Chapter 3.

## **5.3 The Case Study**

### **5.3.1 Justification of the case study approach**

Case study research typically is employed to explore real life events over which the researcher has little control, and where the boundaries between context and the events are not readily evident (Yin, 1993:23). These events are explored using multiple sources of evidence, but in such a way that the holistic and meaningful attributes are preserved and can be understood by the researcher (Robson, 1993; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1993). This study opted for a case study approach as one of its main goals is to assess relationships between stakeholders in a resource management context, and this required a rich understanding of the related context.

Through the application of case study approaches, social science researchers can look to "*establish generalisations that hold in diverse situations*" (Stake, 1995:39). The use of a case study approach in this way can thus be used to provide insights into issues or theory beyond the immediate research context, which can then be extended to other cases of collective interest (Yin, 1993). However, most case studies emphasise interpretation, where the researcher observes and records the workings of the case, and also simultaneously examines its meanings and redirects the observations to refine or substantiate those meanings (Stake, 1995).

Case studies can be particularly valuable to develop and advance theory because they are so intensive and generate such rich subjective data. This brings to light variables, processes and relationships that allow for a better understanding of the phenomena being studied. Case studies also provide an opportunity to try out theoretical principles that later can be developed to construct generalisations about a wider population to which the case study belongs (Moser and Kalton, 1971; de Vaus, 1996). A case study approach was considered appropriate as this study develops and implements a framework for the identification and assessment of stakeholders in a visitor management situation. The use of this approach was intended to provide the basis for other practitioners in the fields of visitor and resource management to generalise the study's results in relation to other similar situations (Stake, 1995).

### **5.3.2 The Los Roques National Park case study**

To assess the applicability of the framework developed for this study it was applied to the case of the Archipelago Los Roques National Park, this being located off the coast of central Venezuela. A key reason for this choice was the park's location in a less developed country where there is a minimal tradition of stakeholder consultation in planning processes due to a history of authoritarian and centralised management. The application in these contexts of participative decision-making frameworks is likely to fail due to the lack of participative mechanisms and resistance from powerful stakeholders. However, stakeholder involvement might be encouraged using the framework developed for this study.

A second reason to choose the Los Roques National Park was its status as a protected area of natural beauty, ecological value and environmental fragility, and as a protected area that attracted 10% of the tourists that visit Venezuela (Asoproroques, 1999). It was the third most important tourist destination in Venezuela, and this suggested that the management of tourism there was important for the affected stakeholders. Furthermore, a concern already existed among the main park authorities about the overuse of park resources by tourism (AUA, 1997b, INPARQUES, 1998; Ornat, 1997).

An additional advantage of selecting this park was the researcher's long involvement with the area, having lived and previously having undertaken research there over a period of ten years, first as an environmental scientist and then as a tourism consultant. This previous involvement provided rich insights into the area's management, the politics involved and the stakeholder interests and needs. A more detailed description of the Los Roques National Park was provided in Chapter 3, along with background on Venezuela.

#### **5.4 Data collection instruments used**

Implementing a case study approach involved developing a conceptual framework to guide the inquiry, along with the research questions that define the issues to be examined. It also required a sampling strategy to collect information, and the appropriate data collection instruments to gather it (Burns, 2000; Robson, 1993; Yin, 1993). This study uses three different data collection instruments, these being: first, a review of secondary data; second, in-depth interviews; and third, a decision pathways questionnaire. This section reviews the characteristics of these instruments and explains why they were selected.

##### **5.4.1. Secondary data**

According to Yin (1993), it is necessary to pay explicit attention to the contextual conditions affecting the phenomenon being studied and to the broader range of knowledge as set out by previous research. Thus secondary data sources were consulted particularly prior to developing the study's conceptual framework. The small amount of published research or reports on

visitor and natural resource management in Los Roques and even in Venezuela was gathered. This research and reports included the Los Roques National Park Management Plan, the decree that established the Central Co-ordinating Authority, annual reports and monthly information publications, two internal reports from the Spanish International Co-operation Agency, two of the researcher's own consultancy reports on the area, and various books relating to public policy and the national park system in Venezuela. A review was also conducted of a daily Venezuelan newspaper with a national circulation (the *El Universal*) through the World Wide Web. Information on Venezuela was reviewed in section 3.2 of Chapter 3, and on Los Roques in section 3.3. During the preparation phase prior to the fieldwork, the researcher also kept contact with two environmental consultants who were knowledgeable about Los Roques and its management, so that the researcher kept abreast of the main developments in the park while he was in the UK.

The review of these secondary data sources provided a broad understanding of the context in which tourism and natural resources were managed in Los Roques National Park, and it helped in developing a conceptual framework that reflected the local context in which it would be tested. However, given the objectives of this study, the collection of primary data was also necessary and this required the design and implementation of interviews in the field.

#### **5.4.2. Semi-structured interviews**

There were several reasons for the choice of interviews rather than other data collection instruments in this case study. In this study the number of potential respondents was relatively low, so using interviews guaranteed that an appropriate information return would be obtained, particularly when compared to other methods such as self-completion questionnaires, which tend to have a low response rate. Interviews were also favoured as they encourage respondents to express their views in an open way, as well as in their own words, thus reducing the chance that issues that they considered important would be overlooked (Burns, 2000; Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Yin, 1993).

A semi-structured interview format was chosen for this study, whereby the interview schedule had fairly structured questions arranged thematically in relation to the conceptual framework, but it was designed in a way that allowed the use of prompts, and to follow-up relevant lines of inquiry that the interviewees considered important. This approach also allowed for variation in the question sequence when this was deemed appropriate by the researcher, such as when an issue had already been covered in a previous question, or when there was the need to provide the respondent with an opportunity for further explanation. According to Robson (1993:231), the use of semi-structured interviews provides greater flexibility in the data collection strategy, as the researcher can alter the interview *"based upon its perception of what seems most appropriate in the context of the conversation"*.

A semi-structured interview approach was chosen for several reasons. As it was necessary to inquire about a relatively large number of issues, the use of semi-structured interviews helped respondents to focus only on the issues that were central to the study. This not only helped to obtain relevant information, but also reduced the possibility of respondents drifting into issues irrelevant to the study and prolonging the time required to complete the interview, which eventually could have resulted in short answers being given to later questions due to tiredness or boredom. Semi-structured interviews were also selected as the study required a comparative analysis of the perceptions from different stakeholder groups about common issues, thus requiring that all interviewees were questioned about the same issues. Finally, this approach allowed the researcher to seek clarification and gave interviewees the opportunity to elaborate about issues that may not have been sufficiently explained.

As the interviews were designed to assess all possible scenarios for tourism and natural resource management in the Los Roques National Park, certain questions in the interview schedule were not relevant to some stakeholders. Thus, some questions about regulatory responsibilities were not posed to stakeholders for whom this was not relevant (typically, stakeholders from the tourism and NGO interest groups) and some questions about resource

use were not put to stakeholders who had only a regulatory function (typically government stakeholders).

The thematic areas and questions in the interviews were designed based on the study's aims and objectives (as outlined in Chapter 1) and its conceptual framework (discussed in Chapter 4). The main aims of the interviews were to identify and assess the views of the stakeholders affected by tourism management proposals, and to assess the potential influence of stakeholders in relation to the management of the park's resources. These aims were met through four thematic areas. These were:

- a) The identification of stakeholders.
- b) The identification of resources considered valuable and those used and affected by tourism. This included the assessment of problems in relation to the management of tourism and resources, and of the resource needs and management preferences of the stakeholders.
- c) Assessment of the attributes of the previously identified stakeholders in order to identify their interest in the management process and their degree of influence on it.
- d) The evaluation of the park's most likely management options.

The interview was designed as four subsets or thematic areas with distinct questions relating to specific areas of the conceptual framework, but all four subsets were used concurrently, and thus are referred to as 'the interview'. The interview contained a total of 39 questions, but only the first 34 were addressed to all stakeholders. The remaining five questions referred to the last thematic area (assessment of feasible management scenarios), and they were only put to stakeholders with the most management authority in the park (Appendix 5.1).

The first thematic area in the interview covered the first 12 questions, and these relate to step one of the Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA), that of stakeholder identification. Questions 1 to 8 examined which of the organisations previously selected through a purposive sampling process are identifiable "stakeholders". Questions 9 to 12 sought views on other relevant

stakeholders in addition to those previously identified through the snowball technique.

Questions 13 to 29 related to the interview's second thematic area and these correspond to step two of the STA framework, that of assessing the management issues related to stakeholder preferences. The first two questions related to views on the destination's resources, while the next three questions sought views on which resources were used and affected by tourism. Questions 18 to 21 solicited opinions on problems related to tourism's use of the destination resources, while the remaining questions (22 to 29) assessed opinions on stakeholder resource needs and their management preferences. The management preferences of these stakeholders were also assessed using a decision pathways questionnaire.

Questions 30 to 34 related to the third thematic area of the interview, which corresponds to step three of the STA Framework, this being the analysis and mapping of stakeholder influence. These questions generated the data used to assess the stakeholders in terms of their interest in the management of the park and their degree of influence on it. As discussed in section 4.5.3. of Chapter 4, this information was used to place stakeholders in a matrix that describes their potential interest in, and influence on the park's management.

The final five questions in the interview assessed views on the park's most likely management options, with this information being used along with the opinions on stakeholder management preferences to assess future potential conflicts around park management. This assessment partly corresponds to step 4 of the STA framework, that of stakeholder management. Since these questions were targeted at key policy-makers who had most influence on the park's policies, they were put to only five of the 31 interviewees. These questions attempted to identify the realistic constraints that will determine the management decisions that are likely to be taken, and to assess the management options likely to be favoured in the decision-making process.

Great care was taken in administering the interview. A carefully prepared introductory letter explained the purpose of the study, the nature of the

information being sought, and the use to be made of the information. It gave assurances that all information would remain confidential and would be used only for research purposes, and that the respondent's identity would remain anonymous. This letter was faxed or handed personally to each respondent prior to the interview, when an appointment was being arranged. The researcher also attempted to telephone each respondent to explain the general issues to be discussed during the interview, thus providing the respondents with an additional opportunity to seek further clarification about the research and to enable them to gather supporting information from their files. The information in the introductory letter was also reiterated prior to the start of each interview, and if necessary a copy of the letter was also handed to the respondent. Both the letter and the verbal introduction stated that the interview would be completed in about 45 to 60 minutes, depending on the respondent. Appointments were made that suited each respondent in terms of time and location, thus helping to reduce the possibility of interruptions or inconveniences that might lead to an early termination of the interview.

Prior to commencing the interview, the researcher thanked the respondents for their co-operation, and informed them that they did not have to reply to a particular question if they felt it was inappropriate, and also that they could finish the interview early if they so wished. Permission to tape the interview with a recording device was sought and obtained from all respondents.

During each interview the researcher kept track of the questions asked by ticking them off in a notebook. When a respondent mentioned important issues during the interview, such as a suggestion for the researcher to contact another person, a written note was made. As soon as possible after the conclusion of each interview, the researcher also made notes about emergent issues and about the respondents' comments or attitudes that would assist in future interpretation and would give supporting context to the collected information. The interviews were conducted in the locations chosen by respondents, and they ranged from 35 up to 150 minutes in duration, with an average length of 60 minutes. During the interview the researcher took a neutral

role, presenting a friendly, conversational and non-judgemental stance, while at the same time the researcher sought to focus the "conversation" toward the aims of the interview (Burns, 2000; Marshall and Rossman, 1999).

After the conclusion of the fieldwork, all interviews were transcribed verbatim and translated from Spanish to English, with these transcriptions serving as part of the database for further analysis. At the end of the interview, the researcher handed the decision pathways questionnaire to all respondents for later completion.

#### **5.4.3. Decision pathways questionnaire**

The researcher suspected that when respondents were asked about their management preferences in the interviews, this might have resulted in respondents choosing scenarios corresponding to their perceptions of what is desirable for the park, rather than responses that reflected their own interests, particularly if these were perceived to be detrimental. Thus, it was decided that triangulation was required in order to seek to reveal any "hidden agendas" behind the preferences for park management as revealed in the interviews (Decrop, 1999; Flick, 1992). The triangulation was implemented through a decision pathways questionnaire (Gregory *et al.*, 1997; Satterfield and Gregory, 1998) that used a different approach to reveal the management preferences of stakeholders. This questionnaire also focused on the degree of commitment of stakeholders to their expressed management preferences.

According to Gregory *et al.* (1997:240), decision pathways questionnaires *"present respondents with a set of linked questions that encourage the deliberate construction of expressed values in the course of selecting a preferred resource-management alternative"*. They go on to suggest that when specific pathways are selected or avoided, important information is revealed about the respondents' key trade-offs and about their reasoning processes. Satterfield and Gregory (1998) argue that the application of a decision pathway approach helps to bridge the gap between environmental values and management decisions by assisting respondents to frame the context in which these decisions are made, by defining the key objectives that

decisions are trying to achieve, and by making explicit the need for trade-offs between competing but desirable objectives.

The decision pathways questionnaire used in this study allowed stakeholders to select their organisation's preferred management scenario from seven possible choices, designed around various degrees of resource conservation, expressed in terms of modifications of two criteria: the current level of visitor numbers, and the level of management measures applied in the park. It is acknowledged that the decision to restrict the questionnaire's management paths to only seven choices resulted in an oversimplification of the management options applicable in the park, and thus offered stakeholders relatively few decision "paths" to choose from. However, it was felt that the choices presented to the stakeholders were focused on what was expected to be the most contested and controversial issue in any tourism and resource management plan for Los Roques, this being the volume of visitors and the level of resource use that the area could accommodate. The management options in the questionnaire also concentrated stakeholder choices on one of the few aspects of management that managers have direct control of, this being the level of management that they apply. Hence, while the choices presented to the stakeholders were perhaps constrained, the practical value of the information gathered was increased by focusing on the key issues faced by the managers and on the management aspect over which the managers had more control. Moreover, it enabled the examination of realistic management compromises by the stakeholders.

Three design criteria were taken into account when developing the management scenarios in the decision pathways questionnaire. These were the level of resource use by tourism, the number of visitors coming to the park, and the management measures applied to control those visitors. However, in order to have a manageable number of options, it was assumed that the level of resource use and the number of visitors would increase in parallel. This meant that if one was increased, then the other also increased, and if a management measure resulted in a reduction of one, then the other was also reduced. Thus, the management scenarios presented in the questionnaire only specify

variations in visitor numbers, and assume that this also meant a similar variation in the level of resource use. This made the questionnaire more user friendly and reduced the complexity of its application, enabling the presentation of management choices that were readily familiar to the respondents, and with consequences that they could easily visualise.

In designing the scenarios, the parameter 'visitor numbers' was defined as the number of visitors per unit of time that used a given resource as a result of a given management scenario. The resulting management categories involve unchanged, increased or reduced numbers of visitors compared with current numbers. The parameter 'management measures' referred to the level of non-restrictive and restrictive management measures that should be applied to conserve the park's resources. Restrictive measures implied modifications in the levels of use and visitor numbers allowed, whereas non-restrictive measures referred to management measures such as the provision of information, the use of tourist guides, and resource hardening. The resulting management categories were unchanged, increased or reduced management measures compared with those currently employed. When a feasible management scenario calls for increased levels of use and increased management, it is assumed that restrictive management measures are reduced to allow for more use, while non-restrictive measures are increased to allow for more management.

Finally, the parameter 'resource conservation' was defined as the degree of conservation of the park's natural resources resulting from the application of a given management scenario, compared to current conservation levels. The resulting categories were reduced, increased or balanced resource conservation, with the last category referring to a hypothetical situation where, given the manipulation of all other criteria, a constant state of resource conservation was achieved over time. It was assumed that the resource conservation criterion acted as a variable that depended on the other three, that is, the degree to which the park's resources were preserved was the end result of manipulating management measures, visitor numbers and levels of resource use.

The seven feasible management 'paths' generated for the decision pathways questionnaire are described in Table 5.1, and a blank of the questionnaire used is included in Appendix 5.2. The scenarios in Table 5.2 are discriminated according to variations in the number of visitors (unchanged, increased or reduced), and as result of their application they lead to three different levels of resource conservation, these being maintained, increased or reduced.

**Table 5.2.** Description of the management paths built into the decision pathways questionnaire.

<b>PATH NUMBER</b>	<b>PATH DESCRIPTION</b>
<b><i>Management paths with maintained visitor numbers</i></b>	
PATH 1 Maintained visitation and maintained management.	The number of visitors and management measures are maintained. It is assumed that this path leads to a gradual decrease in resource conservation.
PATH 2 Maintained visitation and reduced management.	The number of visitors is maintained, while the management measures are reduced. It is assumed that this path leads to a decrease in resource conservation.
PATH 3 Maintained visitation and increased management.	The number of visitors is maintained and the management measures are increased. It is assumed that this path leads to either a balance or an increase in resource conservation.
<b><i>Management paths with increased visitor numbers</i></b>	
PATH 4 Increased visitation and maintained management.	The number of visitors is increased, while the management measures are maintained. It is assumed that this path leads to a decrease in resource conservation.
PATH 5 Increased visitation and increased management.	The number of visitors is increased along with the management measures. It is assumed that this path leads to either a decrease or a balance in resource conservation.
<b><i>Management paths with reduced visitor numbers</i></b>	
PATH 6 Reduced visitation and maintained management.	The number of visitors is reduced, while the management measures are maintained. It is assumed that this path leads to a balance or an increase in resource conservation.
PATH 7 Reduced visitation and increased management.	The number of visitors is reduced, while the management measures are increased. It is assumed that this path leads to an increase in resource conservation.

The questionnaire was designed for self-completion and asked respondents to provide the views of their organisation, while it provided guidance to the respondents through the use of prompts and detailed instructions. In order to avoid overloading the respondents, they were handed the questionnaire immediately after the completion of the interview but were requested to complete it during a week-long period, after which the researcher visited them. Prior to the collection of the completed questionnaires, the researcher contacted each respondent by telephone and confirmed their

completion. In those cases where they had not been completed, the respondent sent another copy along with a follow-up letter, and requested its completion in the following seven days. There were five instances where the respondents chose to complete the questionnaire immediately after the interview, and seven respondents out of 31 did not return the questionnaire in spite of repeated telephone calls and further copies of it being provided by the researcher. There was no noticeable pattern in the respondents that chose not to return the questionnaire. The completed questionnaires were processed by noting and categorising the response to each question in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, and by comparing the created paths with those originally designed into the questionnaire.

#### **5.4.4. Triangulation**

In accordance with the literature on methodological issues, this study combined multiple methods and data sources as a strategy to add analytical rigour and depth (Decrop, 1999; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Flick, 1992; Selin and Chavez, 1995). The application of this strategy, known as triangulation (Decrop, 1999), helps to control the researcher's biases that may be created by being the sole observer of a phenomenon (Selin and Chavez, 1995). By enquiring about the same issue through different research instruments, the researcher may reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994), and this may facilitate the understanding of different perceptions on a phenomenon (Flick, 1992). This study applied a triangulation strategy whereby both interviews and decision pathways questionnaires were used to collect information about the stakeholders' preferences in terms of future management scenarios for Los Roques National Park. This strategy was also used within the interview, allowing the respondents several opportunities to provide information about critical or important issues by using subtle wording differences to ask about similar issues in two different questions. A triangulation approach was also used to compare and review the past steps taken by stakeholders in the secondary data sources that were collected prior to the fieldwork.

## **5.5 Data collection procedures**

### **5.5.1 Desk research and fieldwork preparation**

Desk research was conducted prior to the fieldwork in order to gain a better understanding of the issues that may have been affecting the research topic, and to aid the design of the study's conceptual frameworks (Robson, 1993). This desk research started in the early stages of this study (in 1998), once it had been decided that a case study would be used of a Venezuelan national park.

The desk research included the review, both in journals and books, of relevant literature related to the management of visitors in natural areas and the development and application of stakeholder theory. This review was carried out intensively during the first year of the research and continued until the thesis was completed, and it was central to the design and refinement of the conceptual frameworks. This process also included reviewing secondary data published about Los Roques National Park, the management and administration of the Venezuelan national park system, and the management of tourism in Venezuela.

The desk research not only facilitated the formulation of the conceptual frameworks, but also provided the researcher with an awareness of the current state of knowledge in the subject area and helped in relating this study to the wider context of tourism and resource management in natural areas (Finn *et al.*, 2000; Gill and Johnson, 1991). The process of reviewing secondary information prior to the design of the conceptual frameworks was in line with the constructivist approach used in this study (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Guba and Lincoln, 1989). It assisted in the iterative process where secondary data provided guidance for the design of the conceptual frameworks, and was later used in the data analysis process to assist in identifying patterns and comparing them with those noted in the secondary sources. This iterative process allowed for the emergence of information relevant to the study (Locke, 1996).

The researcher maintained regular contact with the Superintendent of the Los Roques National Park and the Spanish International Co-operation Agency's representative for the park and this was invaluable in preparing for the fieldwork and for each field visit in Venezuela. These regular contacts allowed the researcher to keep abreast of latest developments, obtain contact details of potential interviewees, and secure logistical support for visits to the park. Whenever possible, the researcher also contacted and sought the assistance of the respondents to be interviewed prior to the commencement of the fieldwork. But this was not always possible, particularly for respondents who lived in the park, no postal service or residential telephone network existed.

The collection of primary data was undertaken in two fieldwork periods, the first one for three months, from August to October of 1999, and the second one for approximately one month, in February and March 2001. There were several reasons to divide the data collection in two fieldwork periods. As explained in Chapter 3 (Los Roques National Park), in 1999 when the first fieldwork period took place there were several profound changes taking place both within the national park and the country. These nation-wide changes affected Venezuela's constitutional and legislative framework, resulting in a legislative vacuum for all activities. This in turn caused a significant degree of uncertainty for many respondents, who felt that all changes and issues had been put on hold, and would remain so until the constitutional order of the country was re-established. The arrival of a new political party into office also led to many top government representatives being replaced, including several targeted for interview or who had already been interviewed.

Given this legislative uncertainty and the replacement of top government officials targeted for interview, it was decided that a second round of interviews was required at a later period in order to better understand the constraints and opportunities that might be faced with the management of tourism in Los Roques National Park. This also provided an opportunity to include additional stakeholders in the sample, particularly recently appointed government officials. This also increased confidence in the previous observed patterns, as well as provided additional data for triangulation. The second fieldwork also added a

longitudinal dimension to the study, allowing for observation of the evolution of changes in the park, and provided the researcher with further opportunities to validate the observations and conclusions reached during the first fieldwork phase.

### **5.5.2 The pilots**

Pilots were conducted in order to assess and improve the face-to-face interview schedule and the decision pathways questionnaire. This evaluation was carried out for several reasons. The first was to ensure that the questions were worded so they conveyed the exact meaning sought by the researcher. This was important as the interview and questionnaire were designed in English and later translated into Spanish. The second reason to undertake the pilot with the interview schedule was to make sure it could be completed in a reasonable length of time without causing respondent fatigue. Finally, the pilots allowed for assessments of the overall appropriateness of the survey instruments in relation to the data needs of the research.

The pilots were undertaken in two stages. The first stage was conducted prior to the commencement of the fieldwork with a person who was not taking part in the study but who had lived and worked in Los Roques National Park for three years, and so was familiar with the study area and with several of the targeted respondents, as well as with the type of problems that the study might encounter. This first pilot highlighted only minor problems in the interview, mostly related to the wording used in some questions in the Spanish version, and these were corrected by making slight modifications. The person who assisted also made valuable suggestions, offered insider knowledge about which individuals could act as representatives of certain interests and groups in Los Roques, and made useful comments on the best times and locations to approach some of the respondents. No corrections seemed necessary to the decision pathways questionnaire as a result of this pilot.

The second stage of the pilot was undertaken with the first two respondents, when particular attention was paid to observing if the respondents encountered any difficulties with either the interview or the questionnaire. At the

end of the session both respondents were also asked if they experienced any difficulty in answering either the interview or the questionnaire, and their suggestions were solicited for improving them. However, neither of the respondents suggested modifications with these research instruments, and neither found difficulties with them. Hence, no modifications were made as a result of this second piloting, and the information collected was considered adequate and included in the research data. However, it was noted that one interviewee took about 150 minutes to complete the interview due to the extended comments made in their replies. In order to avoid the recurrence of this situation and thus avoid respondent fatigue, specially designed prompts were prepared to help them to focus on the issues they were being asked about, and help steer them away from commenting on issues that were not relevant to the research. These prompts included the researcher remarking that in spite of the interesting nature of the respondent's comments, they did not directly relate to the topic of the study, and suggesting further discussion of those issues at the end of the interview.

### **5.5.3 Selection of interviewees**

Two procedures were used to select the interviewees for this research, the first one being a purposive sample and the other a snowball sampling method. This combination was chosen because it ensured that individuals selected for interviewing would be those who were involved in, or were knowledgeable about the management of Los Roques National Park, and who were representatives of stakeholder groups relevant to this research. Both of these sampling methods constitute a type of non-probability sampling, this meaning that the characteristics of the sampling unit are likely to be varied and cannot be predicted by the researcher (de Vaus, 1996; Robson, 1993).

### **5.5.4 Purposive sampling**

Purposive samples are defined as those where the sampling units chosen for study satisfy specific theoretical and empirical characteristics that make them of interest to the researcher, and thus are not randomly selected (de Vaus, 1996). Purposive samples are considered an accepted research procedure in those situations where the researcher uses judgement to select

cases that fulfil a specific research objective, usually involving in-depth research (Babbie, 1998; Neuman, 1997). This type of sample can allow sufficient data to be collected to be able to examine a specific issue or objective set out by the researcher, while taking account of considerations about desirability and feasibility (Babbie, 1998).

This study used a purposive sampling both for the selection of the 'core' group of interviewees required to initiate the snowball sampling and for the assessment of the national park's most likely management scenarios. The use of purposive sampling enabled the researcher to select interviewees who could provide the information required to implement the snowball sampling, as it targeted individuals who were involved with the management of tourism and the natural resources in the park, and who acted as information gatekeepers. By identifying these information gatekeepers, a 'critical mass' of respondents was interviewed to then identify other stakeholder groups related to the park's management. Specific criteria were developed for the identification of these information gatekeepers, with them being selected and interviewed to initiate the snowball process if they met any of these criteria. These criteria are detailed under criteria A2 of Table 4.2 in section 4.5.1 of Chapter 4. In order to confirm that these individuals were stakeholders relevant to the park's management, they were further screened with criteria A1 for stakeholder identification, which is described in Table 4.2 of Chapter 4.

The secondary documentation obtained prior to the fieldwork was reviewed with the criteria for the identification of information gatekeepers in order to identify relevant respondents required to initiate the snowball process. The documents reviewed included legal or descriptive information about the park, listings of area users and permit-holders for specific activities, lists of organisations with jurisdictional authority in the area, and documents identifying organisations with previous involvement in the area. Three respondents were selected and interviewed as a result of the documentation review, these being a former representative of the Central Co-ordinating Authority, a representative of the Los Roques National Park working for INPARQUES, and a former representative of the Los Roques Tourism Operators' Association. These

individuals were chosen because the first two represented the institutions with the most regulatory authority in the park, and the third because the Association, and this representative in particular, had a long involvement with the park and with the diverse interest groups. These three respondents thus constituted the starting point for the snowball sampling.

A further purposive sample was also required in order to identify the management scenarios that were most likely to be implemented in the national park. This was considered an essential step in the conceptual framework because the authoritarian tradition in the Venezuelan national parks meant that most decisions were usually taken with little or no consultation with affected stakeholders. Hence, the identification of the most likely management scenarios was important as a reference against which to compare the preferred management scenarios of the stakeholders. For this purpose, the representatives of the institutions with most influence over the park's management were identified using criteria A3 of Table 4.2, which is presented in Chapter 4. The application of these criteria is detailed in section 4.5.1 of the same chapter, which describes the implementation of Step 1 of the STA framework (stakeholder identification).

Using the criteria for the identification of representatives from the park's most influential institutions, five respondents were chosen to assess the management scenarios that were most likely to be implemented, these being two former representatives of the Central Co-ordinating Authority and its current representative, and the former and current representatives of the Los Roques National Park. Three of these interviewees had already been selected and interviewed during the process of identifying information gatekeepers for snowball purposes.

The use of purposive samples resulted in several distinct advantages for this study. Foremost was that it allowed the researcher to adjust the characteristics of the case study to the requirements of the research, specifically to identify and assess only those individuals deemed relevant to the study objectives. This in turn resulted in a sample with the necessary

characteristics to evaluate the conceptual frameworks relating to the management of visitors and resources in a natural area. Finally, this sampling represented a efficient investment of the limited time and financial resources that the researcher had to implement and complete the fieldwork process.

### **5.5.5 Snowball sampling**

After having constructed an initial stakeholder group for interviewing, the next step in the sampling process was to identify further stakeholders relevant to the park's management using a snowball sampling method. This involved the use of an explicit mechanism for stakeholder identification where the previously identified respondents were asked to nominate additional stakeholders. This is a particular type of multi-stage, purposive sample, aimed at establishing an interconnected web of samples, which *"begins with one or a few people or cases and spreads out on the basis of links to the initial cases"* (Neuman, 1997:207). Snowball sampling or snowballing has successfully been used by practitioners researching stakeholder theory to identify stakeholder groups and to study relationships among them (Bryson, 1988; Bryson and Crosby, 1992; Finn, 1996; Rowley, 1997). According to Rowley (1997), the application of a snowball technique to stakeholder identification reduces the potential bias caused by managers or researchers, as the selection process is based on the perceptions of the stakeholders themselves.

The snowball sampling was initiated by interviewing the initial 'core' group of three stakeholders previously identified (see Section 5.5.4). Additional stakeholders were identified by interviewing the 'core' group and probing their relationships with other organisations using carefully designed questions, which identified relevant actors related both to them and to the management of the park. These questions are based on criteria A4 for stakeholder identification by snowball, which are presented in Table 4.2 of Chapter 4 and explained in detail in section 4.5.1 of the same chapter. These questions correspond to question 9 to 12 in Appendix 5.1. The use of these questions made it possible to identify other stakeholders beyond to the 'core group' through a process where the stakeholders themselves, and not the researcher, nominated who should be

regarded as having a stake in the management of the park's tourism and natural resources.

Each of the organisations mentioned during the snowballing process was screened further with the criteria set out for the identification of stakeholders (criteria A1 for stakeholder identification, which is described in Table 4.2 of Chapter 4). This cross-checking ensured that the researcher agreed that the nominated organisation had a stake in the park's management and should be included for further analysis as a stakeholder. Once these new nominees have been positively identified as stakeholders, they in turn were interviewed to try and identify further stakeholders through their relationships with other actors who could be relevant to park management. A list of nominated stakeholders was kept and updated after each interview in order to keep track of organisations that had been nominated by previously identified stakeholders and which should be interviewed.

In order to be able to establish a limit where the snowball process would be terminated and no further interviews would be made, a cut-off limit to the inclusion of a nominated stakeholder in the interview process was established. This limit was based on the number of times that a stakeholder had to be mentioned, and was operationalised as a set of criteria which are presented in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3.** Criteria to establish the cut-off limit for stakeholder identification during the snowball process.

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The nominee is at the end of the stakeholder chain, that is, they have been mentioned less than three times by other previously interviewed stakeholders, and thus they are not considered for interviewing in that particular link (modified from Rowley, 1997).</li><li>• The nominee has been mentioned three or more times, but is not affected by the use of the resources or any change in its management, and hence is not a stakeholder.</li></ul> |
|--|

This limit to the inclusion of new stakeholders was established in order to keep the respondent group of a manageable size for interview purposes. Further, the STA framework requires the stakeholder group to be of a size that is manageable for decision-making purposes. For those reasons a threshold of three or more mentions was established before a given nominee was considered as a new stakeholder and thus was interviewed. This threshold was chosen because it was perceived to exclude those respondents with minimum involvement in the use or management of the park's resources.

## **5.6 Analysis of results**

This study collected a large amount of qualitative data in the form of interview transcripts and, to a lesser extent, questionnaires. To analyse this information in a meaningful way that enabled the researcher to evaluate the conceptual frameworks, an interpretative stance was assumed. This involved the researcher going *"beyond what is directly said in order to work out structures and relations of meaning not immediately apparent in the text"* (Kvale, 1996: 201). This approach requires that the researcher distances themselves from the contextual level of the data by interpreting what was said from within a particular theoretical and methodological stance. In the case of this research the adopted theoretical stance is a constructivist one. This approach was implemented by using the STA and STREM frameworks to provide the analytical context, while conceptual distance was established from the data by applying the "Framework" analytical approach proposed by Ritchie and Spencer (1994), coupled with the development of a coding map that was analysed using N-Vivo software for qualitative analysis (QSR, 1999). This section explains the "Framework" analytical model and how it was applied to the collected data, and how the analysis was enhanced by using a coding map developed by the researcher and integrated into the qualitative analytical software package.

### **5.6.1. The "Framework" analysis approach**

This study adapted a modified version of the "Framework" analytical approach of Ritchie and Spencer (1994) to provide a systematic means of

handling and analysing the collected information. The "Framework" approach involves five interconnected steps, and its application commences once information has been collected in the field.

The first step of the "Framework" approach consists of a process of familiarisation by the researcher, who reviews the range and diversity of the data in order to gain an overview and to list emerging key ideas and recurrent themes. The second step involves the identification of a thematic framework of issues and concepts arising from the recurrence and patterning of the responses. The third step involves a charting process, where the previously listed issues and concepts are organised in a structured and thematic way dictated by the thematic framework. The fourth step consists of mapping and interpreting the data by identifying key characteristics and by linking and explaining the observed patterns and connections in the broader data set. The fifth and final step relates to the interpretation of the broader findings and relationships in relation to the wider conceptual frameworks or bodies of knowledge.

The "Framework" approach is useful in applied qualitative research, where it can provide a contextualising strategy that is particularly well suited for the analysis of case studies. It provides a structure that places the views and attitudes of respondents into a conceptual framework that is organised according to the aims of the study. This approach provides coherence and structure to qualitative data that is inherently difficult to handle, while retaining the original accounts from which the data is derived. It also provides a systematic way to explore and map qualitative data and to categorise, theorise and explain the results of an inquiry (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994).

### **5.6.2. The thematic index used in this study**

This study applied the "Framework" analytical approach in a modified form. This is because, instead of identifying and developing a thematic framework wholly inductively from the data, the researcher developed a combined deductive and inductive thematic index framework. This thematic index provided the main interpretative tool to organise and contextualise the

findings, and to relate them to the study's conceptual frameworks. It not only considered *a priori* issues, but following Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) proposed guidelines, the index also considered analytical themes base on the recurrence and patterning of respondents' views and also emergent issues arising from these views. Both the analytical themes and emergent issues were handled in an inductive manner, with categories developed empirically based on the views of the respondents. When the analysis process was completed, the index contained 12 themes or subject areas and 65 thematic codes or research issues, which are presented in Table 5.4 at the end of this chapter.

The different criteria developed for each step of the STA framework provided the initial basis on which to build the thematic index. These criteria, which are detailed in Chapter 4 (Conceptual Framework), provide a systematic and robust basis for each step of the STA framework and also for the development of the interview questions. Thus, it was logical to use these criteria to build the thematic index or research issues for the data analysis. These criteria relate to the identification of stakeholders, the assessment of their attributes and relationships, their needs and expectations in relation to the management of the resources, as well as the identification of valued resources and those used and affected by tourism. In order to build the thematic index, the researcher noted the information that was required for each thematic code or research issue, and this information was then related to the resulting 65 thematic codes that constitute the index.

Each thematic code was related to each interview transcript. Although the interview contained specific questions that related directly to the information required by each thematic code, the whole interview transcript was scanned for information relevant to each thematic code or research issue. Thus it provided the basis for a full "content analysis" of the respondents' comments. The main advantage of undertaking the analysis in this way is that it provided a large data base of responses from which to analyse and interpret the response patterns.

In order to apply the thematic codes in the thematic index, the researcher used the N-Vivo software for qualitative analysis (QSR, 1999). This software

was used to catalogue the data into the specific thematic codes as described in the next section.

### **5.6.3. Applying the "Framework" approach using computer software**

Many critics of qualitative research methods argue that often the amount of data collected is so large that it is difficult to manage and process it, resulting in the loss of the specific advantage (information richness) that makes this approach superior to quantitative methods (Hong, 1984; Wolfe *et al.*, 1993). This difficulty, particularly when it is coupled with time and resource constraints, might lead to researchers ignoring part of the data altogether as a way to deal with the problem (Moore *et al.*, 1995). Some commentators have argued that computer-assisted qualitative data analysis systems can help to overcome the problems of managing large amounts of data. Their use has been recommended in qualitative research in the social sciences and tourism as a way to improve the quality and reliability of the analysis (Anderson and Shaw, 1999; Hall and Winchester, 1997; Hong, 1984). Hall and Winchester (1997:192) argue that computer-aided processing "*can improve the rigour, depth and reliability of analysis of qualitative data*", while reducing the analytical difficulties, and the cost and time expenses typically associated with this type of data.

In a systematic comparison of qualitative data analysis between traditional qualitative analytic techniques and computer-assisted analysis, Anderson and Shaw (1999) find that both manual coding and keyword searches are able to produce similar results to those obtained through the use of Nud.ist analytic software and that they are not mutually exclusive. However, they also find that computer-assisted analysis results in decreasing cost and time expenses and increased analytic power and simplification for the user. They go on to suggest that tourism management will greatly benefit from the increased use of these packages, as they increase the depth of analysis and understanding while reducing the time and effort required to do so (Anderson and Shaw, 1999:105).

One of the more recent software packages aimed at qualitative data analysis is N-Vivo (QSR, 1999), and its earlier precursor, Nud.ist. According to Fielding (1994; cited in Anderson and Shaw, 1999:100), theory building software such as N-Vivo is at the forefront of qualitative computer analysis. By focusing on relationships between categories, it enables researchers to make connections between different thematic issues, thus allowing for the development of new classifications and categories in the data set. This allows the researcher to formulate and test propositions around a conceptual structure that fits the data. Miles and Weitzman (1994) tested 22 qualitative data analysis packages and found that Nud.ist was one of the more advanced software packages available, as it includes a malleable node-tree structure that can be manipulated easily by the researcher, while assisting in the management and analysis of data and the building of theory.

This study used the N-vivo software to assist in the process of data handling, and it also coupled its application to an analytic index that provided guidance to the analytical process. Its use in conjunction with the "Framework" approach enabled the researcher to substitute all the manual tasks of the approach's three intermediate steps (identification of a thematic framework, coding of issues and concepts, and data mapping and interpretation) with an equivalent but much faster, and more powerful and efficient computer-assisted counterpart.

Among the advantages of using N-Vivo in this study was the ease with which the indexing, search and conceptualisation of unstructured qualitative data was implemented. It also allowed the researcher to retrieve vast quantities of data quickly and efficiently, whilst providing a consistent method for its management. The structure provided by the thematic index and its use within N-Vivo enabled the researcher to build a link between the respondents' original accounts and the categories of responses required to assess the STA framework. This was achieved by connecting respondent views to the STA conceptual framework in an organised, systematic and context-based fashion. This in turn permitted the researcher to establish relationships between

response categories, thus making it possible to formulate further theoretical propositions and to generate conclusions around the STA framework.

In the final stage of the data analysis the complete data set was sorted and classified according to the 12 subject areas and 65 research issues set out in the coding index, with these research issues corresponding to one or more of the data inputs required by the STA framework. Also at this stage a broader picture of the whole data set was built up by identifying key characteristics from the analysis. As set out in the final step of the "Framework" approach, the researcher interpreted the findings by seeking patterns and connections between the perceptions of the respondents and the study's conceptual framework. This process provided an opportunity to explain and interpret the findings. It also allowed for the wider implications of the study findings and the conceptual framework to be recognised. The presentation of the study findings was made through the use of a narrative approach (Jamal and Getz, 2000), where respondents' quotes taken from the interviews are used in support of the assertions made by the researcher. This narrative approach and its *"rich, multi-vocal, dynamic and sometimes contradictory meanings and voices"* offers the reader an opportunity to engage with the data and narrations of the respondents. It seeks to embody their voices and to remind the reader about *"the human and ethical dimension of planning, the concerns and issues of those who are impacted by such processes"* (Jamal and Getz, 2000: 161).

### **5.7 Methodological limitations of this study**

Although this study followed well-established procedures of qualitative inquiry, it is acknowledged that there might still be threats to the validity and adequacy of the data and its interpretation. Any research dealing with issues of opinion and preference is subject to certain limitations and problems. Some of the limitations that might have affected this research are reviewed here.

One threat to the validity of the findings is the potential imposition of the researcher's own interpretation of meanings within the study's results, resulting in the loss of the perspectives and meanings that respondents attached to their

words and actions (Maxwell, 1996). Processes and attitudes may thus be explained in ways that are not compatible with, or which contradict the views of the participants. Similar problems can arise if the researcher did not consider alternative explanations of the phenomena being studied, or did not acknowledge aspects of the data set that contradicted other explanations (Maxwell, 1996: 90).

Another potential problem is that some interviewees may have misrepresented situations and positions that they perceived to be inappropriately judgmental. Or they may have sought new justifications for their actions after the event or have hidden any failures on their part. Also, some of the responses might have been incomplete or might not have fully described the events, attitudes or positions that resulted in a particular situation or phenomena (Burns, 2000; Marshall and Rossman, 1999). In this case where there are conflicting interests, and particularly with Venezuelan government officials, it is possible that some answers would have been politically motivated and that pressures from third parties might have changed their response to certain issues or events.

The researcher attempted to reduce the influence presented by these threats through the use of cross checks between different data sources and between the accounts of different respondents, as well as through the use of triangulation and a longitudinal sampling process. These actions presented the researcher with an opportunity to validate and increase the reliability of the observations and conclusions (Burns, 2000, Decrop, 1999; Maxwell, 1996).

Another potential problem arising from the case study was the low accountability of public officials and elected representatives, which is a chronic problem in Venezuela, and more generally in less developed countries. This research assumed that the representatives of stakeholder groups were giving a fair and undistorted account of the interests and preferences of their constituencies, and thus were representing the views of their interest groups. However, the value and applicability of the information provided by these stakeholders might be reduced if the views only represented their own personal

agendas rather than the views of their interest group. This particular problem was tackled by interviewing additional members of stakeholder groups when the researcher felt that the views expressed by a representative were significantly atypical or unrepresentative of others in their stakeholder group.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has reviewed the methodology used in the research. It briefly reviewed the adequacy of qualitative methods of inquiry as a means of understanding people's perceptions and views in relation to tourism management. It also discussed the research strategy adopted by this study, and how the conceptual frameworks have been closely integrated with the methodology. The chapter then reviewed how the application of a case study methodology has provided a means to evaluate the STA conceptual framework. It has explained how in-depth interviews have been used as the main tool for data collection, along with a decision pathways questionnaire and secondary information. The sampling framework used in this research was also outlined, and explanations were given as to why purposive and snowball sampling methods were appropriate for the case study and the aims of the research.

Finally, this chapter reviewed the approach taken to the analysis of results. It explain how the "Framework" analytical approach was used and how it was linked to a coding index and to computer-based analysis. This was followed by a discussion of the advantages and implications of using a computer-based approach to data analysis. Lastly, the possible limitations of the adopted methodology were considered.

**Table 5.4.** Thematic index applied in the analysis of the data collected in this study using the "Framework" analytical approach.

*A PRIORI ISSUES INDEX*

**1) Stakeholder Identification**

- 1.1 Perceived missions or roles.
- 1.2 Perceived duties.
- 1.3 Patterns of resource use.
- 1.4 Levels of resource use (direct or indirect).
- 1.5 Legal relationships around the resources and/or their management.
- 1.6 Benefits obtained from the resources.
- 1.7 Perception of resource dependencies, linkages or other relationships.
- 1.8 Perception of rights or interests in relation to the resources and/or their management.
- 1.9 Evidence of attempted / past / current involvement with resource management.

**2) Stakeholder relationships**

- 2.1 Perceived dependence of others on the services or other functions provided by the stakeholder.
- 2.2 Perceived stakeholder dependence on the services or other functions provided by others.
- 2.3 Past or present collaboration or other co-operative relationships with others, including problem-solving alliances and information exchanges.
- 2.4 Legal or operational constraints received from, or given to others.

**3) Resource identification**

- 3.1 Attributes or resources considered valuable or important *per se*.
- 3.2 Attributes or resources considered valuable or important for tourism.
- 3.3 Resource being used by tourism.

**4) Effects of tourism-related resource use**

- 4.1 Resources being affected by tourism.
- 4.2 Tourism activities considered appropriate.
- 4.3 Reasons for considering a tourism activity to be appropriate.
- 4.4 Tourism activities considered inappropriate.
- 4.5 Reasons for considering a tourism activity to be inappropriate.
- 4.6 Levels of resource use.
- 4.7 Reasons for considering a level of resource use to be appropriate.
- 4.8 Reasons for considering a level of resource use to be inappropriate.
- 4.9 Perceived problems of tourism management.
- 4.10 Perceived problems between tourism and other activities.

**5) Stakeholder resource needs**

- 5.1 Perceived advantages and benefits derived of current resource management.
- 5.2 Perceived disadvantages and costs derived of current resource management.
- 5.3 Patterns of access to resources, including location and timing.
- 5.4 Ability to access alternative resources.
- 5.5 Ability to accommodate changes in resource access and use.

**6) Stakeholder expectations related to resource management**

- 6.1 Perceived resource management problems.
- 6.2 Agreement with current management practices and reasons for agreement.
- 6.3 Disagreement with current management practices and reasons for disagreement.
- 6.4 Ability to achieve own objectives with the current management practices, and reasons why the current practices allow or impede that.
- 6.5 Preferred management situation.

## **7) Stakeholder attributes**

### **7.L) Stakeholder legitimacy**

- 7L.1** Evidence of resource use.
- 7L.2** History or tradition of resource use.
- 7L.3** Evidence of acceptance of stakeholder use or behaviour within current managerial, legal or cultural practices.
- 7L.4** Evidence of legal right to the resources.
- 7L.5** Evidence of resource benefits.
- 7L.6** Evidence of expressed interest or involvement with the resources

### **7.U) Stakeholder urgency**

- 7U.1** Inability to accommodate changes in resource access and use.
- 7U.2** Inability to access alternative resources.
- 7U.3** Evidence of seasonal resource dependence.
- 7U.4** Evidence of dependence on resources with limited availability.
- 7U.5** Perceived negative effects over mission or functions due to change in current practices, or lack of change in current practices.

### **7.P) Stakeholder power**

- 7P.1** Legal control over resources.
- 7P.2** Direct or indirect ability to regulate other's access to resources.
- 7P.3** Claimed or attributed ability to affect others due to absence or behaviour.
- 7P.4** Previous or current involvement in resource management.
- 7P.5** Claimed or attributed evidence of ability to sabotage or ignore management measures.
- 7P.6** Ability to rally other stakeholders to support own claims.
- 7P.7** Claimed or attributed ability to influence management for self-benefit.
- 7P.8** Expressed or implicit perceptions of power from others.

## *EMERGENT ISSUES INDEX*

### **8) Institutional inefficiency**

- 8.1** Complaints or criticisms of government institutions.
- 8.2** Evidence of past or ongoing failures of problem-solving.

### **9) Public utilities**

Mentioned as a problem or limitation for the adequacy of tourism services.

## *ANALYTICAL THEMES INDEX*

### **10) Perception about Roquenos**

- 10.1** Roquenos mentioned in reference to management issues.
- 10.2** Roquenos mentioned in reference to management problems or in answers with negative connotations.
- 10.3** References or suggestions relating to Roquenos when mentioning need for changes in education, training or organisation.

### **11) Public utilities**

Mentioned as a limitation to tourism growth or in association with references to tourism growth / tourism limits / tourism capacity.

### **12) Institutional conflicts**

- 12.1** Tensions or conflicts acknowledged by institutional stakeholders.
- 12.2** Evidence of past or ongoing tensions or conflicts among institutional stakeholders.

## **Chapter 6**

### **The Park Stakeholders**

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#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the identification of stakeholders relevant to tourism and resource management issues in Los Roques National Park. Identifying relevant stakeholders and deciding how much influence they may have on a decision-making process is one of the most difficult and controversial problems for resource managers when they are designing and implementing management proposals.

This chapter describes how stakeholders were initially identified by asking them who they regarded as actors affected by the park management. The next section explains how the researcher determined who were stakeholders relevant to the park management. The chapter then assesses the degree to which each identified stakeholder had legitimate and urgent claims in relation to park management, and also their power to influence that management. Finally, consideration was given to the interest of stakeholders in the park's management and their potential influence on that management. These considerations are included in the Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA). This framework involves a stakeholder mapping process and it is used to determine which stakeholders to interview.

#### **6.2 Stakeholder identification by snowballing**

##### **6.2.1. The snowballing process**

This section identifies the stakeholders with an interest in the resources of Los Roques National Park and who thus are affected by the park's management for tourism. This involved a rolling snowball process, where a small 'core' group of park stakeholders was identified from secondary data using criteria A2 for key actor or gatekeeper identification, as explained in Section 4.5.1 of Chapter 4 (Conceptual Framework). This 'core' group was then asked to name other stakeholders affected by resource issues in the park or

who were affected by the park's management. These newly identified stakeholders in turn were asked to name other stakeholders, and this process was repeated until no new nominations exceeded the cut-off threshold previously established for stakeholder identification, as explained in Section 5.5.3 of Chapter 5 (Methods Chapter).

All respondents were given numerous opportunities during the snowballing process to identify other stakeholders in this way. These opportunities included questions about their dependency relationships (for example, who depended on their services, and whose services they themselves depended on), their co-operative relationships (alliances or at least co-operation with others) and the legal constraints imposed by others on their mission (such as authorisations or permits that they required). Additionally, they were asked more specifically to mention any other organisations or groups that had an interest in the park, and also those they considered should be involved in its management. The specific questions used to identify potential stakeholders with an interest in the park's resources and who were affected by the park's management for tourism are presented in Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1.** Questions designed to identify potential stakeholders with an interest in the park's resources and who were affected by the park's management for tourism.

- *Are there other organisations or interest groups with an interest in the park that depend on services provided by your organisation? Which are these organisations or interest groups, and what services do they depend on?*
- *Are there other organisations or interest groups with which you need or choose to work in matters related to the park? Which are these organisations or interest groups, and for what matters do you work with them?*
- *Does your organisation need any form of authorisation, such as a permit, to work in relation to the park? If yes, for which activities does it need authorisation, and to whom do you have to apply?*
- *Which other organisations or interest groups do you think might have a right or an interest in the park, or are affected by the park? Should they be involved in the management of the park and its resources? If yes, why and how should they be involved? If no, why should they not be involved?*

The snowballing process was initiated with a former senior representative of the Central Co-ordinating Authority, a representative of INPARQUES in Los Roques National Park and a former representative of the Los Roques Tourism Operators' Association. These three individuals mentioned nine organisations with which they had relations and that they considered relevant to park management. These nine stakeholders were subsequently interviewed. Table 6.2 lists the 12 representatives interviewed in this first stage of the snowballing process, including their job title and (within the constraints of the agreed levels of confidentiality) the names of their organisation.

**Table 6.2.** Stakeholders interviewed in the first stage of the snowballing process.

NAME OF ORGANISATION	REPRESENTATIVE INTERVIEWED
<b>INITIAL INTERVIEWEES (CORE GROUP)</b>	
Los Roques Central Co-ordinating Authority (CCA)	Former senior representative
National Parks Institute (INPARQUES)	Current representative of the park
Los Roques Tourism Operators' Association	Former representative
<b>FIRST SNOWBALLING</b>	
National Parks Institute (INPARQUES)	Former representative of the park
National Guard, Los Roques Post	Current representative
Venezuelan Coast Guard, Los Roques Post	Current representative
Local NGO with conservation interests in the park	Current representative
Recreational diving operator	Current company manager
Los Roques Tourism Operators' Association	Current representative
International development agency	Current representative
A large tourism company in Los Roques	Current senior representative
A small independent posada in Los Roques	Current owner

The 12 initial interviewees went on to name other parties that were then contacted for additional interviews, with these respondents in turn mentioning additional stakeholders. This second stage of the snowballing process resulted in 41 further stakeholders being named. These are listed in Table 6.3, together with the number of times they were mentioned by respondents. These findings, including those in Table 6.3, incorporate results from two fieldwork periods, with stakeholders continuing to emerge during the second fieldwork phase. As explained in Section 5.5.1 of the Methods chapter, during the first period of fieldwork there was much legislative uncertainty and certain key government officials were later replaced, with their replacements being interviewed during the second fieldwork period.

**Table 6.3.** Stakeholders mentioned during the first and second stages of the snowballing process and number of times they were mentioned.

NAME OF STAKEHOLDER (Formal or generic name)	NUMBER OF TIMES MENTIONED
Central Co-ordinating Authority (CCA)	24
National Parks Institute (INPARQUES)	18
Military forces within the park (National Guard and Coast Guard)	11
Venezuelan Tourism Ministry (CORPOTURISMO)	9
Neighbourhood Association	8
Fishermen's Association	8
Los Roques Tourism Operators' Association	8
Local conservation NGO	6
Tourists visiting Los Roques <sup>1</sup>	8
Ministry of Health	6
Ministry of the Environment <sup>2</sup>	5
Harbour Master's Office <sup>3</sup>	5
Posada owners	5
Tourism operators	5
International development agency	4
National-scale conservation NGOs	4
Sport-fishing tourism operators	3
Ministry of Education	3
Friends of Los Roques Foundation	3
Airlines flying to Los Roques	3
Fire brigade	3
<b>CUT-OFF POINT OF THREE MENTIONS</b>	
Ministry of Agriculture	2
Ministry of Transport and Communications	2
Ministry of Internal Affairs	2
Multinational organisations (World Bank)	2
Los Roques recreational diving operators	2
Natural resources of Los Roques National Park <sup>1</sup>	2
Tourism Boat Operators' Association	2
National Biodiversity Office	2
National and international tourism agencies	2
Tourism service providers	1
Inland Revenue Service	1
International conservation NGO (The Nature Conservancy)	1
National Commission for Sustainable Tourism	1
Cultural Patrimony Institute	1
Madrizky Island Owners' Group	1
National Telecommunications Commission (CONATEL)	1
National Council for Science and Technology (CONICIT)	1
Los Roques Civic Authority	1
National Sailing Association	1
Sailing instruction organisation	1

<sup>1</sup>: Named group that did not have a clear or defined representative.

<sup>2</sup>: The legal representative of the Environment Ministry in Los Roques National Park was the CCA.

<sup>3</sup>: The Coastguard had assumed the functions of the Harbour Master in Los Roques National Park.

Thus, the second fieldwork period not only provided an opportunity to include additional interviewees in the sample, particularly recently appointed government officials, but it also added a valuable longitudinal dimension to the study.

As pointed out by Gray (1985), stakeholder identification is an ongoing process in which stakeholders will continue to appear, and the researcher has to set the cut-off point after which no further stakeholders will be added. In this study, a threshold of three mentions in the snowballing process was used to limit the stakeholder number included in the Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA). The justification for this threshold is discussed in Section 5.5.3 of Chapter 5. Table 6.3 shows that 21 stakeholder organisations or groups were mentioned three or more times. However, among the 21 stakeholders mentioned at least three times, tourists visiting Los Roques did not have a clear representative. Hence, it was decided to include the Sailboat Captain's Association as the nearest equivalent to a specific tourist group. Among the 21 stakeholders there were also two organisations (the Ministry of Environment and the Harbour Master's Office) who were represented by the Central Co-ordinating Authority and the Coastguard, respectively, and thus were already included in the process. Hence, they were not considered for further interview. It was decided that the fire brigade would not be interviewed as their sole role in the park was granting fire safety permits to posadas, so they had a very marginal role in the management of natural resources or of tourism activities.

The exclusion of these three organisations reduced the initial group of 21 stakeholders to 18. However, it is recognised that some actors with fewer than three mentions could have had an interest in park management or played a role in it. Some actors with considerable influence over park management were likely not to use such influence unless their interests were directly affected, and thus their potential role as stakeholders may not have been perceived by other actors. This might explain why some potentially influential stakeholders were not listed, or did not reach the threshold of three mentions. For this reason the researcher included four additional stakeholders for further consideration under

the STA framework. These four stakeholders were the national park's recreational diving operators, the Tourism Boat Operators' Association, the park's tourism service providers (such as restaurants and shops) and the Madrizky Island Owners' Group. The researcher felt that the representative of the Tourism Boat Operators' Association and some tourism service providers held contrasting views to those expressed by the representative of the Tourism Operators' Association, the organisation that supposedly represented them. The two other organisations, the recreational diving operators and the Madrizky Island Owners' Group, were associated with important management issues in the park. The decision to include these four organisations brings the total of stakeholders considered for further analysis to 22.

During the period between the two field visits, the senior representatives of the Central Co-ordinating Authority (CCA) and the representative for the INPARQUES office in Los Roques were replaced; in fact, the CCA Representative was replaced twice. Given the importance of these organisations in the park, it was decided to interview both their former and current representatives. This provided information on policies implemented under their former managers, as well as on future changes and policies as seen by the new managers. During the fieldwork, the person who had initially established and run the Tourism Operators' Association resigned his position in disagreement over policies implemented by the Association's Board of Directors. For this reason it was decided to interview both the Association's current and former representatives.

Within the confidentiality constraints, Table 6.4 shows the job titles of the 31 representatives from the 22 organisations selected for further interviews in order to assess their stakeholder attributes. The table also classifies these interviewees according to broad types of interest group, categorised as either tourism, government or NGOs. Most subsequent tables will also be organised according to these three broad interest groups.

**Table 6.4.** Organisations selected for further analysis in the STA framework and the job of the representative interviewed, these being categorised by interest group.

NAME OF INSTITUTION OR ORGANISATION	REPRESENTATIVE INTERVIEWED
<b>TOURISM INTEREST GROUP</b>	
Los Roques Tourism Operators' Association	Former representative
Los Roques Tourism Operators' Association	Representative
Tourists visiting Los Roques	Representative of Sailboat Captains' Association
posada owners	Owner of small independent posada
posada owners	Local owner of small independent posada
posada owners	Owner of large posada
Tourism operators	Representative of large tourism company
Sport-fishing tourism operator	Representative of sport-fishing posada
Sport-fishing tourism operator	Sport-fishing guide
Friends of Los Roques Foundation	Representative
Airlines flying to Los Roques	Tourist guide for large airline
Recreational SCUBA diving operators	Recreational diving operator
Tourism Boat Operators' Association	Representative
Tourism service providers	Owner of independent bar and restaurant
Madrizky Island Owners' Group	Former representative
<b>GOVERNMENT INTEREST GROUP</b>	
Central Co-ordinating Authority (CCA)	Former representative 1
Central Co-ordinating Authority (CCA)	Former representative 2
Central Co-ordinating Authority (CCA)	Current representative
National Parks Institute (INPARQUES)	Former representative
National Parks Institute (INPARQUES)	Current representative
Military forces within the park	Representative of National Guard, Los Roques Post
Military forces within the park	Representative of Coastguard, Los Roques Post
Venezuelan Tourism Ministry (CORPOTURISMO)	Representative
Ministry of Health	Representative of the Regional Health Office in which Los Roques is included
Ministry of Education	Headteacher of Los Roques school
<b>NGO INTEREST GROUP</b>	
Neighbourhood Association	Representative
Fishermen's Association	Representative
Local conservation NGO	Representative
International development agency	Representative of Los Roques project
National Conservation NGOs	Representative of conservation NGO 1
National Conservation NGOs	Representative of conservation NGO 2

In sum, 12 stakeholders interviewed during the initial snowballing process mentioned 41 organisations that, according to their views, were affected by the

park's management of natural resources and of tourism, and 21 of them exceeded the threshold of three or more mentions to be considered for further analysis. However, three of these were not further considered, while another four were included because they were regarded as having important roles in park management. Hence, a total of 31 representatives from the 22 stakeholder groups were approached for a first or second interview.

### **6.2.2. Stakeholder relationships**

This section examines the views of interviewees about their dependency relationships with other stakeholders. These views help to identify the potential for co-operation or antagonism between actors, this being useful in the design of stakeholder management strategies. It also aids understanding of the difficulties that have been experienced in response to previous management policies.

Tables 6.5 to 6.7 present stakeholder views on whether other organisations depended on them, whether they also depended on other parties, and whether they have co-operative relations with others. The Tables and the discussion separate the respondents according to their broad interest group. Appendix 6.1 details the specific organisations that the respondents perceived they had these relations with.

Table 6.5 demonstrates that all but three of the 15 tourism respondents considered that other stakeholders depended on their services, with the majority mentioning tourists as the group depending most on them. The former and current representatives of the Tourism Operators' Association and the large tourism company representative also contended that the local community was highly dependent on them in terms of jobs and income. The large tourism company representative argued that *"our company... creates jobs, the majority of our employees in Los Roques are 'Roquenos'...the employees who work as hostesses in the restaurant, the kitchen hands, room keepers, and the crews on catamarans, they are all Roquenos."*

**Table 6.5.** Views of tourism stakeholders on their relationships of dependence and co-operation.

TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS			
INTERVIEWEE	WHETHER OTHERS DEPEND ON THEM	WHETHER THEY DEPEND ON OTHERS	WHETHER THEY CO-OPERATED WITH OTHERS
Owner of small posada	YES	YES	NO
Local owner of small posada	YES	YES	YES
Owner of large posada	YES	YES	YES
Provider of tourist services	YES	YES	YES
Representative of large tourism company	YES	YES	YES
Representative of sport-fishing posada	YES	YES	YES
Sport-fishing guide	YES	YES	YES
Tourist guide for large airline	YES	YES	YES
Recreational diving operator	YES	YES	YES
Representative of Boat Operators' Association	YES	YES	YES
Former representative of Tourism Operators' Association	YES	YES	YES
Representative of Tourism Operators' Association	YES	NO	YES
Representative of Sailboat Captains' Association	NO	YES	YES
Representative of Friends of Los Roques Foundation	NO	NO	YES
Former Representative of Madrizky Island Owners' Group	NO	NO	YES

Five tourism interviewees felt that the park's government institutions depended on them for income from concession levies and entry fees. This view was clearly expressed by the former representative of the Tourism Operators' Association, who stated that *"because of the tourism operators...the park has the funds to finance all the protection activities"*. The tourist guide employed by a large airline suggested that it was important for the authorities to take the company into consideration *"because it brings more tourists, which in turn means more money from entry fees"*.

The representatives of the Sailboat Captains' Association, the Friends of Los Roques Foundation and the Madrizky Group were a notable exception, as they considered that other parties did not depend on their presence in the park. One likely influence on this perception was that all three groups used only their own resources, such as a sailboat or house, while in the park, and they thus had minimal relationships with other actors.

All tourism interviewees mentioned government organisations among the actors they depended on, the only exception being representatives of the Tourism Operators' Association, the Friends of Los Roques Foundation and the Madrizky Owners' Group. All but one interviewee claimed to maintain some sort of co-operative relationship with other organisations in the park. During the first fieldwork period all the tourism interviewees stated that they worked with government institutions but not with other tourism businesses. However, during the second field visit this situation had reversed, with most stating that they had little co-operation with government institutions but varying degrees of co-operation with other tourism businesses. This may partly be explained by the higher degree of joint working among tourism businesses observed during the second visit, with two industry associations having been created and another in the process of being created. This collaboration in the industry appeared to be motivated by the support given by the Central Co-ordinating Authority to the newly-formed Boat Operators' Association.

The relations of dependency and co-operation among government stakeholders are summarised in Table 6.6. The specific organisations mentioned during the interviews are listed in Appendix 6.1.

**Table 6.6.** Views of government stakeholders on their relationships of dependence and co-operation.

GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS			
INTERVIEWEE	WHETHER OTHERS DEPEND ON THEM	WHETHER THEY DEPEND ON OTHERS	WHETHER THEY CO-OPERATED WITH OTHERS
Former CCA representative 1	YES	YES	YES
Former CCA representative 2	YES	NO	YES
Current representative of CCA	YES	YES	YES
Former representative of INPARQUES	YES	YES	YES
Current representative of INPARQUES	YES	YES	YES
Representative of National Guard	YES	YES	YES
Representative of Coastguard	YES	NO	YES
Representative of CORPOTURISMO	YES	NO	YES
Headteacher of school	YES	YES	YES

Note: As discussed in Section 6.2.1, the Ministry of Health representative was not interviewed in terms of these relationships.

Most of the nine government representatives mentioned they depended on other government organisations. Six of them, and particularly the current

CCA representative, mentioned that either tourists or tourism operators depended on them. The former representative of INPARQUES claimed that the park's natural resources depended on this organisation's continued presence in the park. He suggested that *"the park condition, in relation to its natural resources, depends fundamentally on INPARQUES"*. He was the only interviewee at this early stage of the interviews mentioning direct relationships with the park's natural resources.

Three government interviewees stated that they did not depend on any other institutions working in the park. More specifically, when asked if the CCA worked with other park institutions, one former representative replied that *"we don't want to depend on anyone"*. Conversely, of the six interviewees mentioning some dependency on another institution, four mentioned the Central Co-ordinating Authority, probably because the CCA financed part of their operating costs in Los Roques.

Table 6.7 summarises the relations of dependency and co-operation among the NGO stakeholders, and the specific organisations mentioned during the interviews are listed in Appendix 6.1.

**Table 6.7.** Views of NGO stakeholders on their relationships of dependence and co-operation.

NGO STAKEHOLDERS			
INTERVIEWEE	WHETHER OTHERS DEPEND ON THEM	WHETHER THEY DEPEND ON OTHERS	WHETHER THEY CO-OPERATED WITH OTHERS
Representative of Neighbourhood Association	NO	YES	YES
Representative of Fishermen's Association	NO	YES	YES
Representative of international agency	YES	YES	YES
Representative of local conservation NGO	YES	YES	YES
Representative of conservation NGO 1	NO	NO	YES
Representative of conservation NGO 2	YES	YES	YES

Half of the six NGO respondents argued that no other organisations depended on them. Arguably the Neighbourhood Association and the Fishermen's Association representatives did not even mention their own members as depending on their institution. This may be indicative of their lack

of organisational consolidation, particularly in terms of their membership, with evidence of structural weaknesses in these two organisations. In spite of being established for less than a year at the time of the second field visit, the Neighbourhood Association already appeared to be in disarray, as there appeared to be no regular meetings and the Association's representative seemed to take decisions without consulting with his constituents. Similarly, the Fishermen's Association has a history of long periods of inactivity, with meetings convened only when major crises affected their trade.

The representatives of the two large conservation NGOs had noticeably contrasting perceptions of their dependency relationships. This may reflect their organisations' interests, as the NGO 2 representative worked closely with Los Roques National Park authorities, particularly with the CCA, during the design of park management policies. By contrast, the other NGO that did not consider it had dependency relations in the park had only sporadic contact with the park authorities and its main interests were in other Venezuelan national parks.

The assessment of stakeholder perceptions of dependency suggests that some of the actors who were central to achieving effective park management, such as the CCA or the Tourism Operators' Association, felt they did not depend on other stakeholders in meeting their objectives. This lack of perceived dependency among key actors could explain why so far it has proven impossible to implement a coherent tourism management policy in the park. Gray (1985) and Logsdon (1991) contend that if stakeholders lack a high degree of interdependence, then the more powerful actors may well refuse to co-operate with others (Gray and Hay, 1986) or will seek their own solutions. However, if the problems confronted by these stakeholders are complex and involve several parties, then such individualistic solutions have little chance of success (Logsdon, 1991). This might make it more difficult to achieve sustainable tourism objectives as stakeholders wielding power but having little interdependence with others are less likely to engage in negotiation, or they may try to impose their own interests (Gray, 1985; Gray and Hay, 1986).

### 6.3 Researcher's identification of stakeholders

This study identified parties involved in managing tourism and natural resources in Los Roques National Park, by allowing interviewees to identify the stakeholders they felt were affected by, or who have an interest in, the park's management. This involved a snowballing interviewing process to examine respondents' perceptions of dependency and co-operation relations in order to identify additional stakeholders.

However, a snowballing process is not enough by itself to identify the actors with an interest in the park's resources and their management. It was insufficient as some actors that were nominated lacked sufficient links to park management activities or to the park resources. Hence, a set of criteria was developed to allow the researcher to identify which of the actors nominated could be regarded as relevant stakeholders. These criteria related to the respondents' patterns of resource use and their involvement with park management, and they are listed in Table 6.8.

**Table 6.8.** Criteria used for stakeholder identification and the relationships that they examine.

CRITERIA	RELATIONSHIP EXAMINED
<b>RESOURCE USE CRITERIA</b>	
Resource user	Assess if interviewee used the park's natural resources
Level of resource use	Assess if interviewee's resource use was direct (e.g. lobster or beaches) or indirect (e.g. scenic or income collected from other users)
Perceived resource benefits	Assess if interviewee gained any benefit (monetary, material or otherwise) from the park's resources
Resource dependency perceptions	Assess if interviewee depended in any way on the park's resources
<b>MANAGEMENT CRITERIA</b>	
Legal relationship with management	Assess if interviewee had a legal mandate over the use of resources or was legally involved in its management
Perceived right or interest	Assess if interviewee had a legal right to use the resources and if was interested in their management
Involvement with management	Assess if interviewee had been or was involved in the management of tourism or natural resources in the park

Based on the criteria, a set of eight questions was devised to identify which organisations nominated during the snowballing process lacked a relationship with the park's resources or their management, and thus could be excluded as stakeholders in this study. These questions asked respondents if they used the park's resources, how dependent they were on them, what

benefits they obtained from them, and if they perceived they had a relationship with the resources. Relationships with the park management were also probed by asking if respondents had legal ties or duties with regard to the park management, if they perceived themselves as having rights or interests in the park management, and if they had ever participated in its management. These questions are listed in Table 6.9.

**Table 6.9.** Questions used to identify stakeholders affected by the management of Los Roques National Park.

<p><i>For what purpose was your (organisation / interest group) set up and what are its main areas of responsibility?</i></p> <p><i>What is the nature of your organisation's relationship with the archipelago Los Roques National Park?</i></p> <p><i>Does your organisation use the park or its resources in any way? If yes, in what way or ways, and over what period of time has it used the park or its resources?</i></p> <p><i>Does the park or its resources provide your organisation with any material, monetary or other types of benefit? If yes, which types of benefit does it provide?</i></p> <p><i>Does your organisation have any legal obligation to the park's management and its resources, including the management of visitors? If yes, what is the nature of this legal obligation?</i></p> <p><i>Is your organisation affected by the use of the park and its resources, or any change in its management? If yes, how is it affected?</i></p> <p><i>Has your organisation been involved in the management of the park and its resources, or is your organisation interested in being involved in any way in the park's management? If it is or has been involved in the park's management, in which ways is it or was it involved?</i></p> <p><i>Does your organisation have the right to use or regulate the park's resources? If yes, why does it have these rights, and what are those rights? If no, what rights of use or regulations related to the park and its resources do you think your organisation should have?</i></p>
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Table 6.10 summarises the number of criteria that were met by the various stakeholders. During the interviews to assess these criteria the stakeholders expressed views that have significant implications for the park's management, and these views are also discussed here. Table 6.10 shows that from the list of 31 actors generated from the snowballing process, 30 of them can be regarded as stakeholders according to the criteria established in this study. The Ministry

of Health was the only organisation that did not meet any of the assessment criteria, and despite it being mentioned six times during the snowballing process it was therefore not given further consideration in the study.

**Table 6.10.** Resource use and management criteria met by the stakeholders in each interest group.

<b>TOURISM INTEREST GROUP</b>		
<b>INTERVIEWEE</b>	<b>Number of resource criteria met</b>	<b>Number of management criteria met</b>
Owner of small posada	4	1
Local owner of small posada	4	2
Owner of large posada	4	1
Provider of tourist services	4	1
Representative of large tourism company	4	1
Representative of sport-fishing posada	4	2
Sport-fishing guide	4	2
Tourist guide for large airline	4	1
Recreational diving operator	4	2
Representative of Boat Operators' Association	3	3
Former representative of Tourism Operators' Association	3	1
Representative of Tourism Operators' Association	4	2
Representative of Sailboat Captains' Association	4	2
Representative of Friends of Los Roques Foundation	3	2
Former representative of Madrizky Island Owner's Group	4	2
<b>GOVERNMENT INTEREST GROUP</b>		
Former CCA representative 1	2	3
Former CCA representative 2	1	3
Current representative of CCA	2	3
Former representative of INPARQUES	2	3
Current representative of INPARQUES	1	3
Representative of National Guard	2	3
Representative of Coastguard	1	3
Representative of CORPOTURISMO	0	3
School headteacher	0	1
Representative of Ministry of Health	0	0
<b>NGO INTEREST GROUP</b>		
Representative of Neighbourhood Association	2	2
Representative of Fishermen's Association	4	2
Representative of local conservation NGO	4	3
Representative of international agency	0	3
Representative of conservation NGO 1	0	2
Representative of conservation NGO 2	0	3

The school's headteacher did meet the stakeholder identification criteria but only in a marginal way, complying with just one management criterion (interest in the park's management). This suggests that the local community's school might not be a stakeholder relevant to park management, and perhaps should only be informed of the management outcomes. However, given the

headteacher's knowledge about the community, she was regarded as a valuable source of information and was given full consideration in the study.

The remaining 30 interviewees met at least two or more criteria for stakeholder identification and were therefore stakeholders for the purpose of this study. The application of the stakeholder identification criteria not only validated the results of the snowballing interview, but also confirmed that this technique is valuable in as much as it can produce a relatively comprehensive list of stakeholders. The results, however, also suggest that stakeholder perception of who are relevant actors might not be enough in itself to identify stakeholders relevant to a management issue, thus making necessary the application of stakeholder identification criteria. The use of these criteria enables the researcher to distinguish and then disregard those parties that are nominated because stakeholders are familiar with them but that have little relevance to the management issues being analysed. Further, these criteria allow researchers to identify stakeholders that are not recognised by other actors during the snowballing process but that, due to their power to influence management issues, or their legitimacy and interest in participating in them, should be acknowledged as stakeholders in their own right.

Significant variability was observed in the number of criteria met by these stakeholders, particularly among government and NGO stakeholders. These differences were less marked among tourism stakeholders. Both the former and current representatives of the Tourism Operators' Association, and the Friends of Los Roques Foundation representative met only a limited number of resource use criteria. These stakeholders appeared to have little or no perception of dependency between their businesses and the well-being of the park's natural resources. This is typified by the comment of the Tourism Operators' Association former representative who, when asked if they obtained any benefits from these resources, retorted: *"benefits as such, I don't believe so"*. However, the remaining 13 tourism stakeholders met all four resource use criteria, three of them being categorised as direct resource users, three as indirect resource users, and the remaining nine as both (the stakeholder resource use classification is detailed in criterion A6 of Section 4.5.1, Chapter

4). All 15 tourism stakeholders met at least one management criteria for stakeholder identification, as all of them felt that they ought to be involved in park management, mainly in relation to the legal arrangements (concessions, permits or leases) that gave them resource access.

Nine out of 15 tourism stakeholders expressed an interest in actively becoming involved in park management, or stated that they had previously been involved in the past. Furthermore, four of these stakeholders favoured there being wider opportunities for stakeholder participation to replace the limited consultation mechanisms traditionally allowed by the park authorities. The representative of the Boat Operators' Association suggested that such a change towards wider participation was already taking place. He suggested that his organisation had a legal role in park management, arguing that their presence in the meetings of the CCA management council had given them an institutional influence in decision-making. He described how *"during the meetings with the authorities...we participate in deciding the changes [that take place in park management]. For example, in December we requested an increase in the number of people allowed to visit some cays and...it was accepted"*. However, the participation of tourism stakeholders in park management was relatively new, this being observed only during the second field visit, and it seemed to be motivated by the current CCA representative's desire to delegate some powers to local organisations in the park. This may explain why at the time the CCA supported the formation of other NGO organisations in the park, including the Neighbourhood Association and a Sport Fishermen's Association.

Due to their legal involvement in the park's management, eight out of ten government stakeholders met all three management criteria. However, they tended to meet only a limited number of resource criteria, as none of them considered themselves to be resource users, contending that their only direct link with park resources was the income they received from tourism operator fees. Indeed, the representatives of CORPOTURISMO and the Coastguard asserted that they had no relations with the park's natural resources. This suggests that their interest in the park was limited to their respective

management obligations, and thus they were not particularly involved or interested in how the park resources were used.

This assessment also suggests that there were differences in the perceptions of resource dependence between the former and current representatives of INPARQUES, with the former representative perceiving that the organisation had a higher dependency on the resources. By perceiving that INPARQUES was less dependent on park resources, the current INPARQUES representative may have felt less inclined to seek compromises with other stakeholders, or may have assumed that restrictions on resource use would not have any effect on their stake (Logsdon, 1991).

There were significant differences in the number of stakeholder criteria met by the six NGO stakeholders, with the representative of the local conservation NGO meeting all seven criteria and the international development agency and the conservation NGOs meeting three or less. This finding might be due to the advisory role played by these organisations, and it indicates that the international development agency and the conservation NGOs had interests but not rights in relation to the park's resources. Conversely, the local conservation NGO's mission and activities were exclusively limited to Los Roques. According to its representative, the local conservation NGO was in a unique situation due to it being located in the national park itself, so it depended directly on the park's natural resources, and it met all the resource criteria. Similarly, both the Neighbourhood Association and the Fishermen's Association scored highly in the stakeholder identification process as their members were resource users and both associations were located in the park.

Summing up, among the 31 representatives of 22 organisations identified during the snowballing process, one of them, the Ministry of Health, did not meet the criteria to be considered a stakeholder relevant to Los Roques National Park's management. Another party, the Ministry of Education, represented by the school's headteacher, only met the stakeholder identification criteria in a marginal way, but was included for further analysis due to her local community knowledge. This resulted in 21 organisations included for further

analysis, from which 30 representatives were interviewed. The organisations and their representatives selected for further analysis in the STA framework are listed in Table 6.11.

**Table 6.11.** Organisations identified as stakeholders relevant to the management of Los Roques National Park and the jobs of the representatives who were interviewed.

NAME OF INSTITUTION OR ORGANISATION	REPRESENTATIVE INTERVIEWED
<b>TOURISM INTEREST GROUP</b>	
Los Roques Tourism Operators' Association	Former and current representatives
Tourists visiting Los Roques	Representative of Sailboat Captains' Association
Posada owners	Two owners of small independent posadas (one local) and one owner of a large posada
Tourism operators	Representative of a large tourism company
Sport-fishing tourism operator	Representative of sport-fishing posada and sport-fishing guide
Friends of Los Roques Foundation	Representative of Los Roques Foundation
Airlines flying to Los Roques	Tourist guide for large airline
Recreational diving operators	Representative of diving operation
Tourism Boat Operators' Association	Representative
Tourism service providers	Owner of independent bar and restaurant
Madrizky Island Owners' Group	Former representative
<b>GOVERNMENT INTEREST GROUP</b>	
Central Co-ordinating Authority (CCA)	Two former representatives and current representative
National Parks Institute (INPARQUES)	Former and current representatives
Military forces in the park	Representatives of National Guard and the Coastguard
Venezuelan Tourism Ministry (CORPOTURISMO)	Representative
Ministry of Education	Headteacher of Los Roques school
<b>NGO INTEREST GROUP</b>	
Neighbours Association	Representative
Fishermen's Association	Representative
Local conservation NGO	Representative
International development agency	Representative of Los Roques project
National conservation NGOs	Representatives of two different organisations

The actors identified by snowballing were further validated as stakeholders through the application of stakeholder identification criteria. These criteria suggested that the snowballing interviews were a valuable technique to identify stakeholders. However, stakeholder perceptions might not be enough to identify the stakeholders relevant to park management. The use of stakeholder identification criteria can help to determine those actors who have little

relevance for specific management issues, as well as relevant stakeholders who are not recognised as such by the other actors during the snowballing process.

#### **6.4 Stakeholder attributes of legitimacy, power and urgency**

In order to participate in, or to influence a decision-making process, a stakeholder has to have the right to be involved in that process (legitimacy), the ability to affect its outcome (power), and the motivation to be involved in it (urgency) (Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997). Thus, assessment of these three stakeholder attributes provides the means to, first, know if a stakeholder previously identified through snowballing actually holds a stake and is relevant to a defining issue, which in this case were management proposals for tourism and natural resources in Los Roques. Second, the assessment of these attributes is indicative of the influence and interest that a given stakeholder is likely to have in decision-making. Hence, this section assesses the legitimacy, urgency and power attributes of the stakeholders previously identified in this research. The results of this section are then used to assess stakeholder interest and influence in park management in section 6.5 (Stakeholder interest and influence in management).

##### **6.4.1. Stakeholder Legitimacy**

Some commentators argue that legitimacy is socially produced in the communicative interaction among stakeholders, and hence it constitutes a shared social good, that does not depend on self-perception and may be defined and negotiated differently at different levels of society (Lawrence, Wickins and Phillips, 1997). These characteristics are reflected in Suchman's definition of legitimacy (1995, cited by Mitchel, Agel and Wood, 1997: 866), which is described as *"a generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions"*.

As legitimacy is determined by the application of an evaluative set of social expectations, the way it is perceived will depend on the particular evaluative framework in which these expectations are considered, and on who

makes these considerations. The conceptual framework for this research necessitated the adoption of an operational definition of legitimacy that does not depend on the perceptions of the stakeholders themselves, but still uses existing social constructs related to perceptions of legitimacy. Hence, legitimacy was related to specific criteria that assessed stakeholder use of the park's resources, including their history of resource use. These criteria also considered the existence of cultural or managerial practices that legitimated stakeholder behaviour, whether legal rights existed that entitled stakeholders to use or manage the resources, whether stakeholders derived benefits from the park's resources, and whether stakeholders expressed an interest or had been involved in the park's management. These criteria correspond to criteria C1 of the STA framework, and are presented in Section 4.5.3 of Chapter 4. Based on these criteria, specific questions were developed to assess legitimacy.

Part of the information required for the legitimacy assessment was collected during the interview for stakeholder identification. However, additional questions were required to complete the stakeholder legitimacy assessment, and these are presented in Table 6.12. The stakeholders had to meet at least one criterion to be considered legitimate, and their legitimacy increased with each successive criterion met.

**Table 6.12.** Specific questions used to assess stakeholder legitimacy.

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Are the activities of your organisation recognised as acceptable in the laws relating to the park or its management? If yes, was your organisation doing these activities before the park was declared? If your organisation's activities are considered unacceptable, which ones are considered unacceptable and by whom, when and why did this happen?</i></li><li>• <i>Does your organisation regulate the way in which other organisations use the park or its resources? If yes, how does your organisation regulate the use of the park or its resources and which organisations are affected by this regulation?</i></li></ul> |
|--|

Tables 6.13 summarises the number of legitimacy criteria met by the stakeholders in each interest group. All 30 stakeholders met at least one legitimacy criteria. The stakeholders with the highest legitimacy score included the tourism interest group, along with two NGO stakeholders (the representatives of the local conservation NGO and of the Fishermen's

Association). Government stakeholders generally had a comparatively low score, with none meeting more than four legitimacy criteria. This difference between interest groups is due to their use of park resources, so that tourism stakeholders saw themselves as having high resource dependency, and government stakeholders perceived themselves as not using these resources.

**Table 6.13.** Number of legitimacy criteria (out of 6) met by stakeholders in each interest group.

INTERVIEWEE	Number of legitimacy criteria met (N = 6)
<b>TOURISM INTEREST GROUP</b>	
Owner of small posada	6
Local owner of small posada	6
Owner of large posada	6
Provider of tourist services	6
Representative of large tourism company	6
Representative of sport-fishing posada	6
Sport-fishing guide	6
Tourist guide for large airline	6
Recreational diving operator	6
Representative of Boat Operators' Association	6
Former representative of Tourism Operators' Association	6
Representative of Tourism Operators' Association	6
Representative of Sailboat Captains' Association	6
Representative of Friends of Los Roques Foundation	6
Former representative of Madrizky Island Owners' Group	6
<b>GOVERNMENT INTEREST GROUP</b>	
Former CCA representative 1	4
Former CCA representative 2	4
Current representative of CCA	4
Former representative of INPARQUES	4
Current representative of INPARQUES	4
Representative of National Guard	4
Representative of Coastguard	4
Representative of CORPOTURISMO	3
School headteacher	1
<b>NGO INTEREST GROUP</b>	
Representative of Neighbourhood Association	5
Representative of Fishermen's Association	6
Representative of local conservation NGO	6
Representative of international agency	2
Representative of conservation NGO 1	1
Representative of conservation NGO 2	2

Some stakeholders in the government and NGO interest groups met only a handful of legitimacy criteria. These included the school headteacher and the representative of conservation NGO 1 (who only met one criterion), the representatives of conservation NGO 2 and the international development

agency (who met two), and the representative of CORPOTURISMO (with three). These low legitimacy scores may be attributed on the one hand to the fact that none of these stakeholders directly used the park resources. On the other hand, with the exception of CORPOTURISMO, none of these organisations had a legally recognised role in park management, even if some of them, like the international development agency or conservation NGO 2, were supported by the Co-ordinating Authority and INPARQUES.

In sum, all 30 stakeholders had legitimacy in terms of the natural resources in Los Roques National Park, and in most cases this legitimacy was high, with most stakeholders meeting between four to six legitimacy criteria.

#### **6.4.2 Stakeholder Power**

According to Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997), power can be difficult to define, but can be recognised as the ability of those possessing it to bring about the outcomes they desire. More specifically, they consider it a social relationship in which a given actor can get another to do something that otherwise would not have been done. Harrison and St. John (1994) classify the different sources of power of stakeholders, recognising that some may possess more than one source of power, with this classification including formal, economic and political power. In the case of Los Roques National Park, formal power would imply the existence of a mandate or legal power over the resources, economic power would represent the ability to withhold resources valued by users, and political power would come from the ability to persuade others to influence the park management.

This study used eight criteria in order to assess stakeholder power. Four of these criteria assessed stakeholder control over the park's resources, their ability to regulate the resource access of others, their ability to affect others through their behaviour or their absence, and their ability to rally other stakeholders to support their own claims. Indirect questions are used to assess two of the criteria: the stakeholder ability to sabotage or ignore management measures, and also their ability to influence management in a way that was beneficial or profitable to them. Previous or current participation in resource

management was considered to be an indication of power, so this feature was also assessed. Finally, since power is a socially recognisable characteristic, all stakeholders were asked to name the organisations that they considered were powerful enough to be able to disrupt the park's management. These criteria were linked to eight specific questions, the majority of which had already been asked during the stakeholder identification process and the assessment of legitimacy. However, some additional questions were necessary to fully assess this stakeholder attribute, and these are presented in Table 6.16. For the stakeholders to have power they have to meet at least one criterion, with their power increasing with each further criterion they meet. These criteria correspond to criteria C3 of the STA framework, and are presented in Section 4.5.3 of Chapter 4.

**Table 6.16.** Specific questions used to assess stakeholder power.

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>If your organisation disagrees with some of the park's management regulations, is there any way in which your organisation can change or avoid compliance with these regulations? If yes, how can (if no, why can't) your organisation change or avoid compliance with these management regulations?</i></li><li>• <i>Are there any organisations who ignore or get around the park's management regulations? If yes, which organisations, and in what ways do they ignore or get around the park's management regulations?</i></li></ul> |
|--|

Table 6.17 presents the number of power criteria met by stakeholders in each interest group. This assessment reveals significant differences in the number of power criteria that stakeholders met, with government sector parties having the highest scores. The remaining stakeholders met half or less of the power criteria, with the exception of the large tourism company representative, the tourist guide for the large airline, the former representative of the Madrizky Group and the representative of the Neighbourhood Association representative.

**Table 6.17.**Number of power criteria (out of eight) met by the stakeholders in each interest group.

INTERVIEWEE	Number of power criteria met (N = 8)
<b>TOURISM INTEREST GROUP</b>	
Owner of small posada	0
Local owner of small posada	1
Owner of large posada	1
Provider of tourist services	2
Representative of large tourism company	4
Representative of sport-fishing posada	2
Sport-fishing guide	2
Tourist guide for large airline	5
Recreational diving operator	2
Representative of Boat Operators' Association	3
Former representative of Tourism Operators' Association	2
Representative of Tourism Operators' Association	3
Representative of Sailboat Captains' Association	0
Representative of Friends of Los Roques Foundation	2
Former representative of Madrizky Island Owners' Group	6
<b>GOVERNMENT INTEREST GROUP</b>	
Former CCA representative 1	6
Former CCA representative 2	6
Current representative of CCA	7
Former representative of INPARQUES	6
Current representative of INPARQUES	5
Representative of National Guard	6
Representative of Coastguard	6
Representative of CORPOTURISMO	2
School headteacher	1
<b>NGO INTEREST GROUP</b>	
Representative of Neighbourhood Association	4
Representative of Fishermen's Association	2
Representative of local conservation NGO	2
Representative of international agency	2
Representative of conservation NGO 1	2
Representative of conservation NGO 2	2

Apart from the CORPOTURISMO representative and the school headteacher, all other government stakeholders were directly involved in the park's management, and thus meet a large number of power criteria. This characteristic relates to their role in formulating and implementing management guidelines (Co-ordinating Authority and INPARQUES), or to their role in enforcing these guidelines for all park users (Coastguard and National Guard). All of them also had the ability to modify current management regulations to their benefit, either by requesting changes through established legal mechanisms (INPARQUES, Coastguard and National Guard), or by setting up management priorities that were favourable to their interests (Co-ordinating Authority). According to the power classification of Harrison and St. John

(1994), the power attributes wielded by these government institutions were mostly of the formal type, meaning that they were held through a mandate or legal authority over the resources.

The involvement of the CCA, INPARQUES, the National Guard and the Coastguard in park management enabled them to affect other stakeholders by regulating access to resources or by them not complying with their assigned functions. Further, the former representatives of institutions with most regulatory power in the park, that is the Central Co-ordinating Authority and INPARQUES, asserted that their institutions had the ability to stop or derail changes in park management that they considered harmful to their interests. They stated that their institutions could influence other stakeholders either by introducing legal challenges to them (former representative of INPARQUES), by legal or financial pressure over them (former CCA representative 1) or through the direct imposition of decisions through political pressure (former CCA representative 2).

With the exception of the Coastguard, National Guard, and current CCA representatives, all government stakeholders claimed they lacked the ability to rally other stakeholders in support of their own claims. This finding suggests that high levels of tension and a lack of co-operation existed among the government stakeholders. This was confirmed by several tourism stakeholders, who regarded the tension among government institutions to be a significant management problem for the park, and it was also acknowledged by some government respondents.

The tourism stakeholders varied greatly in the number of power criteria they met, ranging from none (in the cases of the small posada owner and the Sailboat Captains' Association representative) to six (in the case of the Madrizky House Owners' Group former representative). In contrast to the government actors, the tourism stakeholders considered that their power mostly originated from their ability to rally others to support their claims, and from their ability to affect others through their behaviour or absence. Four of these stakeholders made particular reference to their ability to affect others as

employers of local people, and as providers of a large income to park authorities through fees and taxes charged on their operations. A third aspect of power for these stakeholders was their ability to influence park management for their own benefit, which they achieved mostly through informal pressure or through negotiation mechanisms with park authorities. This significantly contrasts with government institutions, where this power was exerted through formally established legal procedures.

In sum, tourism stakeholders held power through their provision of local jobs and as an income source for government institutions. In these areas they were able to mobilise local people and the media to support their claims, and they could also manipulate management regulations to their advantage, mostly through informal pressure and negotiation mechanisms. These would be characterised by Harrison and St. John (1994) as economic and political types of power, as they related to their ability to withhold resources valued by other actors, and their ability to persuade others to influence management outcomes. However, none of the posada owners had substantial power. This suggests that tourism stakeholders largely hold power through representation, such as through the Tourism Operators' Association, or through their bargaining weight from sheer size, as was the case with the large tourism company representative. As the large tourism company representative and the tourist guide for the large airline had significant power, these stakeholders might well choose to negotiate their own solutions with the park authorities instead of joining the Tourism Operators' Association. There was evidence that these companies had done this in the past, suggesting that powerful tourism stakeholders may support the Tourism Operators' Association only when it is convenient for them.

The Madrizky House Owners' Group held an exceptional degree of power in relation to the other tourism stakeholders, mostly due to the legal arrangement whereby Madrizky island resources were leased to them. This arrangement pre-dated the creation of the Park and it gave the Group unique control over the island. Further, as the Madrizky Group members belonged to several of the most economically powerful Venezuelan families, they were able

to influence the park's management to their own benefit. While they did not use that influence on a regular basis, during the second fieldwork period the researcher witnessed the enormous pressure that at least one of the Group's members was capable of unleashing to influence park management. This individual managed to pressure INPARQUES into allowing him to practice sport-fishing in the Total Protection area in the park, despite the current management regulations strictly forbidding any use other than vigilance by the park authorities. The representatives of two other park management institutions, several government ministers and even the President of INPARQUES directly pressured the INPARQUES local representative into allowing the irregular activities of this individual.

Finally, in the case of NGO stakeholders, almost all of them met only two power criteria. Their power attributes originated mostly from their support for the park's management by helping them to implement management measures, or from their perceived ability to influence the park authorities through public pressure. However, it is possible that some of these stakeholders overestimated their power to influence the park management, particularly in the case of the representative of the local conservation NGO, whose role in the park's management had been at best marginal for quite a long period. It is likely that the ability of these stakeholders to affect others by their absence or behaviour was quite low. However, the representative of the Neighbourhood Association scored highly on the power criteria, mostly through his perceived ability to participate in the park's management and to modify it with support from the Central Co-ordinating Authority.

As many as 17 stakeholders considered there were organisations powerful enough to disrupt the park's management process. The institution perceived by a majority of stakeholders as most powerful by far was the Central Co-ordinating Authority, which was mentioned eight times by an equal number of stakeholders across all three interest sectors. Five stakeholders also mentioned unspecified, general economic interests related to tourism as being powerful enough to affect the management regulations. Notably, the Tourism Ministry (CORPOTURISMO) was mentioned directly by two interviewees as

having disrupted the local management of tourism in the past, despite this institution appearing to have a relatively low level of power. Another notable case was the tourist guide for the large airline, who felt his own company was powerful enough to ensure that it was involved in decision-making processes. This stakeholder asserted that, as his *"company is the largest operator in the park, so it should be taken more into account when strategic changes are made. Therefore, it is very important that the administrative authorities take our company into consideration because it is the one that brings more tourists, representing more money from entry fees"*.

The assessment of power attributes is useful as it elucidated the ability of stakeholders to influence decision-making in the park and to influence management actions. These results indicate also that some stakeholders, such as the large airline and the Neighbourhood Association, had acquired the power needed to apply pressure, to have their interests taken into account by the management system, and to affect the park's balance of power. Several stakeholders both in the government and tourism sectors suggested that this was in fact the situation. However, the most powerful stakeholders were the government institutions, due to their legal involvement in park management and their ability to affect the activities of other stakeholders through imposing legal constraints.

#### **6.4.2. Stakeholder Urgency**

Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997) contend that the analysis of legitimacy and power attributes is not enough to establish a stakeholder's importance. Hence, their framework also adopts the urgency of stakeholder claims as an additional criterion to measure their importance. They define urgency as the degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate attention, and it is based on the attributes of time sensitivity, this being the degree to which delay is unacceptable to the stakeholder, and criticality, defined as the importance of the claim to the stakeholder (Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997).

As with the legitimacy attribute, this study required an operational definition of urgency that would not depend solely on the perceptions of

stakeholders. These criteria should also assess the criticality and time sensitivity of stakeholder relationships with the park and its resources. For this reason, stakeholder urgency was linked to five criteria that assessed how their well-being or operational capacity was affected by changes in their relationship with park resources. The first criterion was stakeholder perception of negative effects resulting from a change in current management practices, or from the lack of it. The second criterion was stakeholder ability to accommodate changes in resource access and use; the third was stakeholder ability to access alternative resources; the fourth was stakeholder dependence on resources with limited availability; and the fifth was stakeholder dependence on resources with a seasonal access pattern. These criteria correspond to criteria C2 of the STA framework, and are presented in Section 4.5.3. of Chapter 4. For stakeholders to claim urgency they had to meet at least one of these criteria, and their urgency increased with each successive criterion met. These criteria were linked to four specific questions that are presented in Table 6.14.

**Table 6.14.** Specific questions used to assess stakeholder urgency.

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Does your organisation need to use the park or some of its resources during specific times of the year? If yes, when and for what purpose?</i></li> <li>• <i>If the park's resources that your organisation uses were not available, could you substitute them with some other resources? If no, could you use the same resources but in alternative locations within the park?</i></li> <li>• <i>If the activities that your organisation is involved in were not allowed in the park, could you substitute them with some other activities? If no, could these activities be provided in alternative locations within the park?</i></li> <li>• <i>Is your organisation negatively affected by the way the park's resources are being used or managed? If yes, does this compromise the activities and / or viability of your organisation?</i></li> </ul> |
|---|

Table 6.15 summarises the number of urgency criteria met by stakeholders in each interest group. It shows considerable variability in the number of urgency criteria met by stakeholders, with government and NGO stakeholders generally having least urgency. This lack of urgency attributes relates to their low dependence on the park's natural resources, thus making them relatively unaffected by management changes to these resources. Indeed, for five of the nine government stakeholders their only urgency attribute related

to their perception that some type of management changes could negatively affect their institutional objectives. These changes mostly related to sharing or relinquishing part of their attributions to other institutions. By contrast, tourism stakeholders that directly used the park's resources tended to have the highest urgency, while tourist accommodation stakeholders tended to meet fewer urgency criteria.

**Table 6.15.** Number of urgency criteria (out of 5) met by stakeholders in each interest group.

INTERVIEWEE	Number of urgency criteria met (N = 5)
<b>TOURISM INTEREST GROUP</b>	
Owner of small posada	2
Local owner of small posada	5
Owner of large posada	2
Provider of tourist services	2
Representative of large tourism company	5
Representative of sport-fishing posada	4
Sport-fishing guide	5
Tourist guide for large airline	4
Recreational diving operator	3
Representative of Boat Operators' Association	5
Former representative of Tourism Operators' Association	1
Representative of Tourism Operators' Association	1
Representative of Sailboat Captains' Association	5
Representative of Friends of Los Roques Foundation	4
Former representative of Madrizky Island Owners' Group	4
<b>GOVERNMENT INTEREST GROUP</b>	
Former CCA representative 1	1
Former CCA representative 2	1
Current representative of CCA	1
Former representative of INPARQUES	1
Current representative of INPARQUES	1
Representative of National Guard	0
Representative of Coastguard	0
Representative of CORPOTURISMO	0
School headteacher	0
<b>NGO INTEREST GROUP</b>	
Representative of Neighbourhood Association	0
Representative of Fishermen's Association	5
Representative of local conservation NGO	4
Representative of international agency	0
Representative of conservation NGO 1	0
Representative of conservation NGO 2	0

The highest urgency was held by representatives of the large tourism company, the recreational diving operator, the sport-fishing guides and the Boat Operators' Association, as it would be very difficult to find them alternative resources and areas for their current activities, and it is difficult for them to

change their activities. The representative of the Sailboat Captains' Association was in a similar situation, as it was claimed that their activity relied for its success on a specific geographic location and time frame. The large tourism company and the local owner of the small posada had a higher urgency than other posada owners, because they offered their clients a seasonal product, that is lobster, which had very strict regulations limiting how they were exploited.

The representatives of the local conservation NGO and the Fishermen's Association had the highest urgency among the NGO stakeholders. This is largely because they were highly dependent on specific and limited resources (the current location within the park for the former, and fishing areas for the latter). Additional factors were the lack of viable substitute areas for their activities, and the fact that they could be adversely affected by the resources being restricted or by changes in their management.

Four NGO and four government stakeholders did not meet any urgency criteria as they did not directly depend on the park's natural resources, and they also saw their mission as being independent of the park's management of natural resources. In other words, these stakeholders felt that they could still achieve their mission irrespective of the condition of the park's resources. This perception was reflected in the comments of the representative of conservation NGO 1: *"For us, in practical terms, this park is not important. It may be important from several points of views, such as the environmental, the territorial, the ecological or the coastal management point of view...However, from our organisation's point of view, the disappearance of this park does not affect us in any way at this time."*

The assessment of the urgency attribute shows that the highest urgency rested with stakeholders that depended most on the park's natural resources, and that had most to lose from changes in park management or from resource deterioration. Only 22 of the 30 actors assessed met the criteria for urgency, and among these 22 there was significant variability in the number of criteria met, with tourism parties meeting the most and government stakeholders the least.

## **6.5 Stakeholder interests and their potential role in influencing park management**

After completing the assessment of stakeholder attributes, the next step in the STA Framework is to assess how much influence the stakeholders might have on the management process and how important their involvement is for the success of management proposals.

In order to assess stakeholder importance for management proposals, this section “maps” each stakeholder within a matrix that describes their potential interest and influence over park management. The value of this assessment is that it enables decision-makers leading the management process to know which stakeholders have the power to affect park management and which have an interest in its outcome. In other words, the assessment of stakeholder interest and influence indicates to decision-makers who should be involved in the management process. In order to produce the stakeholder interest and influence matrix, this section classifies stakeholders according to their level of resource dependence and the number of legitimacy, urgency and power criteria that they met.

### **6.5.1. Stakeholder classification according to resource dependence**

According to Finn (1996), to adequately manage stakeholders it is important to understand why a given stakeholder becomes involved in a problem or issue, and what perspective this stakeholder holds of the problem or issue. This is why all stakeholders were classified according to their level of resource dependence.

Stakeholders were classified as being either direct or indirect users according to their use of park resources. Direct resource users were defined as those whose function, operation or well-being depended on, or was directly generated by, resource use. All tourism stakeholders, along with three NGO stakeholders (the Neighbourhood Association, the Fishermen's Association and the local conservation NGO), were included in this category. Three tourism parties (the provider of tourism services and the former and current representatives of the Tourism Operators' Association) asserted that they were only indirect resource users. They felt that their operations were not making

use of the park's natural resources and that they only gained an indirect benefit, this being publicity or the use of the natural scenery as promotional background for their activities. However, their view is questionable as the main motivation attracting their customers to Los Roques tended to be the park's natural resources. While their businesses did not directly use any resource, this did not mean that they were not resource-dependent. Hence, in spite of their claims, they were classified as direct resource users for this study. Table 6.18 summarises the findings of this section.

**Table 6.18.** Classification of stakeholder organisations according to their level of resource dependence.

NAME OF INSTITUTION OR ORGANISATION	Level of resource dependency
<b>TOURISM INTEREST GROUP</b>	
Tourism Operators' Association	Direct <sup>1</sup>
Sailboat Captains' Association	Direct
Posada owners	Direct
Large tourism company	Direct
Sport-fishing operators	Direct
Friends of Los Roques Foundation	Direct
Large airline	Direct
Recreational diving operators	Direct
Boat Operators' Association	Direct
Tourism service providers	Direct <sup>1</sup>
Madrizky Island Owners' Group	Direct
<b>GOVERNMENT INTEREST GROUP</b>	
Central Co-ordinating Authority (CCA)	Indirect
National Parks Institute (INPARQUES)	Indirect
Military forces in the park	Indirect
Venezuelan Tourism Ministry (CORPOTURISMO)	Non user
Ministry of Education	Non user
<b>NGO INTEREST GROUP</b>	
Neighbourhood Association	Direct
Fishermen's Association	Direct
Local conservation NGO	Direct
International development agency	Non user
National conservation NGOs	Non user

<sup>1</sup>: These stakeholders perceived themselves to be indirect resource users.

Indirect users were defined as those whose function, operation or well-being depended on a third-party that was a direct resource user. This includes all but two of the government stakeholders, who benefited from the resources through the concession fees charged by the Central Co-ordinating Authority for tourism operators, with this income then distributed by the CCA to

INPARQUES, the Coastguard and National Guard. Table 6.18 shows that some government and NGO stakeholders could not be included in any of the previous resource use categories. The Tourism Ministry (CORPOTURISMO) and Los Roques local school were included within a category of non-users, as they were not connected or did not depend on the park's natural resources for their normal functions or well-being. This category also included the international development agency and both of the national conservation NGOs, as none of them were physically based in the park or used its resources in any way.

In sum, most tourism stakeholders were direct resource users, the majority of government stakeholders were indirect resource users, and the NGO stakeholders were either direct resource users or non-users. It is likely that stakeholders who were direct resource users would have a strong interest in management proposals, while those who were indirect users would generally be less interested, the reason being that indirect users tended to be less affected by management changes negatively impacting on the resources.

#### **6.5.2. Matrix of stakeholder interest and potential influence**

An important step in enhancing the likely success of tourism and natural resource management proposals is to assess how stakeholders' interests and potential influence can affect them. This knowledge helps to identify those actors who might support or sabotage the proposals (Finn, 1996), thus relating the strategic options to the anticipated stakeholder dynamics. The end goal of this classification is to design management measures that are tailored according to the way that targeted stakeholders are likely to react to them.

Eden (1996) proposes the use of interest and power criteria to assess the characteristics of stakeholders in relation to their potential attitudes to an issue. A modified Eden classification matrix is used in this study, based on each stakeholder's potential influence and interest in the management process. The stakeholder categories resulting from this assessment are participant-dependent, participant-active, non participant-passive, and non participant-active. These categories refer to each stakeholder's likely interest in the

management proposals, and their potential influence on them. They are illustrated in Figure 6.1.

**Figure 6.1.** Example of an influence and interest matrix and the four categories created by its application.

<b>HIGH INTEREST</b>	PARTICIPANT - DEPENDENT	PARTICIPANT - ACTIVE
<b>LOW INTEREST</b>	NON PARTICIPANT - PASSIVE	NON PARTICIPANT - ACTIVE
	<b>LOW INFLUENCE</b>	<b>HIGH INFLUENCE</b>

As explained in Section 4.5.3 of Chapter 4, all stakeholders were assigned a specific level of interest in management proposals in relation to the number of urgency criteria that they met and their level of resource dependence. These parameters constituted the required input to assign an interest level according to criteria C4 of the STA Framework. Similarly, the level of stakeholder influence was determined by looking at the number of legitimacy and power criteria met by each stakeholder, and by feeding this information into criteria C5 of the STA Framework. Table 6.19 explicitly presents the classification criteria applied in the analysis.

**Table 6.19.** Criteria applied to the stakeholder interest and influence matrix.

<b>HIGH INTEREST</b>	<i>The stakeholder met at least one urgency attribute OR was a direct resource user</i>
<b>LOW INTEREST</b>	<i>The stakeholder did not meet any urgency attributes AND was an indirect resource user</i>
<b>HIGH INFLUENCE</b>	<i>The stakeholder met more than three power attributes AND more than three legitimacy attributes</i>
<b>LOW INFLUENCE</b>	<i>The stakeholder met three or less power attributes OR three or less legitimacy attributes</i>

Only those stakeholders currently representing an organisation were included in the interest and influence matrix. Thus, the former representatives of the Central Co-ordinating Authority, INPARQUES and the Tourism Operators' Association were not considered. This decision was taken because it is unlikely that these former representatives could significantly influence future management proposals for the park. Figure 6.2 presents the results of the interest and influence matrix.

Figure 6.2. Matrix of stakeholder interest and potential influence.

<b>HIGH INTEREST</b>	<b>PARTICIPANT - DEPENDENT</b>	<b>PARTICIPANT - ACTIVE</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small posadas in Los Roques</li> <li>• Fishermen's Association</li> <li>• Tourism service providers</li> <li>• Sport-fishing tourism operators</li> <li>• Sailboat Captains' Association</li> <li>• Local conservation NGO</li> <li>• Recreational diving operators</li> <li>• Friends of Los Roques Foundation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Co-ordinating Authority</li> <li>• INPARQUES</li> <li>• Tourism Operators' Association</li> <li>• Large tourism company</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Association</li> <li>• Madrizky Island Owner's Group</li> <li>• Boat Operators' Association</li> <li>• Large airline</li> </ul>
<b>LOW INTEREST</b>	<b>NON PARTICIPANT - PASSIVE</b>	<b>NON PARTICIPANT - ACTIVE</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CORPOTURISMO</li> <li>• Ministry of Education</li> <li>• International development agency</li> <li>• National conservation NGOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastguard in Los Roques</li> <li>• National Guard in Los Roques</li> </ul>
	<b>LOW INFLUENCE</b>	<b>HIGH INFLUENCE</b>

All stakeholders were classified in the four stakeholder management categories of the matrix. The first category of participant-active stakeholders involves stakeholders with a high interest in the park's management and use, and a high ability to influence them. Included in this category are the Central Co-ordinating Authority, the National Parks Institute (INPARQUES) the large tourism company and the large airline, the Tourism Operators' Association, the Neighbourhood Association, the Boat Operators' Association and the Madrizky Island Owner's Group. These stakeholders can be considered key players that would have to be included when developing and implementing management proposals related to the park. Any management proposal that ignored some of these stakeholders would likely fail because their interests would not necessarily be taken into account and they might then use their influence to either forward their own interests or sabotage the proposals.

Two participant-active stakeholders, the Boat Operators' Association and the Madrizky Group, were hardly mentioned during the snowballing process, but both were likely to have considerable influence and interest in park management. In the case of the Boat Operators' Association this discrepancy might be explained by the fact that it was a relatively new organisation that was gathering power and influence at great pace. This organisation may come to

play an important role in the park, but it was then not yet fully recognised as a key player by other stakeholders. With regard to the Madrizky Group, this stakeholder holds what Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997) call "hidden power", that is power that was there but was not fully used because there was no immediate threat to its interests, and thus it was not necessarily noted by other stakeholders. Hence, the potential interest and influence of these stakeholders was not readily acknowledged by other actors, and this reinforces the point made earlier in Section 6.3 about the need to have independent criteria for stakeholder identification as stakeholder perceptions alone might not be adequate to identify all relevant actors.

The participant-dependent stakeholders constitute the second category in the potential interest and influence matrix, these being stakeholders with a high interest in the park's management and use, but who lacked ability to influence them. This category includes the small posadas, the Fishermen's Association, the providers of tourism services, sport-fishing operators, the Sailboat Captains' Association, the local conservation NGO, the recreational diving operators, and the Friends of Los Roques Foundation. None of these stakeholders had by themselves the power to influence park management proposals or to impose conditions during their development. However, they all had enough legitimacy and urgency to consider themselves involved and with a high stake in park management proposals, and it was highly likely that they would demand that their interests were given consideration in the proposals. Even if they could not directly influence the management proposals or their implementation, they were likely to be capable of establishing strategic alliances to increase their influence, particularly if there were common issues affecting other organisations. It may be considered that these stakeholders should be taken into account to prevent their opposition, such as through sabotaging manoeuvres. In section 4.5.3 of Chapter 4 it was argued in relation to the interest and influence matrix, that participant-dependent stakeholders have enough legitimacy and stakes in the issue to rightfully be involved. Hence, the stakeholder analysis provided by the matrix could and probably should also act as an empowerment mechanism, identifying those groups who need their

participation capacity built up in order to have their voice heard and to be able to exert an influence over management proposals.

The third category in the potential interest and influence matrix are non participant-active stakeholders, which included those with a high degree of influence over the park's management and use, but who did not have a significant direct interest in the results. This category included both the Coastguard and the National Guard in Los Roques. These actors had a high degree of influence over park management proposals because they legally enforced the management regulations and they had the authority and power to impede resource access to other stakeholders. However, none of them depended directly on the park's natural resources for their well-being, and to a certain extent their mission was also independent of the state of these resources, even if resource management was part of their wider mission. Consequently, they had a low degree of interest in what happened to the park and its resources. In Los Roques National Park, however, these stakeholders depended on the Co-ordinating Authority and to a certain extent on INPARQUES. This implies that even if they did not have a direct interest in park management, they could be forced to support those stakeholders with most interests through the manipulation of the relations of dependency existing between them. Even if these stakeholders would not directly participate in the formulation of management proposals for Los Roques, their interests would have to be taken into account in order to avoid their potential opposition.

Finally, the fourth stakeholder category is of non participant-passive stakeholders, which included stakeholders who had both a low degree of influence over the park's management and use and lacked any real interest in the outcomes. This category included the Ministry of Tourism (CORPOTURISMO), the Ministry of Education, the international development agency and the national conservation NGOs, all of which had a low degree of influence over the park's management and who did not depend on its resources for their well-being. Even if these stakeholders participated in some activities related to park management, this process and its outcomes did not affect them and they lacked the capacity to block or sabotage them. In principle, their

participation in resource management proposals for Los Roques might be considered desirable but not indispensable, unless these stakeholders could later develop a higher interest or gain an increased influence over park management.

To summarise, this section has classified all stakeholder groups according to their potential interest in, and influence over, the management of Los Roques National Park and its natural resources. Of the resulting categories it may well be considered that at least two, the participant-active and the participant-dependent stakeholders, should be closely involved in management proposals affecting the park's natural resources and tourism. Not involving these stakeholders would likely risk the failure of the management proposals because potentially they have the ability and the interest to block or sabotage any process that does not take into account their interests. Although in the case of Los Roques the participant-dependent stakeholders are likely to organise themselves in strategic alliances that give them the power they lack on their own, the application of the potential interest and influence matrix should act as an empowerment tool. For those stakeholder groups with high legitimacy but who lack the power to influence management proposals, it should be used to target capacity building in order to increase their ability to influence decision-making outcomes.

Although not absolutely necessary, the decision-makers responsible for managing Los Roques National Park would probably gain new assets if they included the stakeholders who fell into the other two categories of potential interest and influence. The non-participant -active and the non-participant -passive stakeholders might have some influence on park management, and their co-operation may bring added value in the form of increased resources, knowledge, expertise and experience.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

This chapter identified who, according to the park's main actors, could be considered to be stakeholders relevant to the management of Los Roques

National Park. After drawing up an initial list, the researcher further refined the stakeholder identification through the assessment of their dependence on the park's resources and their involvement in its management. The chapter then examined the stakeholder attributes of legitimacy, urgency and power to assess how much these stakeholders were able to influence the park's management process. Finally, through the use of a stakeholder matrix of potential interest and influence, stakeholders were identified who it might be considered are essential to involve in proposals that affect the park and its resources.

The initial identification of potential stakeholders was achieved through the assessment of their dependency relationships using a "snowballing" process in which each actor mentioned by an interviewee was subsequently interviewed to identify other potential stakeholders. This process resulted in a total of 41 organisations being named, of which 22 were considered to have an important role in park management and were selected for further analysis under the STA framework. A total of 31 representatives from these organisations were approached for further interviews. The information obtained during the snowballing process also enabled the researcher to assess the dependency relationships of these actors. Through the use of stakeholder identification criteria it was concluded that one of the representatives identified during the snowballing process, the Ministry of Health, did not meet the criteria to be considered a stakeholder, thus reducing the stakeholder organisations considered for further analysis to 21, and the interviewed representatives to 30.

The assessment of legitimacy, urgency and power attributes helped to evaluate stakeholder ability and interest in participating in decision-making and in influencing the outcomes of management decisions. The application of the potential interest and influence matrix led to the classification of the stakeholders according to the roles they potentially might have in the management of Los Roques National Park. The resulting categories can allow decision-makers to design stakeholder management measures that are tailored to the characteristics of each group in order to increase the likelihood that the management process will succeed and perhaps even generate added value.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Stakeholder Resource Use and Interests**

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#### **7.1 Introduction**

A crucial step within the Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA) is the assessment of stakeholders' needs and interests in relation to management of the park's tourism and resources. It serves two purposes. First, it enables the design of resource management options that are feasible and acceptable to stakeholders affected by any management proposal. Second, the assessment of stakeholder needs and interests provides park managers with an indication of the issues that stakeholders consider vital, issues that are liable to create conflict, and those that are potentially negotiable.

The examination of stakeholder needs and interests necessitates the identification of park resources that they value in terms of their perceived significance for tourism and for their intrinsic value. This chapter also identifies the park resources that are used and affected by tourism, and it assesses stakeholder perceptions about the suitability of current types of tourism activities and levels of tourism resource use. The last section of the chapter examines stakeholders' current patterns of resource access and use. This assessment identifies the degree to which stakeholders can access alternative resources or accommodate changes in how they use them. The appraisal of stakeholder resource needs, and of limitations they have in relation to their use, provides guidance as to the management options that stakeholders might consider appropriate.

#### **7.2 Park resources valued by stakeholders and the tourism industry**

The study asked stakeholders to specify the resources they perceived to be intrinsically valuable and those they considered valuable for the park's tourism industry. They were also asked to identify the resources used by tourism. The questions used for these assessments are presented in Table 7.1.

**Table 7.1.** Questions used to identify resources that stakeholders perceived to be intrinsically valuable, those of value for the tourism industry, and the specific resources used by tourism.

- *Is this park important or valuable to your organisation? If yes, why is it valuable or important?*
- *In your view, which particular physical, biological and social resources contribute to the park's value and importance? Why are these resources valuable and important?*
- *What is the value and importance of this park for tourism?*
- *Which of the park's physical, biological and social resources are being used for tourism?*

The resources that the stakeholders perceived as intrinsically valuable are listed in Table 7.2, Table 7.3 lists those considered valuable specifically for tourism, and Table 7.4 lists the specific resources identified as being used by tourism. In order to facilitate comparison between stakeholder groups and across the three tables, the findings are presented first by absolute numbers of stakeholders per interest group and second by the percentage of stakeholders per interest group.

**Table 7.2.** Park resources perceived as intrinsically valuable by stakeholders in each interest group.

RESOURCE PERCEIVED AS INTRINSICALLY VALUABLE	STAKEHOLDERS IN EACH INTEREST GROUP THAT MENTIONED THE SPECIFIC RESOURCE					
	TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS (N=15)		GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS (N=9)		NGO STAKEHOLDERS (N=6)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Natural resources	8	53	6	66	3	50
Scenic beauty	7	46	3	33	2	33
Tourism	6	40	1	11	0	-
Fishing resources	4	26	0	-	1	16
Social resources	2	13	4	44	3	50
Pristine conditions	2	13	1	11	0	-
Geographical location	2	13	0	-	0	-
Physical resources	2	13	1	11	0	-
Total Protection Zone	1	0.6	0	-	1	16
Ecosystems	1	0.6	2	22	3	50
Beaches	1	0.6	1	11	0	-
Tourism income	0	-	1	11	0	-
Political value	0	-	1	11	1	16

*Note: Resources mentioned by more than 40% of stakeholders are highlighted in grey.*

The resources listed in tables 7.2 to 7.5 were produced by the researcher by condensing stakeholders' comments into 'standard resource lists', obtained

by identifying and selecting keywords commonly used by all interviewees to name specific park resources.

**Table 7.3.** Park resources perceived as valuable for tourism by stakeholders in each interest group.

RESOURCE PERCEIVED AS VALUABLE FOR TOURISM	STAKEHOLDERS IN EACH INTEREST GROUP THAT MENTIONED THE SPECIFIC RESOURCE					
	TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS (N=15)		GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS (N=9)		NGO STAKEHOLDERS (N=6)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Scenic beauty	9	60	8	88	4	70
Natural resources	7	46	3	33	1	16
Beaches	5	33	4	44	2	30
Fishing resources	3	20	1	11	1	16
Tourism facilities	3	20	0	-	0	-
Business opportunities	2	13	0	-	1	16
Weather	1	0.6	1	11	0	-
Tourists	1	0.6	0	-	0	-
Physical resources	1	0.6	0	-	0	-
Ecosystems	0	-	1	11	0	-
Pristine conditions	0	-	3	33	2	30
Conditions for outdoor sports	0	-	1	11	0	-
Local culture / population	0	-	0	-	1	16

Note: Resources mentioned by more than 40% of stakeholders are highlighted in grey.

**Table 7.4.** Resources used by tourism according to stakeholders in each interest group.

RESOURCE USED BY TOURISM	STAKEHOLDERS IN EACH INTEREST GROUP THAT MENTIONED THE SPECIFIC RESOURCE					
	TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS (N=15)		GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS (N=9)		NGO STAKEHOLDERS (N=6)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Beaches	9	60	4	44	6	100
Scenic beauty	8	53	6	66	5	83
Natural resources	5	33	5	55	0	-
Fishing resources	5	33	1	11	2	33
Tourism facilities	4	26	1	11	0	-
Coral reef	3	20	0	-	0	-
Pristine conditions	0	-	2	22	0	-
Local population	0	-	1	11	1	16
Weather	0	-	0	-	1	16

Note: Resources mentioned by more than 40% of stakeholders are highlighted in grey.

Table 7.2 indicates that at least 50% of stakeholders in all three interest groups identified natural resources as the most important attribute contributing to the intrinsic park's value. There was, however, some disagreement between tourism actors and other stakeholders regarding which other resources were intrinsically valuable. Tourism stakeholders also gave a high priority to the

park's scenic beauty and its tourism industry, whereas government and NGO stakeholders (44 and 50% respectively) highlighted its social resources, specifically the local population and culture, as the other most valuable park attribute. Further, government stakeholders regarded the scenic beauty of the park and its ecosystems as the third and fourth most important intrinsic elements of the park (33 and 22% respectively). By contrast, 50% of NGO stakeholders considered the park's ecosystems to be highly valuable, thus regarding them as equally important as the park's natural and social resources.

In contrast to government and NGO actors, tourism stakeholders attributed a low intrinsic value to the park's social resources, with only 13% mentioning them. A possible explanation for this may be the generally poor perception that most tourism parties had of the local population's ability to work in the tourism industry. Further, only one of the 30 respondents in all groups mentioned them as an attribute valuable to tourism, suggesting that the local population is not considered important for the tourism industry. This is surprising given that locals constitute most of the park's tourism workforce, particularly in lower and middle-level positions.

Tourism actors also considered that the park's ecosystems contributed little to its intrinsic value, with only one among the 15 mentioning them. This may relate to their perception of tourism being an integral feature of the park, rather than a feature that depends *on* the park. Some comments made by these respondents are presented in Table 7.5.

**Table 7.5.** Comments of tourism stakeholders referring to tourism as a valuable park attribute.

*"This is what we subsist on, everybody lives on tourism in this park. The most important resources for us are fishing and tourism" (Representative of sport-fishing posada).*

*"Los Roques is very important because it is one of the best places in the world for tourism" (Sport-fishing guide).*

*"Of course [the park] is important! And it is important for a multitude of reasons, let alone its natural resources, but also its tourism, its people, its fishing" (Former representative of Madrizky Group).*

This has implications for the formulation of management measures because at least six (40%) tourism stakeholders appear to have perceived tourism as an intrinsic park attribute. Thus, they may want tourism to be given precedence over other park attributes, such as its fragile ecosystems or local population. Only one stakeholder (the INPARQUES representative) highlighted the value of the park's resources because of the income generated from its multiple uses, asserting that *"we have abundant fish fauna which generate an income, not only through tourism but also through small-scale fishing"*, and also remarking that the park *"has been given greater importance due to...the income it generates"*. It is surprising that only one interviewee mentioned this issue, given that almost all stakeholders depended directly or indirectly on such income.

In relation to park resources regarded as valuable for the tourism industry (Table 7.3), 13 items were mentioned. Almost all stakeholders (80% of government stakeholders, 70% of NGO and 60% of tourism) referred to the park's scenic beauty as the main resource valued by this industry. Tourism stakeholders ranked natural resources as the second most valued attribute for tourism, while both the government and NGO stakeholders considered the beaches as tourism's second most valued attribute. NGO stakeholders also regarded the park's pristine characteristics as equally valuable as beaches for tourism. In turn, tourism parties ranked the beaches in third place after the park's natural resources.

The fact that tourism stakeholders valued the park's resources above its beaches was an unexpected result, as most conservation-related stakeholders asserted that the park's tourism industry was exclusively directed to a 'sun-and-sand' type of tourism. According to these latter stakeholders, the industry overvalues the park's scenic beauty to the detriment of its natural resources and processes sustaining its ecosystems. This view was summed up by the representative of the conservation NGO 1, who asserted that *"if you remove the park's fauna and flora and you leave only sand and water, this would be enough to satisfy tourists. You can take away some resources or ecological processes*

*and this won't have any affect on the average tourist visiting Los Roques ".*

All other resources were mentioned a few times by all three interest groups. A small number of tourism actors (20%) mentioned fishing resources as valuable for tourism, suggesting that local fish is an important food consumed by tourists. However, since almost all tourism stakeholders relied on local fish for part of their food supplies, a higher proportion might have been expected to mention this item as an important tourism-related resource. This suggests that the tourism industry may have taken for granted some park resources on which they depended, as indeed seems to be the case with the local population that constituted most of its workforce. Further, only two stakeholders listed the local population as a resource used by tourism (one government and one NGO stakeholder, Table 7.4).

Table 7.4 shows that the 30 respondents from three interest groups mentioned only 9 resources as used by tourism, and there was much agreement as to which were identified. Both tourism and NGO stakeholders regularly identified beaches as a resource used for tourism (9 and 6 stakeholders, or 60% and 100% respectively), with the scenic settings of the park as the second most often mentioned (8 and 5 stakeholders, or 53% and 83% respectively). The park's fishing resources were third most often mentioned by both of these groups. Six of the nine government stakeholders (66%) mentioned the park's scenic settings as the most used resource, with its natural resources being second most often mentioned (5 stakeholders, or 55%) and its beaches third (4 stakeholders, or 44%).

The number of resources mentioned in Table 7.4 is lower in comparison to the other two tables, with most stakeholders mentioning fewer resources (three to five). The results suggest that tourism is actually using very few park resources, and also that the resource types currently used were mostly scenic and recreational, with other more direct uses, such as nature observation or SCUBA diving, included only in a marginal way. These findings support the perception of conservation-related stakeholders who asserted that the park's tourism industry is mostly sun-and-sand oriented, and that little consideration

was being given to other, more ecologically valuable resources.

To conclude, this assessment of intrinsically valued park resources and of resources valued for tourism suggests that the park's natural and social resources were being given inadequate consideration by tourism stakeholders, despite them being crucial for the industry's well-being. Although the local population constituted a significant part of the park's tourism workforce, it did not appear to be considered a valuable tourism resource. Furthermore, several tourism parties mentioned tourism as an important park attribute, suggesting that they perceived the industry as an inherent park feature rather than an activity depending on the park.

Tourism stakeholders, and to some extent also stakeholders from other groups, seem to have regarded the park's scenic settings as the most intrinsically valuable resource. This implies that the park and its resources were valued predominantly because of their benefits for tourism and not for any inherent physical, biological or social characteristics. This has implications for park conservation and management as the park's resources might eventually be overused in favour of maintaining tourism activities. However, some respondents in conservation-related government and NGO groups valued several park characteristics that were essential both for its sustainability and for all activities in the park. Some of the latter respondents had significant influence over park management, so it is likely that some conflict might occur between them and the tourism stakeholders when discussing park attributes to be preserved and the reasons for doing so.

### **7.3 Resources affected by tourism use**

This section examines stakeholder perceptions of how the tourism industry affected resources in the park. This information was obtained by asking the stakeholders: "*Are any of the park's resources being affected by tourism use? If yes, which ones and in what ways?*". Table 7.6 summarises responses for the tourism actors. Twelve out of the 15 tourism respondents identified negative effects on the park's resources resulting from tourism, with these

impacts all concerning natural resources. They described tourism's effects on either specific geographical locations or on particular natural resources. The geographical locations most often mentioned were the marine areas around Gran Roque, an area of nearby Francisky cay known as the "Piscina" (*the swimming pool*), and the park's Total Protection and Tourism Areas. The natural resources most frequently mentioned as affected by tourism were the coral reef, fish, lobsters and the beaches.

**Table 7.6.**Resources identified by tourism stakeholders as affected by the park's tourism industry.

<b>TOURISM STAKEHOLDER</b>	<b>RESOURCES NEGATIVELY AFFECTED BY TOURISM</b>
Owner of small posada	Coral health and fish density in tourism areas/ Lobsters / Total Protection Areas of the park
Recreational diving operator	Water quality around Gran Roque / Lobsters / Total Protection Areas of the park
Former representative of Tourism Operators' Association	Bird and fish fauna
Current representative of Tourism Operators' Association	Public utilities, especially rubbish and waste water / beaches / coral
Representative of large tourism company	Coral health and fish density in the "Piscina" (the swimming pool)
Representative of Friends of Los Roques Foundation	None
Former representative of Madrizky Group	Tourism Zone areas, particularly the beaches
Representative of Sailboat Captains' Association	Coral / Lobster / Queen conch
Local owner of small posada	None
Provider of tourism services	Water quality around Gran Roque / Expansion areas for the population in Gran Roque
Representative of Boat Operators' Association	Coral reef
Representative of sport-fishing posada	Coral reef / Sea shells / beaches
Sport-fishing guide	None
Owner of large posada	Francisky island, particularly the area near the restaurant / Water quality around Gran Roque / Collateral effects of waste disposal
Tourist guide for large airline	Marine fauna, particularly fish and lobster / Water quality around Gran Roque

Four tourism stakeholders directly referred to the waters around Gran Roque island as affected by tourism. These stakeholders were mostly concerned about potential pollution from sewage leaks from the town's septic wells, which they considered a serious threat to the water and marine life around Gran Roque. Other specific locations perceived as affected by tourism were the Tourism Zone and specifically the "Piscina", a shallow, well protected, circular sand bank surrounded by coral that is near Gran Roque. They regarded

Gran Roque and its surroundings as most seriously affected in terms of the quality and quantity of marine life, particularly of fish and coral, and of damage to the beaches. Some of their comments are presented in Table 7.7.

**Table 7.7.**Comments of tourism stakeholders on areas of Los Roques negatively affected by tourism.

*"the water quality, particularly in the Gran Roque area, it is not the best, because there currently isn't a waste water treatment system. And, even if you have septic tanks and natural filtration, I imagine that part of the waste fluids will end up affecting the water quality around Gran Roque." (Recreational diving operator)*

*"If you compare Los Roques with what it was 30 years ago, there have been some changes to the water, especially around Grand Roque, as a result of...excessive use. From being a town of 600 people, we now have a permanent population of 1200 people that is generating pressures on the environment. Again it is difficult to quantify how much this pressure is, or if it is seriously affecting the environment, but it is obvious that it is affecting it." (Provider of tourism services)*

*"if you try to do snorkelling in the "Piscina", you have to queue in the entry dock to wait for people to get out before you can get in, and then the water is all turbid. There are just 2 or 3 fish, and the tourists are disappointed because they say that they've been sold as if it's full of fish and I we just see two...A moment will be reached in which you will get into the "Piscina" and you'll see all brown, dead coral, and you won't see a single fish." (Representative of large tourism company)*

The tourism parties also asserted that tourism negatively affected specific natural resources, in particular marine life, such as coral, fish and lobsters, and with bird fauna and vegetation also mentioned. The park's fish and its coral reef were perceived as the resources most affected, with these being mentioned by seven and six tourism actors respectively. Some stakeholders also felt that the tourism industry was leading to overfishing. This impact was mentioned by the airline tourist guide, who felt that *"maybe the fish could be affected because there are 60 posadas in Los Roques, which means 600 beds, and they all offer fish in their menus...All the fish and lobsters served in Los Roques come from local fishing. I think these resources are obviously affected, but I don't know to what extent"*. The representative of the Tourism Operators' Association argued that tourism also affected physical resources, such as the infrastructure of public utilities of Gran Roque island, due to the excessive consumption of electricity, fresh water and health facilities, and the production of sewage and rubbish.

Two tourism actors went further and suggested that the industry's negative effects may be widespread and far-reaching, with some deterioration also occurring in the park's Total Protection Areas, which are intended to act as biodiversity reservoirs and were off-limits to tourism. They believed that some effects of tourism could already be seen in these areas, and asserted that a minority of tourism operators had taken tourists into these areas. Their comments are presented in Table 7.8.

**Table 7.8.** Comments of tourism stakeholders on the industry impact on the park's Total Protection Areas.

*"Not all posada owners comply with park's regulations...I have seen tourists handled by specific posadas...which were about to do things that were environmentally damaging, or were going into restricted areas...In my opinion there are tourists visiting places where they shouldn't be going, who are taken there to see special things...some operators have an arrogant attitude and virtually saying 'We are going to those places even if they are off-limits' (Owner of small posada)*

*Hence, with regard to some resources, visiting areas that you shouldn't, with regard to disturbing fauna, I do believe that sometimes tourism is harmful and creates negative effects...Of course, all of this depends on whether the operator managing the tourist is environmentally aware or not, and are not just concerned with pleasing tourists. So they will take them to an area like "Bobos" cay to see the birds, because this is an Total Protection Area and you have to avoid disturbing it, or they will catch a lobster out of season because you felt like eating lobster." (Recreational diving operator)*

Eight out of the nine government stakeholders mentioned similar negative impacts and resources as those mentioned by tourism actors, while only the former CCA representative 2 did not identify any negative effects of tourism on the park's natural resources (Table 7.9).

**Table 7.9.**Resources identified by government stakeholders as affected by the park's tourism industry.

<b>GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDER</b>	<b>RESOURCES NEGATIVELY AFFECTED BY TOURISM</b>
Former CCA representative 1	General health and quality of resources in the Piscina
Former CCA representative 2	None
Representative of the CCA	Fishing workforce / Fishing areas
Representative of INPARQUES	Reef and vegetation in some cays of the Tourism Zone, particularly the Piscina
Former representative of INPARQUES	General effects on the whole park / Water quality, particularly around Gran Roque
Representative of CORPOTURISMO	Public utilities, especially electricity, water and health
Representative of the Coastguard	Total Protection Areas of the park / Marine turtles
Representative of the National Guard	Water quality around Gran Roque
School headteacher	Cays of the Tourism Zone

Environmental impacts in the Tourism Zone, particularly in the "Piscina", were mentioned by three stakeholders, whereas water pollution around Gran Roque was mentioned by another two. Like the tourism actors, the government stakeholders also mentioned some specific natural resources as affected by tourism. Marine turtles were particularly emphasised by the Coastguard representative, who said that *"in "Agua" cay, which is a marine turtle nesting site, they bring tourists during the day, and they allow these tourists, perhaps unintentionally, to affect them...They see the turtle tracks, and they begin to dig looking for the eggs"*. The CCA representative highlighted tourism's effects on the local population, whose livelihood depended on fishing. He stated that there was a conflict between these two activities, which had resulted in fishing being abandoned by the local workforce in favour of tourism, as well as encroachment on fishing grounds, with *"areas that were used for fishing now being used for tourism purposes"*.

Table 7.10 presents the views of NGO stakeholders regarding which park resources were being affected by tourism. Only the Neighbourhood Association representative considered that there weren't any negative effects, while the other five stakeholders mentioned impacts occurring both on the park's natural resources and on its local population.

**Table 7.10.** Resources identified by NGO stakeholders as affected by the park's tourism industry.

NGO STAKEHOLDER	RESOURCES NEGATIVELY AFFECTED BY TOURISM
Former representative of international development agency	Negative effects on resources in some Tourism Zone cays (Piscina and Noronky)
Representative of local conservation NGO	Reef, particularly the Piscina / Water quality / Local population
Representative of Neighbourhood Association	None
Representative of Fishermen's Association	Fishermen's income/Fishing resources, particularly lobster/Anchoring areas for fishing boats
Representative of conservation NGO 1	Water quality around Gran Roque / Lobsters
Representative of conservation NGO 2	Queen conch/Coral reef

These stakeholders identified virtually the same natural resources as affected by tourism as did the other interest groups, namely the Tourism Zone,

water quality around Gran Roque, and the park's coral reef and fishing resources. The Fishermen's Association representative also highlighted tourism impacts on the local population engaged in fishing, stating that *"locals are being affected, because...fishermen do not have anywhere to properly lay anchor. That's because tourism boats keep anchoring in the port, and you cannot even get close to it"*. He contended that tourism also competed with the fishing industry for its resources and areas, asserting that *"there are tourism boats that come here...and we have seen them fishing, for commercial profit...They have even dared to go fishing to the areas where we fish"*. Such comments suggest that a conflict may exist between these two activities, as suggested earlier by the CCA representative. The local conservation NGO representative also discussed another consequence of tourism on the local population, asserting that the *"invasion of people coming from other cultures has made addicts out of many local young people"*.

To summarise, 25 out of the 30 interviewees across the three interest groups mentioned natural resources in the park that were negatively affected by tourism. Various negative effects were mentioned, mostly relating to environmental impacts in specific natural resources and geographical locations, these being the Tourism Zone, in particular the "Piscina", the waters around Gran Roque and the Total Protection Zone. The natural resources most frequently mentioned as affected by tourism were the marine fauna, particularly the coral reef and fishing resources. Even if specific studies were required to assess these impacts with more precision, these findings suggest that many parties in all interest groups perceived that negative resource effects resulted from tourism. This should be an early warning to park managers that environmental impacts were occurring which needed to be dealt with.

Only three stakeholders mentioned tourism's impacts on the local population, particularly on those engaged in fishing. This suggests that most stakeholders were not aware or very concerned about the industry's negative social impacts. A possible explanation might be that only a small proportion of the local population is employed in fishing relative to those working in tourism. They are thus likely to be poorly represented in decision-taking processes. This

likely lack of representation is exacerbated by most fishermen probably having numerous relatives employed in tourism, thus increasing their desire to avoid conflict between the two industries. Furthermore, the local population had traditionally been reticent to put forward views or to participate in processes that they perceived to be led by outsiders, as was the case with the park's tourism industry.

If traditional fishing activities were part of the local characteristics that park managers considered valuable and wanted to preserve, as indeed the park's management plan objectives suggest, then these managers should seek ways to minimise tourism's negative impacts on the local fishing industry. Unless decisive action is taken to balance fishing and tourism, it is likely that the proportion of locals earning a livelihood from fishing will diminish further.

#### **7.4 Appropriateness of tourism activities**

This section examines how appropriate specific tourism activities were considered to be in Los Roques National Park. Stakeholder perceptions were evaluated for the different tourism activities by asking respondents: *"Are the current types of tourism activities appropriate for the park and its resources? Could you briefly explain why?"*. Additionally, the possibility of conflicts between tourism and other park activities was explored by asking the respondents: *"Are there any problems between tourism and other activities in the park? If yes, what are these problems and with which interest groups do they occur?"*

Eleven out of 15 tourism industry stakeholders felt that the park's current tourism activities were appropriate (Table 7.11). Only one stakeholder, the representative of the Boat Operators' Association, considered that the tourism activities were unsuitable. There were also three stakeholders who expressed ambiguous views.

Most tourism parties justified their perception of appropriateness by asserting that the tourism activities were not visibly damaging the park's natural resources. Three tourism actors stated that there was no association between

tourism and any problems in the park. Indeed, two of them added that this was because the park's characteristics and its management regulations were suitable for the industry's current activities.

**Table 7.11.** Views of tourism stakeholders on the appropriateness of the tourism activities in the park.

TOURISM STAKEHOLDER	PERCEPTION OF ACTIVITY	REASONS FOR PERCEPTION
Owner of small posada	Unclear	Activities considered appropriate for the park, but recognised that some resource damage occurred due to tourists' lack of information.
Recreational diving operator	Appropriate	The current activities, and diving in particular, did not have any negative environmental effects.
Former representative of Tourism Operators' Association	Appropriate	The current activities were suited to the park's characteristics.
Representative of Tourism Operators' Association	Appropriate	Tourism activities were well suited to the park's natural, pristine conditions.
Representative of large tourism company	Appropriate	There were no problems related to current activities.
Representative of Friends of Los Roques Foundation	Appropriate	Tourism had created business opportunities that benefited the local population and tourism operators.
Former representative of Madrizky Group	Appropriate	Tourism impacts, if any, could and should be managed by implementing adequate regulations.
Representative of Sailboat Captains' Association	Unclear	Current activities were appropriate, but more regulation and supervision was required to avoid impacts.
Local owner of small posada	Appropriate	Current activities were not producing negative impacts, and current management was handling them adequately.
Provider of tourism services	Appropriate	Current activities were appropriate, but wildlife observation and nightlife should be promoted.
Representative of Boat Operators' Association	Inappropriate	The variety of tourism activities offered by the industry was too limited, and the type of tourists attracted by the park was not appropriate, as they were not sufficiently informed to avoid resource impacts.
Representative of sport-fishing posada	Appropriate	Current activities were suited to the park's characteristics and were producing important income for the park.
Sport-fishing guide	Unclear	Current activities were not producing negative impacts, but more activities should be offered.
Owner of large posada	Appropriate	Current activities were appropriate.
Tourist guide for large airline	Appropriate	The park's management was adequately protecting its resources.

Another two respondents felt that the tourism activities were appropriate given the importance of the income and employment they generated for both the park and the local population. Additionally, three respondents asserted that the current tourism activities were well suited to the park's natural attributes. Some of their comments are presented in Table 7.12.

**Table 7.12.**Comments of tourism stakeholders on the appropriateness of tourism activities in the park.

*"Well, I think that tourism activities currently being undertaken are appropriate. I'm not aware of any other activity apart from windsurfing, which is a good recreational activity, and I don't think it has any harmful effects." (Local owner of small posada)*

*"The activities, yes, I believe they are appropriate. As I said, the activities that you could do are windsurfing...perhaps there are some other activities that could be added, but the current ones, snorkelling, diving, sport fishing and all that, I do believe that they are appropriate activities." (Former representative of the Tourism Operators' Association)*

*"I think that tourism's current activities are quite appropriate for the park...they are also providing income for the park." (Representative of sport-fishing posada)*

*"In a general sense, I would say 'yes'. Now that we could have more of some other activities, like diving, or perhaps new ones, I won't argue with that. But what currently exists is acceptable." (Recreational diving operator)*

The Boat Operators' Association representative was the only one of 15 tourism stakeholders who argued that the tourism activities in the park were less than ideal. He asserted that the development of more tourist activities was necessary, because *"the tourism industry only sells the park's natural environment, and the tourist activities currently on offer are few"*. However, he also asserted that some tourist activities were adversely impacting the park's natural resources due to the industry sometimes attracting the wrong type of visitors, arguing that *"not everybody is ready to visit coral reefs, and the tourism operators often fail to give appropriate information...to their tourists"*.

Three tourism respondents (the owner of the small posada, the representative of the Sailboat Captains' Association and the sport-fishing guide) had a more ambiguous attitude to the appropriateness of the tourism activities. On the one hand, they described the current tourism activities as appropriate, but they also asserted that tourism had various negative effects on the park's natural resources, caused mostly by uninformed visitors adversely affecting the park's fragile characteristics. Thus, when referring to tourists' behaviour while visiting the coral reef, the small posada owner asserted that *"the fact that you tell them on the shore 'do not touch the coral' is of no great help, because...the desire to touch is instinctive behaviour for these people. And, once done, you can't fix it"*. The sport-fishing guide and the provider of tourism services also

argued that the park's tourism industry should develop new and more varied tourist activities, with their comments presented in Table 7.13.

**Table 7.13.**Comments of tourism stakeholders on the need to incorporate new tourism activities.

*"I think that there should be different activities, such as observation of other areas. There are few ways to go: as I told you, 70% of the park is off-limits. It would be a good thing to introduce other activities. I don't know which ones, but something to make this place more interesting." (Sport-fishing guide)*

*"Activities related to the observation and understanding of aquatic and non-aquatic wildlife should be boosted...Aquatic sports should also be encouraged for them to achieve further development." (Provider of tourism services)*

Five out of the nine government stakeholders considered that the current tourism activities were appropriate for the park (Table 7.14). The representative of INPARQUES argued that tourism's *"impact on the environment is minimal"*, and thus it caused few problems for the park and its natural resources. These five stakeholders also asserted that the park's tourism-related regulations and management measures were adequate, making the park's tourism industry *"very well regulated"* (Representative of CORPOTURISMO). They felt that this made the occurrence of negative impacts highly unlikely. However, the remaining four government actors asserted that some aspects of the park's current tourism activities were unsuitable (Table 7.14). Three of these stakeholders, all with direct management responsibilities, considered that inappropriate activities occurred due to the distorted expectations of park visitors, and because the tourism operators lacked training to handle them appropriately. Thus, the former representative of INPARQUES claimed that many tourists did not appreciate the park's natural conditions, whereas the Coastguard representative stated that some tourism operators were inadequately prepared as to how to properly manage most tourist activities. The former CCA representative 1 described the current form of tourism as 'sun and beach', locally concentrated in certain recreational areas and with many visitors only staying for short periods. He asserted that this was not the best type of tourism as it would be better if tourist activities were dispersed throughout the park in order to spread the load, and if long stay tourism (low numbers, high

yield) was encouraged. Table 7.15 presents the comments of some of these stakeholders.

**Table 7.14.** Views of government stakeholders on the appropriateness of the tourism activities in the park.

GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDER	PERCEPTION OF ACTIVITY	REASONS FOR PERCEPTION
Former CCA representative 1	Inappropriate	Current tourists had unsuitable characteristics for the park, and no specialised nature tourism and sports activities had been developed.
Former CCA representative 2	Appropriate	The park's management was appropriate for the tourism it receives.
Representative of the CCA	Appropriate	Tourism was being adequately managed and did not have significant impacts on the park.
Representative of INPARQUES	Appropriate	Tourism had a minimum impact on the environment.
Former representative of INPARQUES	Inappropriate	Tourists did not appreciate the valuable biological resources of the park.
Representative of CORPOTURISMO	Appropriate	The tourism industry was well regulated.
Representative of the Coastguard	Inappropriate	Inappropriate activities occurred due to the inadequate preparation of some tourism operators.
Representative of the National Guard	Appropriate	The tourism industry was not causing any problems to the park or its resources.
School headteacher	Inappropriate	The current volume of visitors was not controlled and their impact on the resources was not being adequately managed.

**Table 7.15.** Comments of government stakeholders on the inappropriateness of tourism activities in the park.

<p><i>"There are a lot of tourism operators, I won't say that all of them, but several of them, who do not give adequate importance to the management areas contained within the park, and who sometimes trespass within them." (Representative of the Coastguard)</i></p>
<p><i>"I do believe that the type of tourism industry that is undertaken in the park should be of a more specialised nature, for people who would like to go SCUBA diving, engage in controlled sport fishing of the catch-and-release kind, and for people who want to contemplate the beauty of nature." (Former CCA representative 1)</i></p>

The school headteacher, who as government stakeholder didn't have management responsibility, considered that the inappropriateness of the tourism industry was partly caused by the park authorities' poor management. She argued that visitors were not adequately controlled and their resource

impacts were not appropriately managed, so that *"people are all over the place, there are no signs, or controls, or footpaths"*, and thus inappropriate activities were allowed. Her answer contrasts sharply with those of the other government stakeholders, who tended to reply to this question in a slightly defensive fashion, almost always arguing that tourism-related problems were not caused by how they managed the industry.

Table 7.16 presents the perceptions of the NGO stakeholders regarding the appropriateness of the park's tourism industry. Three out of six stakeholders stated that some tourist activities were inappropriate, with another one having ambiguous but mostly negative perceptions about their appropriateness. They gave similar reasons for holding these views, all arguing that an inadequate tourism profile and unsuitable activities were promoted by the park's tourism industry. Furthermore, one said that this was also caused by the operators restricting their activities to those that were easy and cheap to implement, such as 'sun-and-sand' tours. This in turn was attracting a type of visitor that was not the most appropriate as they typically came for short periods and were not attracted by the park's ecology. Comments from these stakeholders are included in Table 7.17.

**Table 7.16.** Views of NGO stakeholders on the appropriateness of the tourism activities in the park.

NGO STAKEHOLDER	PERCEPTION OF ACTIVITY	REASONS FOR PERCEPTION
Former representative of the international development agency	Inappropriate	Current sun and beach activities were not suited to the park's nature and conditions. An inadequate type of tourism was being promoted.
Representative of local conservation NGO	Inappropriate	An adequate tourism profile has not been established, nor has ecotourism been developed.
Representative of Neighbourhood Association	Appropriate	Both tourists and operators were behaving adequately and cared for the park's resources.
Representative of Fishermen's Association	Appropriate	There were no problems related to the present tourism activities.
Representative of conservation NGO 1	Unclear	Tourism's current effects were insignificant, but this was mostly because of the type of visitor attracted to the park, not because of the management.
Representative of conservation NGO 2	Inappropriate	Tourism operators offer very few activities because it was easier and cheaper for them to operate in this way.

**Table 7.17.** Comments of NGO stakeholders on the inappropriateness of tourism activities in the park.

*"In relation to tourism, the park is not receiving the type of tourist that we would like to see coming. The tourist going there is still a plain 'sun and beach' tourist, who is not attracted by the park's ecological features. Of course, is not the tourist's fault, since we have CORPOTURISMO that sells Los Roques as sun and beaches, not as a national park." (Former representative of the international development agency)*

*"the only thing they are doing is recreation...I would rather see...an array of possibilities, such as doing interpretation, doing recreation, just resting, going to a convention, and so on...But they don't know how to maximise the park's assets, and they are very tight-fisted, because they don't want to invest in strategies that are really innovative." (Representative of conservation NGO 2)*

The local conservation NGO representative contended that the park's managers and the tourism industry lacked a tourist profile suitable for the area's characteristics. He asserted that *"the park is not focused on a particular visitor profile, and thus any kind of visitor...is attracted to the place"*. This resulted in an inappropriate type of visitor being attracted that results in activities unsuited to the park's characteristics.

Only two NGO parties, the representatives of the Neighbourhood Association and the Fishermen's Association, considered that the types of activity offered by the park's tourism industry were appropriate. They supported this view by mentioning a lack of negative impacts or problems associated with the industry.

In sum, views about the appropriateness of the park's tourist activities were divided according to the stakeholder interest group. Thus, all but one of the tourism actors regarded the current type of tourist activities as appropriate. Their views were based on the apparent lack of problems or impacts associated with tourism, on the park managers' ability to deal with tourism's effects, on the suitability of tourist activities in relation to the park characteristics, and on the industry's financial benefits. By contrast, the two other stakeholder groups often held less favourable views on the suitability of tourist activities, with around half in each group perceiving them to be inappropriate. The reasons given for this conclusion were varied, with most government stakeholders blaming inappropriate tourist expectations or operator

behaviour. The NGO stakeholders generally blamed the park managers' poor regulation and supervision for the inappropriate tourism activities.

Almost all the problems mentioned in this context by the respondents potentially could be ameliorated through appropriate management strategies. This suggests that the park authorities might be unaware or unclear about their role in shaping and guiding the type of tourism activities developed in the park.

## **7.5 Appropriateness of the current level of resource use for tourism**

This section explores stakeholder views on the appropriateness of current levels of resource use by tourism in Los Roques National Park. Stakeholder views were explored in the question: *"Is the current level of tourism use appropriate for the park and its resources? Could you briefly explain why?"*.

Table 7.18, which summarises the views of tourism stakeholders, demonstrates that these actors regarded the current levels of resource use by tourism to be appropriate. Ten of the 15 tourism respondents considered that tourism's level of resource use was suitable, with four actors partly or entirely justifying this by arguing that there was no evidence of negative resource impacts due to tourism. Another four parties argued either that the current level of resource use was suitable or that the park operated below its tourism capacity. This view is illustrated by comments of the Tourism Operators Association's representative, who stated that *"there aren't any perceptible negative tourism impacts"*. He expressed confidence that current visitor levels were unlikely to exceed reasonable resource use limits, although he acknowledged that the appropriate volume of visitors was unknown. He even claimed that he *"has calculated it, and with the visitor average that the park has...I would dare to tell you that we are likely to be far away from any impact limits"*.

**Table 7.18.**Views of tourism stakeholders on the appropriateness of the current level of resource use by tourism in the park.

TOURISM STAKEHOLDER	PERCEPTION OF ACTIVITY	REASONS FOR PERCEPTION
Owner of small posada	Appropriate	There were no resource problems related to this issue.
Recreational diving operator	Appropriate	Tourism activity was well managed and was not causing negative impacts, and the park's bed capacity created an automatic capacity limit.
Former representative of Tourism Operators' Association	Appropriate	The current amount of visitors was appropriate.
Representative of Tourism Operators' Association	Appropriate	The amount of visitors was low in comparison with other parks, and was not causing negative impacts.
Representative of large tourism company	Inappropriate	There were several negative impacts on the environment and on tourists in the few areas where tourism was concentrated.
Representative of Friends of Los Roques Foundation	Appropriate	The park's tourist capacity had not been reached.
Former representative of Madrizky Group	Appropriate	There was no such thing as a maximum level of resource use, as this depended on management regulations to influence negative visitor impacts.
Representative of Sailboat Captains' Association	Appropriate	The service infrastructure in Gran Roque was adequately handling the current tourist load. But studies needed to be undertaken to inform the regulations on further growth and use.
Local owner of small posada	Inappropriate	The current high season visitor level exceeded the park's service infrastructure, and needed to be regulated.
Provider of tourism services	Ambiguous	It was not know if the current level of tourism use was producing negative impacts, because the studies required to ascertain this did not exist.
Representative of Boat Operators' Association	Appropriate	The current volume of visitors was appropriate.
Representative of sport-fishing posada	Inappropriate	The current high season visitor level exceeded the park's service infrastructure, and needed to be regulated.
Sport-fishing guide	Inappropriate	The current volume of visitors was insufficient and must be increased.
Owner of large posada	Appropriate	The current level of visitors was appropriate, but if surpassed it would harm the park resources.
Tourist guide for large airline	Appropriate	The current volume of visitors was appropriate but it was also the park's maximum allowable capacity.

Three tourism actors stated that the park's tourism infrastructure, and specifically its bed capacity, indirectly regulated levels of resource use by tourism as it automatically limited the number of people accommodated in the park at any one time. Their comments are presented in Table 7.19, and they suggest that they did not realise that the park's accommodation limit had no bearing on the numerous day visitors and boat-based tourists using the park

resources. Although their activity patterns might not be exactly the same as those of long-stay visitors, day visitors and boat-based tourists undoubtedly do impact on the park's resources, and these impacts were likely to keep growing independently of bed capacity.

**Table 7.19.** Comments of tourism stakeholders on the limiting effects of the park's accommodation stock on the level of resource use by tourism.

*"I do believe that the way things have been managed, for example the prohibition on hotels and just allowing posadas, has automatically created a visitor capacity limit. What I mean is that the park sustains the visitors that this town [Gran Roque] allows and that's it." (Recreational diving operator)*

*"I think that as long as Gran Roque has the capacity to feed and maintain those tourists, then the number of visitors should be appropriate. The park also has the advantage that no large ships can access Los Roques, and thus this type of tourist, the cruise-ship type, cannot go there. Tourists can only come in medium-sized boats, and hence the visitor volume cannot grow too much." (Representative of the Sailboat Captains' Association)*

By contrast, four tourism respondents considered that current levels of resource use by tourism were inappropriate. However, this does not necessarily mean that these stakeholders believed that the levels of tourism resource use should be reduced. Indeed, one of these respondents, the sport-fishing guide, asserted that there were insufficient visitor numbers coming to the park, stating that *"[the current level of visitors] is too low. I wish it would be higher...we should have more demand, and tourism should be better managed to achieve this."* This respondent was unique among the 30 parties in the three interest groups, as he considered that the tourism industry was under-exploiting the park's resources.

The other three tourism actors who regarded current use levels as inappropriate stated that visitor numbers needed regulating because current levels already exceeded the park's service infrastructure during the peak tourism season. Furthermore, the large tourism company representative stated that even if use levels by tourism appeared appropriate for most of the park, some areas were used so heavily that they were being badly damaged. This respondent also admitted that her company was partly responsible through

being a heavy user of some areas. She recognised that the tourist concentration in these areas had affected her company's business in terms of the customer experience: *"there are so many people that if you try to do snorkelling in the "Piscina" you have to queue in the entry dock to wait for people to get out for you to get in. And then the water is all turbid, there are just two or three fish, and then the tourist becomes disappointed"*. Some of these comments are presented in Table 7.20.

**Table 7.20.** Comments of tourism stakeholders on why the current level of resource use by tourism was inappropriate.

*"In high peak season I think there are too many people, because many of them camp on the beach. The town does not have the capacity to accommodate so many people." (Representative of sport-fishing posada)*

*"I think that the volume of visitors should be controlled by the authorities according to the existing capacity. For example, nowadays the flow of visitors during weekends is very high, and I don't know where they are staying." (Local owner of small posada)*

*"there are cays where too many people go...In 'Francisky' sometimes there are [too many boats]. That cay is going to collapse any minute now." (Representative of large tourism company)*

The comments in Table 7.20 suggest that the physical limit created by the park's tourism infrastructure, and in particular the available bed-places, had already been surpassed, and that visitor levels had increased despite the existing accommodation supply. This may explain why the provider of tourism services was ambiguous about this issue, asserting that further studies were required. This actor argued that visitor numbers may already have exceeded what was comfortable for many tourists and safe for the conservation of park resources, but he also asserted that it was the role of scientists to investigate and decide on this issue.

By comparison, five of the nine government stakeholders considered that tourism's current level of resource use was appropriate, with only two considering it inappropriate and the remaining two providing ambiguous views. Four of the five stakeholders who regarded the level of resource use as appropriate asserted that the tourism resource use was managed adequately by the park authorities, and thus no negative impacts were occurring. As with some

tourism stakeholders, one former CCA representative stated that the park's tourism service infrastructure established a physical constraint that limited the maximum number of visitors at any-one time, thereby regulating the level of tourism resource. Table 7.21 presents respondents views on the appropriateness of current levels of resource use by tourism.

**Table 7.21.** Views of government stakeholders on the appropriateness of the current level of resource use by tourism in the park.

GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDER	PERCEPTION OF ACTIVITY	REASONS FOR PERCEPTION
Former CCA representative 1	Inappropriate	The industry's impact was minimal, but some heavily used areas had been degraded, and the visitor profile was not appropriate for the park.
Former CCA representative 2	Appropriate	The current tourism infrastructure had created a tourism capacity limit.
Representative of the CCA	Ambiguous	The present situation was inappropriate as visitor capacity was not know and current levels might be surpassing management capacity. But this capacity could be increased to allow more visitors.
Representative of INPARQUES	Appropriate	The current level of tourism resource use had been adequately managed and consequently tourism's negative impacts had been avoided.
Former representative of INPARQUES	Appropriate	The current level of tourism use was within the park's institutions management capacity, and negative impacts were not being observed.
Representative of CORPOTURISMO	Appropriate	Although the appropriate tourism resource use level had not been established, current levels appeared to be appropriate.
Representative of the Coastguard	Appropriate	The current resource use level by tourism was ideal and was not having negative effects on the park.
Representative of the National Guard	Ambiguous	The appropriate level of tourism resource use was not known and further studies were required to ascertain it.
School headteacher	Inappropriate	The current level of tourism resource use was causing environmental damage, and the local population was being overwhelmed by the visitors.

The position of the INPARQUES representative was typical of the government stakeholders who regarded current levels of resource use by tourism as appropriate. He contended that it was appropriate due to his institution's ability to manage the industry. He further stated that *"The impact, I can tell you, has not been perceptible. We have a highly controlled tourism*

*industry, and it is concentrated in a few areas that have been specifically set apart for this, with the purpose of cushioning other areas from tourism impacts."*

The National Guard representative held ambiguous views as he felt that the information currently available was insufficient to make an objective judgement about the appropriateness of current visitor levels. He suggested the optimal level could be either lower or higher than at present. The other government stakeholder with an ambiguous position, the Central Co-ordinating Authority representative, stated that the current situation was unsatisfactory because the CCA did not know what was the appropriate level. He added that in any case the current visitor volume might already exceed the park authorities' management capacity to deal adequately with it. He suggested that this situation would be corrected shortly as carrying capacity studies were to be conducted, but he also noted that *"carrying capacity, as it is understood nowadays, is going to depend on the management capacity that we have. So if we enhance our park's management capacity, then we will very likely be able to increase the number of visitors"*. These comments suggest that the CCA's management vision may be to match an enhanced management capacity in the park authority with an increase in visitor numbers.

The two government respondents who regarded tourism's level of resource use as inappropriate claimed that the industry had created negative impacts on the park's natural resources. According to the former CCA representative 1, however, this impact was minimal and restricted to those areas heavily used by tourism. By contrast, the school headteacher felt that tourism's impact was widespread and affected most areas of the park. This actor considered that these impacts had been relatively modest, but she was concerned that *"more and more people are arriving every day and this is not being controlled"*. This respondent was also the only one of the 30 who regarded the local population as a resource affected by the levels of tourism use, asserting that *"the level of tourism use is excessive...because you can see more visitors than locals"* on Gran Roque island.

Three of the six NGO stakeholders viewed tourism's current level of resource use as inappropriate, two considered it appropriate, and one, the conservation NGO 2 representative, did not to give an opinion, arguing that it was difficult to know as further studies were required. Table 7.22 presents the NGO respondents' views on this issue.

**Table 7.22.**Views of NGO stakeholders on the appropriateness of the current level of resource use by tourism in the park.

NGO STAKEHOLDER	PERCEPTION OF ACTIVITY	REASONS FOR PERCEPTION
Former representative of the international development agency	Inappropriate	The park had attracted an inappropriate type of visitor, without proper information and concentrated on a few places.
Representative of local conservation NGO	Inappropriate	The activity had saturated some areas and impacted the reef, but studies must be done.
Representative of Neighbourhood Association	Appropriate	The town received enough visitors, but wanted more people visiting the park.
Representative of Fishermen's Association	Appropriate	The current volume of visitors brought benefits to the local population in terms of grocery supplies.
Representative of conservation NGO 1	Inappropriate	There was no established management policy to deal with visitor levels, so negative environmental impacts had occurred even at present use levels.
Representative of conservation NGO 2	Ambiguous	Further studies were required.

Both the Neighbourhood Association and the Fishermen's Association representatives considered the current level of resource use by tourism as adequate. The Neighbourhood Association representative, however, recognised that on occasions, particularly during the peak tourist season, visitor numbers overwhelmed the park's accommodation and public utility capacity in Gran Roque. In spite of these problems, this respondent suggested that his organisation would welcome an increase in tourist numbers, asserting they were *"not enough yet"*.

The Fishermen's Association representative regarded tourism's current level of resource use as *"appropriate, because this assures that groceries are also available for the locals. In high season the local shops are full of supplies because there are lots of tourists that buy things and it is profitable for shop owners. But, in contrast, when the low season comes there are not steady*

*supplies for the community*". This was an unusual view, in that the current level of tourism was seen as advantageous because of the incidental benefits it brought to the local population. During the past ten years tourism clearly has made available diverse services and goods for the local population. So, it is perhaps understandable that the local population disliked the lack of products and services during the low tourist season.

By contrast, three stakeholders from this group considered that tourism's current level of resource use had led to environmental degradation. They felt that the main cause of this problem was inadequate management related to resource use by the tourism industry. The representative of the international development agency also asserted that the problem was partly caused by the "sun and beach" type of visitor attracted to the park, with the behaviour and resource use patterns of these tourists being problematic.

Similarly, the local conservation NGO representative stated that the park management lacked clear goals and the type of visitor attracted to the area reflected this. These two stakeholders also believed that in the few park areas where tourism was concentrated environmental degradation was beginning or had occurred. The representative of the conservation NGO 1 also asserted that the current level of resource use was problematic due to the park authorities lacking a clear management policy on visitor levels, with this leading to undesirable environment impacts. Some of their comments are presented in Table 7.23.

**Table 7.23.** Comments of NGO stakeholders on why the current level of resource use by tourism is inappropriate.

<p><i>"the visitors that the park get are of the 'sun and beach' kind, which are concentrated in one zone of the park. This is an inadequately-oriented visitor, which makes management difficult because the visitors don't understand the restrictions of a national park. It is more than a use-level issue. I would say that the tourist quality is not adequate for the park." (Representative of the international development agency)</i></p> <p><i>"I believe that tourism is exceeding the limits... as right now it is saturated. What they are doing now is saturating the places that they are using." (Representative of the local conservation NGO)</i></p>
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In short, most stakeholders felt there was an appropriate level of resource use by tourism. However, the extent of approval differed between the three interest groups, with the NGO's being the least inclined to consider the level of resource use as appropriate. Overall, nine of the 30 respondents considered the level of resource use to be inappropriate, four expressed unclear views and 17 regarded the level as appropriate.

Some tourism stakeholders believed that the park's limited availability of tourism accommodation also effectively limited the level of resource use. However, comments by other tourism actors suggested that the current bed-space capacity had already been exceeded, and visitor numbers had increased despite the apparent lack of accommodation. This suggests that using the service infrastructure's physical capacity to limit the volume of visitors may not be successful. It seems that visitors can devise alternative means of overcoming service shortages unless this strategy is coupled with more direct regulation of tourism use.

As several tourism stakeholders believed that visitor numbers can be controlled by the provision of tourist infrastructure, this indicates that their understanding of the situation might become a threat to the long-term conservation of park resources. These stakeholders did not perceive the inherent risk of relying on infrastructure to regulate resource use, especially when it is relatively easy to build new infrastructure. Further, they did not relate the management of visitor levels to the use and management of the park's natural resources. This perceived lack of connection between the park's natural resources and the tourism industry constitutes a further threat to conservation.

Stakeholders in all three interest groups identified the need to conduct studies to assess current levels of resource use and to estimate acceptable levels of tourism use. This was particularly evident in comments by the four stakeholders with ambiguous opinions, remarking that "acceptable" levels of resource use could not be determined without adequate studies.

## 7.6 Stakeholder use of the park's resources

This section examines stakeholders' patterns of resource access and use in order to identify which resources were being used by which users, including the location and timing of their use. The assessment identifies which stakeholders were direct resource users, defined as those actors whose functioning, operations or well-being depended on the resource use (as defined in Criteria A6, section 4.5.1 of Chapter 4). Identification of these stakeholders is a priority because their high dependency on the park's natural resources makes them vulnerable to changes in the condition and management of these resources. To identify these stakeholders, the respondents were asked the questions presented in Table 7.24. While the information was primarily based on responses to these questions, references to resource use elsewhere in the interviews were also included in the analysis.

**Table 7.24.** Questions used to identify the park's resource users and the resources they use.

- *Does your organisation use the park or its resources in any way? If yes, in what way or ways, and over what period of time has it used the park or its resources?*
- *Does the park or its resources provide your organisation with any material, monetary or other types of benefit? If yes, which types of benefit does it provide?*
- *Does your organisation have the right to use or regulate the park's resources? If yes, why does it have these rights, and what are those rights? If no, what rights of use or regulations related to the park and its resources do you think your organisation should have?*

Table 7.25 lists the actors from all three interest groups who were identified as resource users according to Criteria A6, and the type of natural resource they used. Out of the 30 stakeholders interviewed, 17 could be regarded as users of park resources. These included all 15 tourism parties and two NGO groups, these being the local conservation NGO and the Fishermen's Association. It is perhaps unsurprising that all tourism stakeholders were direct resource users, given that the park's main tourist attractions are based on its scenic beauty, particularly its beaches. The NGOs were included because the local conservation NGO used natural resources for research purposes, and the Fishermen's Association used them as the main source of their livelihoods.

Almost all tourism actors used the park's various scenic and fishing resources for their tourists. Surprisingly, the Sailboat Captains' Association representative was the only actor to mention the great value of their use of the peacefulness of the park's natural environments. He classed this as a resource, stating that *"as sailors we benefit from the contact with nature...We search for isolation, peacefulness...Without being disturbed by recreational boats, noises. And myself in particular, I search for the peacefulness of Los Roques as my primary element."*

**Table 7.25.** Stakeholders identified as direct resource users of the park's natural resources and resources that they used.

STAKEHOLDER NAME	NATURAL RESOURCE USED
<b>TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS</b>	
Owner of small posada	Used scenic location as a tourist attraction and used lobster and fish for tourists in the posada and the restaurant.
Recreational diving operator	Used the underwater scenic resources as a tourist attraction, and used healthy and biodiverse coral reef for recreational diving operations.
Former representative of Tourism Operators' Association	Used scenic resources as a tourist attraction, but did not perceive himself as a resource user.
Representative of Tourism Operators' Association	Used scenic resources as a tourist attraction, but did not perceive himself as a resource user.
Representative of large tourism company	Used scenic resources as a tourist attraction, used various locations for recreation and snorkelling, and used lobster and fish for tourists in their restaurants.
Representative of Friends of Los Roques Foundation	Used scenic resources, and occasionally practised sport-fishing.
Former representative of Madrizky Group	Used scenic resources, and occasionally practised sport-fishing.
Representative of Sailboat Captains' Association	Used scenic resources, specific anchoring areas, and used peaceful areas to rest. Also occasionally practised sport-fishing.
Local owner of small posada	Used scenic resources as a tourist attraction, used various locations for recreation and snorkelling (some outside the Tourism Zone), and used lobster and fish for tourists in the posada.
Provider of tourism services	Used scenic resources as a tourist attraction, and used lobster and fish for tourists in the restaurant.
Representative of Boat Operators' Association	Used scenic resources as a tourist attraction.
Representative of sport-fishing posada	Used fishing resources, mostly for catch and release.
Sport-fishing guide	Used fishing resources, mostly for catch and release.
Owner of large posada	Used scenic resources as a tourist attraction, used various locations for recreation and snorkelling, and used lobster and fish for tourists in the posada.
Tourist guide for large airline	Used scenic resources as a tourist attraction, used various locations for recreation and snorkelling, and used lobster and fish for tourists in their restaurants.
<b>NGO STAKEHOLDERS</b>	
Representative of local conservation NGO	Used physical space as the operational base for their research station, used natural resources for research purposes, and used fish for feeding their staff.
Representative of Fishermen's Association	Used fish and lobster for sale and consumption.

Table 7.26 lists the nine government and four NGO stakeholders who were identified as only either indirect resource users or non-resource users. The indirect resource user category applied to actors that did not use any of the park's natural resources and did not need them to achieve their mission, but who were based in the park and depended to some extent on other stakeholders who were direct users. The non-resource user category included the actors, such as the NGO representatives and CORPOTURISMO representative, who were not based in the park and did not use or depend on the park's resources or on other stakeholders who were direct users.

**Table 7.26.** Stakeholders identified as indirect resource users or non-resource users of Los Roques National Park.

STAKEHOLDER NAME	RESOURCE USE CATEGORY	REASON FOR NON-RESOURCE DEPENDENCY
<b>GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS</b>		
Former CCA representative 1	Indirect user	Did not directly need or use the natural resources to comply with mission.
Former CCA representative 2	Indirect user	Did not directly need or use the natural resources to comply with mission.
Representative of the CCA	Indirect user	Did not directly need or use the natural resources to comply with mission.
Representative of INPARQUES	Indirect user	Did not directly need or use the natural resources to comply with mission.
Former representative of INPARQUES	Indirect user	Did not directly need or use the natural resources to comply with mission.
Representative of CORPOTURISMO	Non-resource user	Institution was not based in the park and it did not use any of its resources.
Representative of the Coastguard	Indirect user	Did not directly need or use the natural resources to comply with mission.
Representative of the National Guard	Indirect user	Did not directly need or use the natural resources to comply with mission.
School headteacher	Indirect user	Did not directly need or use the natural resources to comply with mission.
<b>NGO STAKEHOLDERS</b>		
Former representative of the international development agency	Non-resource user	Institution was not based in the park and it did not use any of its resources.
Representative of Neighbourhood Association	Non-resource user	They did not need or use the natural resources to comply with its mission. However, several of its members owned tourism businesses that used resources in direct and indirect ways.
Representative of conservation NGO 1	Non-resource user	Institution was not based in the park and it did not use any of its resources.
Representative of conservation NGO 2	Non-resource user	Institution was not based in the park and it did not use any of its resources.

In order to assess the timing and the location of resource use of the actors identified as direct resource users, the respondents were asked: "Does your organisation need to use the park or some of its resources during specific times of the year? If yes, when and for what purpose?". Table 7.27 presents the timing of the resource use by the tourism and NGO stakeholders. The location of the resources they use is included in Appendix 7.1.

**Table 7.27.** Timing of resource use by tourism and NGO stakeholders identified as direct resource users.

STAKEHOLDER NAME	TIMING OF RESOURCE USE
<b>TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS</b>	
Owner of small posada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenic resources used all year-round.</li> <li>• Fish and lobster used when available and needed.</li> </ul>
Recreational diving operator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenic resources used all year-round.</li> <li>• Coral reef used all year-round.</li> </ul>
Former rep. of the Tourism Operators' Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenic resources used all year-round.</li> </ul>
Representative of the Tourism Operators' Assoc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenic resources used all year-round.</li> </ul>
Representative of large tourism company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenic resources used all year-round.</li> <li>• Recreation and snorkelling locations used all year-round.</li> <li>• Fish and lobster used when available and needed.</li> </ul>
Representative of Friends of Los Roques Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenic resources used all year-round, but particularly at weekends.</li> </ul>
Former representative of Madrizky Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenic resources used all year-round, but particularly at weekends.</li> </ul>
Representative of Sailboat Captains' Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used the park 2 to 6 times per year, mostly from 15 Dec. to 8 Jan., Easter and Bank Holidays.</li> </ul>
Local owner of small posada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All year-round, but particularly at weekends.</li> </ul>
Provider of tourism services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenic resources used all year-round.</li> <li>• Fish and lobster used when available and needed.</li> </ul>
Representative of the Boat Operators' Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All year-round, particularly during peak tourist season between December to July.</li> </ul>
Representative of sport-fishing posada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All year-round, but most operations during first 6 to 8 months of each year.</li> </ul>
Sport-fishing guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All year-round, but mostly 8 months of the year.</li> </ul>
Owner of large posada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenic resources used all year-round.</li> <li>• Recreation and snorkelling locations used all year-round.</li> <li>• Fish and lobster used when available and needed.</li> </ul>
Tourist guide for large airline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenic resources used all year-round.</li> <li>• Recreation and snorkelling locations used all year-round.</li> <li>• Fish and lobster used when available and needed.</li> </ul>
<b>NGO STAKEHOLDERS</b>	
Representative of the local conservation NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location of its operations used all year-round.</li> <li>• Research on natural resources undertaken on year-round basis.</li> <li>• Fish used when available and needed.</li> </ul>
Representative of the Fishermen's Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing all year-round.</li> <li>• Lobster fished in season.</li> </ul>

Table 7.27 shows that the 17 stakeholders identified as direct resource users used them all year-round, except for those depending on fish and lobsters as a food source, which were caught when required during the legal fishing season.

There were significant differences between tourism stakeholders based on their type of tourism business according to the degree to which they used and believed they depended upon park resources. Eight of the 15 tourism actors stated that they needed access to some park resources on almost a daily basis and that their operations depended almost entirely on these resources. Table 7.28 lists these highly resource-dependent tourism stakeholders and briefly describes their business.

**Table 7.28.** Tourism stakeholders that were highly dependent on the park's natural resources.

STAKEHOLDER NAME	BUSINESS CHARACTERISTICS
Recreational diving operator	SCUBA diving operation that offered services to tourists and to recreational divers.
Representative of large tourism company	A large tourism operation with resort characteristics, that packaged together lodging, meals and day-tours with recreational and snorkelling activities.
Local owner of small posada	A small bed and breakfast operation that also packaged this with additional meals, day tours to beaches and snorkelling.
Representative of the Boat Operators' Association	Provided boat transport services to tourism beaches for tourists staying in posadas without their own boat services. Some also offered day tours with limited services such as lunch, snorkelling and beach tents.
Representative of sport-fishing posada	Accommodation business solely for sport fishermen, packaged with fishing services, including specialised guides and boats.
Sport-fishing guide	Specialised guide working for sport-fishing posadas and that offered independent boat-and-guide services.
Owner of large posada	A tourism operation with resort characteristics that offered integrated lodging, meals and day tour packages including recreational and snorkelling activities.
Tourist guide for large airline	Typically worked on an exclusive basis for the large tourism companies or large posadas, providing guiding services to tourists staying in these businesses.

These actors depended more than other tourism stakeholders on these resources because their businesses relied on the park's beaches, scenic reefs for diving, and shallow waters for fishing as their main tourism product. These

stakeholders, and others with similar characteristics, had the greatest urgency in terms of resource needs. Their high degree of resource dependency needed to be recognised and acknowledged in any management plan affecting how these resources are used and accessed. These stakeholders were also most likely to oppose a management plan that did not properly address their resource needs. Table 7.29 illustrates their reasoning as to why they needed access to specific natural resources.

**Table 7.29.** Comments of tourism stakeholders that were highly dependent on the park's natural resources.

*"we bring our tourists to permitted areas...Apart from that, we also depend on the local fishing produce to provide most meals at the 'posada'...I live from the tourists that come to the park, my only source of income is my 'posada' and the services that I offer." (Local owner of small posada)*

*"We are independent tourist boat operators...The use of the park consists of the transportation of passengers and goods...this includes only the 5 cays very close to Gran Roque, which are well located for our operations." (Representative of the Boat Operators' Association)*

*"Our operation consists of packages for people interested in sport fishing, which also includes the accommodation. We use...the Pristine Marine Zone and the Central Lagoon, Carenero...it can be accessed by walking in the shallow water, from the beach and from the boat." (Representative of sport-fishing posada)*

*"The company offers two passenger service plans. A full day in which the passengers spend the day sailing in a catamaran and also have guided snorkelling activities...then lunch is provided. They then sail to another cay, and finally back to Gran Roque...The overnight stay service is very similar, but obviously people stay in the company's posadas and they visit different islands in the recreational area...We use the beauty of the place to sell our packages, we also buy the fish and lobsters from the local fishermen....Obviously, the beaches: the tourists look for the beaches of Los Roques and its marine fauna. This is what our company sells, the crystalline waters, isolated beaches." (Tourist guide for large airline)*

The comments in Table 7.29 indicate that these eight tourism stakeholders used the park's natural resources often on an almost daily basis, and that their business success depended on their continued access to these resources. These stakeholders represented the range of tourism operations in the park, which included air transportation services, package tour and accommodation services, boat transport, sport-fishing and beach services and sports. It is probably safe to assume that other stakeholders with similar operating characteristics will have a similar dependence on the park's

resources. The remaining seven tourism stakeholders identified as direct resource users also benefited from the park's scenic resources, using them to attract clients and promote their business (the small posada owner, the former and current representatives of the Tourism Operators' Association, and the provider of tourism services), or for personal enjoyment (the recreational users, such as the Friends of Los Roques Foundation, Madrizky Group and Sailboat Captain's Association), but they were less vulnerable to management changes with regard to park resources.

According to the former Tourism Operators' Association representative, their main use of the park's resources was to *"use its beauty for publicity"*. This use was also mentioned by the current representative of the Tourism Operators' Association, as well as by the small posada owner, who regarded the park's scenic beauty as their main resource. But these tourism stakeholders implied that they did not consider themselves as resource users, and this may help explain why they generally did not have great concerns about resource access. But it was unlikely that this was the case because almost all posada owners in Los Roques promoted access to the park beaches and reefs to their clients, either directly through their own boat tour services, or indirectly through services contracted out to third parties. Also, most of them agreed that the key factor bringing tourists to their posadas was the beauty and abundance of the park's natural resources. This was reflected in the small posada owner's comments: *"They come because I'm located here, if I wasn't they would not come...People definitively come because it is a national park, because they have been told it is very beautiful, because they want to see live coral, they want to see fish"*. Consequently, they were aware that their income depended on tourists having access to the park's natural areas, and thus any resource management plan needs to acknowledge these stakeholders and their resource needs.

While the Madrizky Group is small and has very limited access requirements to the park and its resources, it should also be given consideration in any management process affecting access issues. Some of its members have very powerful economic and political ties, and, while they rarely exercise it, their potential power and influence on park management is tremendous. Thus,

this group's needs must be carefully considered if conflicts and delays are to be avoided. To a lesser extent than the Madrizky Group, the Friends of Los Roques Foundation and the local conservation NGO also include some members with a degree of power and potential influence over park management.

Finally, the representatives of the local conservation NGO and the Fishermen's Association also recognised that their organisation directly depended on the park's natural resources. The fishermen are the most resource-dependent stakeholder group -even more than tourism stakeholders- as their livelihoods are directly linked to the park's natural resources. Indeed, their whole way of life depends on this resource, and on its sustainable use and long term health. This stakeholder group should be accorded the highest priority in any proposals that modify the management of the park's natural resources.

The assessment in this section demonstrated that tourism stakeholders were all direct resource users, with their livelihoods depending on continuous access to well maintained natural resources. However, the degree of resource dependency varied among them. Some used specific park resources on a daily basis, notably those with business operations related to air transport, package tours and accommodation services, boat transport services, sport-fishing, beach services and beach sports. Thus, their access needs to park resources must be given priority in management proposals. The providers of accommodation, on the other hand, tended only to perceive themselves as slightly dependent on park resources as they considered that their clients were the resource users rather than themselves. However, their resource access needs were actually very similar to other tourism parties, and they should also be again be given consideration in any management proposals.

A few NGO stakeholders used and were highly dependent on the park's natural resources. Even if their needs were less complex in that just a few individuals were involved and they all had the same resource needs, their degree of resource dependence was actually higher than those of the tourism

interest group. Accordingly, a higher priority must be given to these stakeholders during any decision-making process about park resource management.

## 7.7 Stakeholder access to alternative resources

This section describes the stakeholders' ability to accommodate new patterns of resource access and use and also to access alternative natural resources. The purpose of this step is to inform resource managers about realistic management alternatives that may be implemented with the least impact on people's well-being.

This assessment helps to identify stakeholders who might have more flexibility in terms of negotiation and bargaining around management proposals as they can more easily adapt their current activities through new patterns of resource use. Some stakeholders might be able to discontinue some of their activities, move them outside of the national park, or to replace their existing activities with others that are more suitable to the park's natural resources. This assessment involved the actors previously identified as direct resource users being asked the questions presented in Table 7.30. This applied to all 15 tourism stakeholders and two NGO stakeholders, as presented in Table 7.25.

**Table 7.30.** Questions to assess stakeholder ability to accommodate changes in resource access and use.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>If the park's resources that your organisation uses were not available, could you substitute them with some other resources? If no, could you use the same resources but in alternative locations within the park?</i></li><li>• <i>If the activities that your organisation is involved in were not allowed in the park, could you substitute them with some other activities? If no, could these activities be provided in alternative locations within the park?</i></li></ul> |
|--|

Table 7.31 summarises the options open to stakeholders who were direct resource users in relation to whether they could move their activities outside the park, replacing some of their current activities, or accommodate new patterns of resource use.

**Table 7.31.** Assessment of the ability of direct resource users to change their use of natural resources.

STAKEHOLDER NAME	ABILITY TO MOVE ACTIVITY ELSEWHERE	ABILITY TO REPLACE ACTIVITY	ABILITY TO ACCOMMODATE NEW PATTERNS OF RESOURCE USE
<b>TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS</b>			
Owner of small posada	Not possible	Not possible	Possible with low impact
Recreational diving operator	Not possible	Possible, but with high impact and undesirable	Possible and depending on proposal could be desirable or undesirable
Former representative of Tourism Operators' Association	Not possible	Not possible	Possible with low impact
Representative of Tourism Operators' Association	Not possible	Not possible	Possible with low impact
Representative of large tourism company	Difficult, very unlikely or not feasible	Possible, but with high impact and undesirable	Possible and depending on proposal could be desirable or undesirable
Representative of Friends of Los Roques Foundation	Not possible	Not possible	Possible, but high probability of rejection
Former representative of Madrizky Group	Not possible	Not possible	Possible, but high probability of rejection
Representative of Sailboat Captains' Association	Possible, but undesirable	Not possible	Possible with moderate impact and could be either desirable or undesirable depending on proposal
Local owner of small posada	Not possible	Not possible	Possible but likely to have moderate to high impact on operations
Provider of tourism services	Not possible	Possible with moderate impact but considered undesirable	Possible and depending on proposal could be desirable or undesirable
Representative of Boat Operators' Association	Not possible	Not possible	Possible and depending on proposal could be desirable or undesirable
Representative of sport-fishing posada	Not possible	Possible, but with high impact and undesirable	Possible and depending on proposal could be desirable or undesirable
Sport-fishing guide	Not possible	Not possible	Possible and depending on proposal could be desirable or undesirable
Owner of large posada	Not possible	Possible, with unknown impacts, considered undesirable	Possible with low impact
Tourist guide for large airline	Not possible	Possible, but with high impact and undesirable	Possible and depending on proposal could be desirable or undesirable
<b>NGO STAKEHOLDERS</b>			
Representative of local conservation NGO	Difficult, very unlikely or not feasible	Possible, but unlikely and/or not feasible	Possible, but high probability of rejection
Representative of Fishermen's Association	Not possible	Possible, but with high impact and perhaps not feasible	Possible and depending on proposal could be desirable or undesirable

The relocation of activities to other locations outside the park was not a real option for any of the 17 resource users. This is not surprising given the characteristics of Los Roques National Park as an archipelago surrounded by open ocean. With the nearest mainland 150 kilometres away, and without other island groups in the country providing similar combinations of natural resources and logistical facilities, the relocation of their activities was simply impractical.

Only three stakeholders felt that they might be able to move their activities elsewhere, although they considered this very undesirable or almost financially and logistically impossible, depending on their particular circumstances. The large tourism company representative recognised that they had other important operations in other natural areas in Venezuela, as well as minor operations in another island in the Venezuelan Caribbean. However, the interviewee also stressed their high financial return from Los Roques, referring to the park as *"their star destination"*. Further, it was not felt to be feasible to move their operations elsewhere because of their significant investment tied in the park in terms of posadas and accompanying facilities. Similarly, while the local conservation NGO representative admitted that *"there have been moments in which...we have thought of moving to 'Las Aves' [another archipelago which is not a protected area]"*, it was felt that moving out of the park was not an option given their previous investment in the park and their inability to replace their current facilities.

The only exception was the representative of the Sailboat Captains' Association who, given the inherent mobility of sailing, admitted that they sometimes used other marine natural areas and thus they were not strictly limited to Los Roques. However, he also stressed the unique characteristics of Los Roques National Park, which he considered could not be found elsewhere in Venezuela. He listed characteristics of the park that he considered unique, asserting that *"for us, the first thing is its closeness. It is a short sailing, a sailboat departing anywhere from the central coast is there in 12 hours, and this minimises the risks. Secondly, its vastness: it is a remarkably big space, quite convenient for the tranquillity that we search for when we are sailing. The*

*physical characteristics of the area are also important...which provide ideal protection from storms and anything like that."*

For all but two of the 17 stakeholders who were direct resource users, the possibility of introducing new activities to replace their current ones was not realistic for their business or would have had considerable impacts on their livelihood, and thus was undesirable. This was particularly the case for the accommodation providers as they have made considerable investments that would not be recouped if their activities were somehow restricted.

The recreational diving operator was typical of the four stakeholders that in theory could implement new activities, but for whom this was too complex or entailed unacceptable impacts on their livelihood. This stakeholder ran a recreational diving business and he argued that, even if they might be able to switch to other aspects of the activity, there was no real substitute for access to the coral reef. He claimed that substituting their use of the coral reef was *"Well, (laughs) impossible! Perhaps you can create some alternatives, for example, a shipwreck. We used to dive here before, but that reef was destroyed, so let's sink a ship very close by, and we then re-create an attraction which is as valid as a reef. But it is impossible to substitute the park's natural resources"*. He also argued that *"I could become a bonefish operator or a tourist boat operator, but that's not the idea"*.

Similarly, the representative of the large tourism company considered their operation to be a highly integrated tourism package, and by offering air transport, lodging and tours to their clients they had a key advantage over their competitors. Hence, a reduction in any of these aspects was not considered favourably. She argued that *"our activity basically is to bring people to the beach, that they have the services to be able to go to the beach, that they have somewhere to sleep, that they have what they want to eat, that they have a boat, that they have a guide to make recreational activities for them...Thus, if I am not able to do this, my operation there loses all sense."*

Similarly, the local conservation NGO representative admitted that *"if, for example, the element of research was suspended, we would be able to*

*continue with the education element. Of course, we have to change a lot, but the education aspect could continue".* However, he also admitted that he considered this option to be only a possibility, arguing that it would very likely be rejected by the institution's Board of Directors, as replacing research for educational activities would not justify their continued presence in the park.

Both the tourism services provider and the large posada owner contended that they could introduce other activities to replace their existing ones, but neither considered this a desirable option. When asked if he could change his current activities, the provider of tourism services argued that *"I would easily change by adding other activities. However, the microlight is one of the park services which produces the least impact in the park"*. When asked this question, the owner of the large posada simply said that they *"will adapt if some activities are prohibited"*, but made clear that they would not be happy and would not support any such changes.

Finally, almost all stakeholders accepted the possibility that changes may need to be made to the patterns of natural resource access and use. The operators of posada businesses considered this an easy option that would not affect them at all, with the adoption being left to their clients and the tourism boat operators. By contrast, several stakeholders that were highly dependent on the park's natural resources considered the possibility of gaining access to other areas to be potentially rewarding. In particular, the sport-fishing guide, the recreational diving operator, the large tourism company representative, the sport-fishing posada representative and the representative of the Fishermen's Association suggested that they considered this a desirable option and went on to suggest areas they would like to use. All were interested in being allowed to access off-limit areas as part of a resource rotation programme. However, none were likely to consider it acceptable if access to current areas was reduced or restricted without another option being offered in compensation.

When asked if they could use alternative areas of the park, the recreational diving operator asserted that *"not everywhere, but some areas: yes. For example, the part of the South Barrier that goes between the*

"Sebastopol" mouth and the "Boca de Cote" mouth, which is an Total Protection Zone, could be a substitution zone". Similarly, both the sport-fishing guide and the sport-fishing posada representative were very positive about the possibility of operating in other areas of the park. They even suggested which areas they would like to see opened for their operations. Some of their comments regarding this issue are presented in Table 7.32.

**Table 7.32.** Comments made by sport-fishing stakeholders regarding the desirability of opening new park areas for sport-fishing operations.

*"At present, 70% of the national park is closed for sport fishing activity...This is a problem for us because the activity is in high demanded and we have to reject fishermen because we don't have many places for them to fish. If in one week there are 20 fishermen here, it is very difficult for us. We are trying to persuade the government to allow us to use some white sand shallows...so that we have more areas to perform the activity and also to have a better rotation of these areas in order to preserve them. When you go too frequently to the same place, the bonefish develop bad habits and thus don't want to catch flies. We also need to allow the current areas to have a break." (Sport-fishing guide)*

*"the current areas which are prohibited for fishing should be open, maybe not for everybody but just for sport-fishing, since I think we wouldn't affect those areas, because the fish are not injured...Therefore, for those areas currently closed, I would agree if they decided to open them, but only if they were opened exclusively for sport-fishing. If, for example, some areas are opened for others. This even will be beneficial for us." (Representative of sport-fishing posada)*

An important issue about changing the pattern of resource use was raised by the Tourism Operators Association representative, who noted that *"if they would allow access to the same resources in other areas, we wouldn't have any problem with that. But that would create new problems for the park in terms of management"*. At least two other stakeholders also warned of the potentially negative effects that might arise from the opening of areas that were currently off-limits or were lightly used. They considered that such a move would simply transfer the existing problems of heavily used areas into new areas of the park. Their comments regarding this issue are included in Table 7.33.

**Table 7.33.** Comments by tourism stakeholders regarding the undesirability of opening new areas of the park for tourism operations.

*"We can adapt to changes, but I would not agree with changes in zoning because in my view, we will pollute other islands. Also, these places are very critical for fish and birds to reproduce. Therefore, I wouldn't agree that these areas are opened." (Owner of large posada)*

*"We would be affected by changes to the way park areas are managed. Because, if nearby areas are closed and replaced with the opening of other places, we need to re-calculate the cost of day-tours. But I don't think this would be beneficial anyway for the park's environment, and such decisions require scientists to be consulted with." (Tourist guide for large airline)*

There were some stakeholders for whom any changes in resource use may be unacceptable. At the time of the fieldwork research, INPARQUES was discussing changes in the park's zoning and management. Some of the proposed changes would result in zoning which could restrict the activities of the local conservation NGO. Questioned about the proposed management changes, the local conservation NGO representative considered that any change to their current pattern of resource use would be very negative for them. When he was asked if such a proposal would affect his organisation, he replied *"A lot! A lot! And not only the Foundation, but also any other organisation that attempts to do a similar task within the Archipelago. And for the Foundation, directly, it would have a very negative impact, particularly regarding zoning. Also, with regard to research"*. The Madrizky Group and the Friends of Los Roques Foundation were also likely to reject any modification in their current resource use patterns. It is unlikely that they will accept any zoning restriction that might affect their houses, given that their use of the park depends on their holiday houses, both in Madrizky and Gran Roque islands, with virtually no possibility of using other areas for this.

The local owner of a small posada also considered that any change in current use patterns would be detrimental for their business, arguing that *"if the current recreational areas were changed it would affect us very much. Particularly for the people who come just for one day, who have to use 'Francisky' and 'Madrizky' islands for its closeness and because they have so little time, since they come in the morning and leave in the afternoon. If these*

*areas were closed, this would be a problem both for these types of activities, such as the full days, as well as for ourselves."*

The assessment of stakeholder access to alternative resources indicates that moving their activities to other areas or replacing them with others activities would not be a viable proposition for the 17 stakeholders currently using the park's natural resources. However, all but three of the stakeholders who were direct resource users were able to accommodate new patterns of resource access and use. Even if there were only limited management options that were acceptable and feasible for these stakeholders, there was still scope to modify the current pattern of use of natural resources without greatly affecting their well-being.

Most stakeholders, particularly those with a marked dependency on the natural resources, seem to have considered it acceptable that their patterns of resource access could be modified by using new areas instead of the current ones. Indeed, some stakeholders were eager to gain access to areas currently off-limits due to park zoning. However, this management modification may result in the same management problems as in the heavily used areas being replicated in the park's relatively pristine areas. Consequently, the opening of new areas for tourism must be carefully examined by the park managers, particularly when regulation enforcement in the current Tourism Zone is not ideal. Thus, the opening of new areas could easily simply aggravate existing enforcement problems.

## **7.8 Conclusion**

This chapter examined stakeholder needs and interests in relation to the park's resources and to their management. For this purpose, the stakeholders were asked to identify the resources that they considered valuable for the park and for tourism, as well as those resources that were being used by this industry. They were also asked to identify which tourism activities and levels of resource use they perceived to be appropriate. Finally, stakeholder's needs and limitations relating to their use of the park's resources were also examined.

The assessment of park resources that were intrinsically valued and those valued for tourism revealed that the park's scenic beauty and its current use for tourism were valued by most stakeholders. This suggests that the park was valued most because of the benefits it generated for tourism, and consequently priority was being given to the industry. This perception undervalued the rich biodiversity and ecosystems that were key elements integral to the park's health, endangering its conservation. However, a minority of government and conservation-related NGO stakeholders did recognise these key elements as critical to the park's current value. These stakeholders may well act as a balance to the views of other parties. It is likely that some degree of conflict will occur between the different stakeholder groups when discussing which park attributes must be preserved.

Almost all stakeholders in the three interest groups thought that the park's natural resources were being negatively affected by tourism. Most of them commented on the negative environmental impacts on specific natural resources, especially in particular geographical locations of the park. The fact that so many stakeholders noted these negative resource impacts indicates that they need dealing with if the park's natural resources are to be preserved. The managers also need to seek ways to minimise the tourism's negative impacts on local fishermen.

Different views were expressed by the various stakeholders on the appropriateness of the tourism activities. Most tourism actors asserted that the current types of tourism activities were appropriate, while about half of the stakeholders in each of the two other interest groups concluded that the current types of activities were inappropriate. However, the problems associated with some tourism activities could be ameliorated through adequate management strategies. This perhaps suggests that the park's management is unclear about the role they should play in influencing the type of tourism activities being developed in the park.

Most stakeholders regarded the current level of resource use by tourism as appropriate, but the level of approval was higher among tourism

stakeholders than among government stakeholders. The NGO interest group was the least inclined to approve of the level of resource use. Some actors suggested that the park's accommodation capacity could be used as a regulating mechanism to control visitor numbers. Besides the implicit risk that this mechanism could encourage a constant increase in the "limit", the evidence suggests that this would not deter more visitors from using the park unless it was coupled with other more purposeful management methods. In any case, several stakeholders argued that there was a need to conduct studies to adequately establish guidelines to inform future levels of resource use.

All tourism stakeholders were direct resource users, and most were highly dependent on them. The stakeholders involved in air transportation, package tours, accommodation services, boat transport, sport-fishing and beach services had the highest degree of dependence. Thus, their need to use these resources should be given priority in management proposals affecting how these resources are managed. Two NGO stakeholders were also highly dependent on the park's natural resources, and higher priority must be accorded to them as their degree of resource dependence was the highest of all stakeholders.

For those stakeholders who were direct users of the park's natural resources, the options of moving their activities to other areas or replacing them with other activities were not viable. However, almost all of them could accommodate new patterns of resource access and use. While the management options that were acceptable and feasible were limited, there was still scope to modify the patterns of natural resources use without greatly affecting the welfare of the stakeholders. Most stakeholders also appeared to accept that it was possible to modify their patterns of resource use to include other areas instead of those currently used. However, this would be a high risk strategy as it could duplicate current management problems in these new areas and careful consideration must be given to this option by the park managers.

## **Chapter 8**

# **Tourism and Resource Management Issues**

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### **8.1 Introduction**

A key goal of the Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA) is establishing management options that respond to the concerns and preferences of the stakeholders of a natural area. Thus, firstly, this chapter examines stakeholders' perceptions of weaknesses or problems in relation to the management of tourism and natural resources in Los Roques National Park. This assessment provides managers with insights into the concerns of stakeholders about the park's management, thus enabling them directly to address these concerns. The Stakeholder Assessment Framework also identifies stakeholder preferences for the management of the park's tourism and natural resources. The chapter addresses this in part by assessing stakeholder views of the strengths and weaknesses of the park's current management, and also whether they agreed or disagreed with how tourism was being managed. Finally, this chapter examines what effect the current management system had in relation to the ability of stakeholders to achieve their organisational goals, and also their perceptions of any discrepancy between stakeholder objectives and those pursued by the park authorities.

### **8.2 Perceived weaknesses or problems in relation to the management of tourism**

This section assesses stakeholder views about the weaknesses or problems related to the management of tourism in Los Roques National Park. For this purpose, all stakeholders were asked the following question: "*Are there any problems in relation to the management of tourism in the park? If yes, what are these problems?*". Although this question was intended specifically to assess tourism-related management problems, most stakeholders also mentioned other management issues in response to this question. Consequently, it was decided to include other types of management problems in this analysis. As explained in section 5.6.2. (Methodology chapter), the

results here are derived from a content analysis of all responses where respondents mentioned any type of management problems.

The stakeholders mentioned an extensive range of management problems, so these were then grouped into five broad themes. These five broad themes are: 1) tourism management problems; 2) problems related to the park's regulations; 3) problems derived from conflicts among the park's stakeholders; 4) issues related to the behaviour of tourism industry operators; and 5) natural resource management problems. Table 8.1 describes the content of these themes, and they are related to the number of parties that mentioned them, starting with those most frequently mentioned. Each theme is discussed at length in the subsequent sections.

**Table 8.1.** Management problems mentioned by stakeholders, grouped into five broad themes.

THEME	TYPICAL CONTENT OF THIS THEME	NUMBER OF STAKEHOLDERS THAT MENTIONED THIS THEME (N = 30)
Tourism management problems	Problems that affected the tourism industry, and the industry affects on other aspects of the park	27
Park regulation problems	Problems related to the inadequacy or lack of management regulations	24
Behaviour of tourism operators	Problems related to the behaviour of tourism industry operators	19
Conflicts among stakeholders	Problems related to conflicts among government stakeholders	18
Natural resource management problems	Problems related to management of the park's natural resources	15

### 8.2.1. Problems related to the management of tourism

The largest proportion of the respondents -27 of the 30- mentioned problems associated with the management of tourism in the park, including 13 out of 15 tourism stakeholders, all nine government stakeholders and five out of six NGO actors. The issues mentioned by these respondents are summarised according to eight statements, which are presented in Table 8.2, and they are discussed in more detail in the text.

**Table 8.2.**Problems related to the management of tourism in the park.

PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM	NUMBER OF STAKEHOLDERS BY INTEREST GROUP THAT MENTIONED THIS PROBLEM			TOTAL MENTIONS
	TOURISM N= 15	GOVERNMENT N= 9	NGO N= 6	
The poor management capacity of the park authorities had resulted in inappropriate tourism management, such as immigration and negative consequences for the local population and tourists.	9	8	4	21
Tourism's excessive growth, inadequate management and concentration in small areas had caused management problems and resource degradation.	4	5	3	12
The park authorities had promoted a tourist profile that was inappropriate.	4	3	2	9
The park authorities lacked clear objectives for tourism management, especially about the type of tourism they wanted to promote.	2	3	3	8
Tourism had produced tensions or negative consequences for the local population.	1	4	2	7
The seasonal tourism peaks and backpacking tourists had put excessive pressure on tourism services and park resources.	4	-	1	5
The park authorities had not coordinated their management with the activities or wishes of tourism operators or users.	4	1	-	5
The information provided for tourism operators and tourists about the park regulations was insufficient.	3	1	-	4
<b>Total number<sup>1</sup> of stakeholders by interest group that mentioned the problem</b>	13	9	5	<b>TOTAL<sup>2</sup> STAKEHOLDERS= 27</b>

1: Since a stakeholder could mention more than one problem, this total reflects the number of *different* stakeholders in the interest group that had mentioned any tourism management problem.

2: Total number of stakeholders across all three interest groups that had mentioned any tourism management problems.

*1. The poor management capacity of the park authorities had resulted in inappropriate tourism management, such as immigration and negative consequences for the local population and tourists.*

Problems associated with the poor management capacity of the park authorities were the most frequently mentioned tourism management problem, commented on by 21 stakeholders in all three interest groups (Table 8.2). This even included all but one of the government actors, with them blaming each other for this problem rather than accepting that their own organisation was also responsible.

Most respondents stated that the weak management of the park authorities was caused by the in-built inefficiency of the central government bureaucracy in Venezuela, which slowed down management efforts at the local level. According to the former CCA representative 1, the park was difficult to manage because *"no management capacity exists in government, either because they are afraid of the consequences of making mistakes...[or] because it is easier not to do anything, because the typical government official...never does anything"*. However, the former representative of INPARQUES asserted that the inadequate composition of the CCA's institutional members was partly to blame for the park's management problems. He asserted that the CCA's management involved *"institutions that...historically have had little participation, or little interest...in the park"*, resulting in CCA members who were indifferent and lacked any interest in achieving the park's objectives. The Tourism Operators' Association representative also argued that the park authorities suffered from an extended response time and from misguided or inadequate policies.

2. *The excessive growth of tourism, its inadequate management, and its spatial concentration in small areas of the park had caused management problems and resource degradation.*

As many as twelve stakeholders commented on problems arising from tourism's uncontrolled growth and inadequate management, and its concentration in specific park areas. It was noted that this problem resulted in damage to coral reefs and vegetation, a reduction of fauna in tourist areas, an inadequate management of waste water, and excessive demand on some public facilities, particularly by posadas. Five stakeholders mentioned that the "Francisky" group of islands was particularly affected by growing pressure due to the concentration of tourists there. According to the large tourism company representative, this concentration was also adversely affecting the tourist experience, particularly in the "Piscina", where tourists were having to queue to visit the shallow reef areas. These areas were so heavily impacted that many tourists felt *"disappointed"* by the contrast between their expectations and the actual conditions. Table 8.3 examines stakeholder views regarding the degradation of the natural resources in the "Francisky" islands.

**Table 8.3.** Stakeholder views on the degradation of the park's natural resources due to the spatial concentration of tourists in the "Francisky" islands.

*"there are serious impacts on the quality of water in the Tourism Zone...And some places that are being used intensively and without rotation, such as the 'Piscina de Francisky'" (Representative of the local conservation NGO)*

*"the 'Piscina' in Francisky [is] a place that has been quite impacted, because it is the end destination for the majority of tourists" (Representative of INPARQUES)*

*"there are some cays where too many people go: for example, 'Francisky'. In 'Francisky' sometimes there are about 20 sailboats, 30 yachts, the Aereotuy catamarans, the other catamarans, the other operators with huge boats...that cay is going to collapse any minute now..." (Representative of large tourism company)*

*"[tourism] is highly concentrated, because the largest percentage of tourists arrive just for a day, and they are concentrated in 'Francisky', and in the 'Piscina'. It is worrying, and definitively a very rapid degradation of the 'Piscina' will occur if the required measures are not taken." (Former CCA representative 1)*

Stakeholder opinions differed according to their interest group when they explained the causes of tourism's uncontrolled growth and spatial concentration. Most tourism stakeholders asserted that the park authorities were to blame, arguing that there was a lack of proper government planning and management, while themselves had little or no responsibility. However, the government respondents highlighted the continuous increase in tourist numbers as the main cause of park degradation. They asserted that they themselves and tourism operators were equally responsible for this, due to both the industry's continuous growth and the authorities' lack of clear management goals and policies. The NGO actors highlighted the park authorities' lack of adequate management goals and policies as the main causal factor.

### *3. The park authorities had promoted a tourist profile that was inappropriate.*

Nine respondents asserted that promotion by the park authorities had attracted an inappropriate type of visitor. According to the international development agency representative, *"the tourist going there is still a plain 'sun and beach' tourist, who is not attracted by the park's ecological features"*. The former representative of INPARQUES asserted that, due to the current tourist profile, *"a great many of our visitors [only] value clean beaches, clear water, and particularly their perception of a pristine place - of being in a virgin place"*. According to this respondent, the promotion of the park as a 'sun and beach'

destination resulted in most visitors having little or no appreciation for the ecosystems that were essential for all park activities. The local conservation NGO representative made similar comments, asserting that *"the park is not focused on a particular visitor profile, and thus any kind of visitor...is attracted by the place"*. This problem is closely associated with the next management issue.

4. *The park authorities lacked clear objectives for tourism management, especially about the type of tourism they wanted to promote.*

Eight stakeholders mentioned this problem. The CCA representative suggested that park institutions were implementing different management strategies in response to dissimilar visions about tourism. He asserted that his immediate priority was to *"clearly determine which is the (tourism) product that we want to offer in Los Roques...and that this product definition is shared by the majority [of the park's institutions]"*. The local conservation NGO representative summed up this problem: *"there is an absolute lack of objectives and goals both for the management of natural resources and for tourism...neither the park administrators, nor the operators, nor anyone else, has a clear idea about what they want in that park"*.

According to the former representative of INPARQUES, the absence of common, well-defined management objectives had resulted in incoherent park management, leading to the implementation of uncoordinated and even contradictory management efforts. This respondent asserted that *"we have lacked a clear and defined line in order to steer these activities [tourism and fishing]. Thus, efforts have been made to promote tourism and to promote and reinforce the local population's identity, but, on the other hand, there are things that are not done...and result in incoherent management"*. He went on to argue that *"to a certain extent the government has had...a relative lack of definition, or clear policies, regarding this situation"*.

If the park authorities did lack a clear tourism management policy, then their management policies are likely to be reactive rather than pre-emptive, with their policies lagging behind the tourism problems, rather than avoiding their

appearance. Certainly the park authorities had implemented initiatives reactively in response to problems resulting from tourism's rapid expansion. Examples included the recent modernisation of electricity generating facilities due to electricity shortages resulting from the continuously growing number of posadas, and the implementation of a solid waste management programme in response to the overwhelming accumulation of such waste in Gran Roque island.

5. *Tourism had produced tensions or negative consequences for the local population.*

Seven stakeholders considered that tourism was negatively affecting the local population. These effects included tensions between locals engaged in tourism and other tourism operators, who were perceived as outsiders, and conflicts between tourism and fishing, the latter only being practised by the local population.

The former representative of INPARQUES and the representatives of the CCA and the Fishermen's Association felt that tourism was seriously damaging the local population engaged in fishing. The representative of the CCA asserted that *"there is a real conflict...between the traditional fishing activity and the tourism industry...because both activities are occurring in the same physical area"*. He claimed that this conflict was leading to tourism using traditional fishing areas, and also making local people abandon fishing in order to work in tourism. The representative of the Fishermen's Association also felt that tourism had encroached on their anchoring and fishing areas (Section 7.3, resources affected by tourism use). He also argued that tourism had taken away job opportunities and had unfairly disadvantaged them, because tourism operators were using larger and better boats to take tourists to the park's beaches, an activity traditionally done by fishermen outside the fishing season.

The local conservation NGO representative argued that tourism had had serious social consequences for the local population: *"the loss of traditional cultural values and invasion of people coming from other cultures has made addicts out of a good deal of the local young population"*.

The school headteacher felt that tourism had become too dominant and had created an unfair emphasis on conserving the park's natural resources, while the local population had become forgotten at best or despised at worst. This was depicted as partly fuelled by some environmentalists suggesting that the local population's activities, like fishing, were detrimental to the park's conservation. The views of this stakeholder are examined in Table 8.4.

**Table 8.4.** School headteacher's views on the disproportionate attention given to the park's natural resources rather than the local population.

*"People have given too much importance to the park because of its natural resources, as all the support and interest have been focused on this issue. However, the community has never been given consideration. The environmentalists dislike the 'Roquenos'. Sometimes people come here and they are astonished that people live here: Los Roques is promoted as a park, but not with its people. The social resource has been undervalued. There are no plans to improve the community's quality of life, or to highlight the community's interesting history and its culture." (School headteacher)*

Out of the 30 respondents, only seven commented on these impacts on the local population, and three of these were members of the local community. Given the severity of these problems, it seems odd that so few stakeholders made reference to them. This suggests that the local population may have been alienated by tourism and were not represented adequately so that other stakeholders were aware of their plight. It also indicates that most stakeholders had little awareness of the local population or of fishing as a traditional economic activity.

*6. The seasonal tourism peaks and backpacking tourists had put excessive pressure on tourism services and park resources.*

Five stakeholders considered that increasingly large number of visitors during seasonal tourist peaks had put an excessive demand on the park's public utilities and tourism facilities, and in some cases had also damaged its natural resources. These respondents also felt that backpacking tourists were contributing to aggravate this problem.

The local owner of the small posada claimed that, due to excessive tourist demand, *"during the high season we have problems with supplies, food,*

*[and] fuel". This suggests that the day-to-day operation of this individual's business had already been affected by the visitor numbers in the park, and that the owner sometimes found it difficult to provide the minimum services that his operation required. The Neighbourhood Association representative asserted that tourist demand was so high that "there are times when the island collapses-the 'posadas' are full, a lot of times tourists sleep on the beach or camp."*

Both the sport-fishing "posada" representative and the owner of the large "posada" considered backpacking tourists were a significant problem. The representative of the sport-fishing "posada" explained how *"in the peak tourist season...there are many people who camp on the beach, [because] the town does not have the capacity [to accommodate] so many people"*. This was described as resulting in the littering and pollution of beaches. They thought campers were difficult to control and could be adversely affecting the environment, as they were mostly uncontrolled either by the park authorities or tourism operators during their stay. Certainly none of the park's authorised camping areas had adequate sanitary, washing or rubbish disposal facilities, but the researcher felt that some tourism parties were unfairly targeting this visitor type partly because they didn't use services provided by tourism operators and hence, gave limited economic benefits to the park or its operators.

Only stakeholders interviewed during the second fieldwork complained about the park's accommodation capacity being exceeded and about problems relating to camping tourists. This might suggest that these problems had developed during the 15 months between the two research field visits. This may also have indicated that the park's capacity in terms of tourism accommodation and facilities had already been reached during periods of peak demand.

*7. The park authorities had not co-ordinated their management with the activities or wishes of tourism operators or users;*

and

*8. Information provided for tourism operators and tourists about the park regulations was insufficient.*

These two closely interrelated management problems, were likely a further consequence of the deficiencies in clear management objectives previously discussed, aggravated by the park authorities' vertical management style. The fact that mostly tourism stakeholders mentioned these problems indicates their willingness to participate in the park's management, as well as their frustration at the limited participation, if any, they had been allowed so far by the park authorities.

To conclude, 27 out of 30 stakeholders across all three interest groups perceived that some problems existed in relation to tourism management in the park. The two most frequently mentioned problems were the park authorities' inadequate administrative capacity and tourism's excessive growth, inadequate management and spatial concentration. These problems had led to poor tourism management and were adversely affecting the park's natural resources, its local population and the tourist experience.

Most stakeholders blamed the park authorities' inadequate administrative capacity on the excessive bureaucracy and in-built inefficiency of government institutions, the CCA's inadequate composition, delayed response times and inadequate management policies. They also stated that both the natural resources and the service infrastructure were being affected by the excessive growth of tourism and its concentration in small areas, and asserted that this was happening due to the park authorities' lack of clear tourism management goals. The government actors agreed that their administrative capacity and management policies required improvement.

Other related problems mentioned were the promotion of an unsuitable tourism profile, the occurrence of negative tourism socio-cultural impacts, excessive tourist demand during the peak season, and the lack of co-operation and communication between the authorities and tourism operators. Only seven stakeholders, however, asserted that tourism caused negative effects on the local population, suggesting that the local community and their associated economic activities were not being given due consideration other than in terms of the immediate benefits they provided for tourism. The majority, if not all, of

the tourism management problems discussed by the stakeholders could be partly or fully attributed to the park authorities' inappropriate tourism management policy, or the lack of a management vision to guide the tourism industry's future development.

### 8.2.2. Problems relating to the park's regulations

Five management problems associated with park regulations were mentioned by 24 stakeholders, making this the second most frequently mentioned theme. These problems, presented in Table 8.5, are examined next in order according to the number of mentions they received.

**Table 8.5.** Management problems related to the park's regulations.

PROBLEMS RELATED TO PARK REGULATIONS	NUMBER OF STAKEHOLDERS BY INTEREST GROUP THAT MENTIONED THIS PROBLEM			TOTAL MENTIONS
	TOURISM N= 15	GOVERNMENT N= 9	NGO N= 6	
The park's regulations are inadequate, obsolete or too bureaucratic to deal with management problems, and sometimes constrain economic activities (tourism / fishing).	10	3	3	16
The park authorities lack the capacity or funding to enforce management regulations.	6	2	5	13
The CCA was inefficient due to inadequate legislation that imposed unnecessary financial and bureaucratic burdens.	1	4	1	6
INPARQUES and the CCA lack the necessary information and technical expertise to produce appropriate management regulations.	1	5	-	6
Institutional pressures are leading to exceptions in regulation enforcement.	1	1	1	3
Total number <sup>1</sup> of stakeholders by interest group that mentioned the problem	12	7	5	TOTAL <sup>2</sup> STAKEHOLDERS= 24

1: Since a stakeholder could mention more than one problem, this total reflects the number of *different* stakeholders in the interest group that had mentioned any regulation management problem.

2: Total number of stakeholders across all three interest groups that had mentioned any regulation management problems.

*1. The park's regulations are inadequate, obsolete or too bureaucratic to deal with management problems, and sometimes constrain economic activities.*

This was the most frequently mentioned problem in relation to the park regulations, with 16 actors, mostly from the tourism sector, mentioning it. The respondents complained that the current management regulations were

inadequate to deal with offenders. As most infractions were not penalised, this was encouraging further damage to the park's resources and infractions to zoning regulations. These stakeholders regarded park regulations as inadequate because: 1) the park authorities did not have adequate enforcing capabilities; 2) the prosecution procedures were too long and complicated, thereby hindering their implementation; and 3) the fines and penalties were so light that they did not deter further contraventions. Further, another four stakeholders asserted that the park regulations granted similar management jurisdiction to both INPARQUES and the Central Co-ordinating Authority, and to a lesser extent to the National Guard and the Coastguard. This caused conflicts between these organisations, particularly with regard to conferring permits and to enforcing park regulations. Table 8.6 presents some stakeholder comments in relation to the inadequacy of the management regulations.

**Table.8.6.**Stakeholder views on inadequacies in the park's management regulations.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>The regulations conflict with each other</b> <i>"there are lots of regulations that need to be changed, because they contradict each other, they create conflicts, because so many authorities exist here in Los Roques. Each organisation fulfils a role, but on many occasions their roles overlap." (Former representative of the Tourism Operators' Association)</i></li><li>• <b>The regulations are difficult to enforce</b> <i>"if...there is a guy in a boat who drops a can in the water, that person should be fined. But it doesn't happen, because INPARQUES says that they can't fine, because they do not have a fixed penalty regime...They would have to open an administrative inquiry for littering, but then the inquiry procedure is so cumbersome and so long that it never gets anywhere. Hence, the end result is that people drop cans and they don't care less." (Representative of the Tourism Operators' Association)</i></li><li>• <b>The regulations do not grant enforcement capabilities to the authorities and the penalties are too light</b> <i>"The Co-ordinating Authority problem...was that...I could not impose penalties on offenders because I did not have the capacity. For example, if they found someone with a turtle I could not directly punish him, and then this individual would have a fine imposed by INPARQUES of Bs.1000 [c.£1]." (Former CCA representative 1)</i></li></ul>
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Seven tourism parties and the Fishermen's Association representative claimed that the park regulations were overly stringent and bureaucratic, and thus they constrained their businesses and made the administrative procedures too bureaucratic. As a consequence, they were unable to increase their

customer base due to the limited areas in which they could undertake their activities, or because of the need to process each application with different authorities. Some of their comments are presented in Table 8.7.

**Table 8.7.** Stakeholder views on the constraints on their businesses due to the park's regulations.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>The regulations are hindering tourism activities</b> <i>"since we were experiencing some problems related to night diving, I've sent several communications to INPARQUES explaining our needs, and the answer that I got was... 'the regulations say you can't, so don't bother to make any requests'. Of course I do understand that the regulations say so, and that is precisely why I'm trying to explain to them that changes are needed." (Recreational diving operator)</i>  <i>"I wanted to put chairs for customers outside my front door, so I had to request a permit, which was rejected... This is something that I cannot understand because there are no definitive criteria to grant permits... The bureaucracy that is required to comply in order to develop any activity in this park terminates any initiative." (Provider of tourist services)</i>  <i>"At present, 70% of the national park is closed to the sport-fishing activity... This is a problem for us because the activity has become highly demanded and we have to reject fishermen because we don't have many fishing areas ... I'm at a point where I can't grow anymore." (Sport-fishing guide)</i></li><li>• <b>The regulations are too bureaucratic</b> <i>"if you have to go through a procedure, you have to go four or five places to do the same thing... For example, if I bring a new boat I need to request a concession... Once I have the authorisation from the Central Co-ordinating Authority I have to go to INPARQUES, the National Guard and the Harbour Master with the same papers." (Representative of sport-fishing "posada")</i>  <i>"all the administrative routines... are very irritating. Sailors have to go to three different authorities that are spread all over the town requesting their stamps." (Representative of Sailboat Captains' Association)</i></li></ul>
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The Fishermen's Association representative felt that the park's regulations limited their activity by restricting their access to areas with low conservation value but high fishing potential, by banning Queen Conch fishing but not taking action against poaching, and by restricting access to some of their traditional beaching and anchoring areas. This respondent's views are presented in Table 8.8.

**Table 8.8.**Views of the Fishermen's Association representative about constraints on fishing due to the park's regulations.

- **The regulations restrict access to areas of fishing potential**  
*"I don't think that this [area] is adequate for Total Protection...They have set apart an area about 1000 metres wide...if they set aside this area...where is the diver going to dive for lobster? It is quite difficult already with the small allocated areas that we have".*
- **The regulations affecting fishermen do not deter poaching**  
*"we have realised that people have continued to poach [the Queen Conch]. Because beforehand, there used to be a Queen Conch season here and everyone would benefit...Why is it that only these people who poach benefit from Queen Conch fishing, instead of all the fishermen here? The reason is because, instead of detaining the poachers' boats, they are fined with a Bs.200,000 (c.£200) fine, and as a result they will keep on doing the same illegal business".*
- **The regulations restrict their activities**  
*"When the first Director was here, he removed several fishermen from the beachfront near the church, he ordered the boats to be beached elsewhere, and he designated a bathing area there...He removed those fishermen from there, who have been there for years...I don't know what for."*

2. *The park authorities lack the capacity or funding to enforce management regulations.*

This was the second most frequently noted problem with the regulations, being mentioned by 13 stakeholders. They did not question the appropriateness of the regulations, but they considered the authorities lacked the material and financial resources to enforce them properly. This in turn resulted in visitors and operators ignoring the regulations or purposefully contravening them. Examples of this included boats using anchors in areas designated only for buoy-anchoring, and operators exceeding the authorised visitor capacity in cays with a fixed visitor limit. Thus, the former representative of the Madrizky Group claimed that the park authorities have not been able to enforce regulations because traditionally they have attempted to supervise the implementation of management regulations by themselves, rather than delegating this responsibility to those organisations that have to comply with them. He contended that the *"only way that [the authorities] can keep up with the park's pace of development is by not thinking that they have to do everything"*. He proposed that the *"authorities should verify the management rather than implement the management...The best way is to combine self-regulation by users and verification by the authorities. Obviously, you cannot presume that*

*everybody is following the rules and close your eyes to what's going on. You have to monitor compliance, and the fines [for non-compliance] must be very heavy."* Example of the comments made by other stakeholders about this problem are presented in Table 8.9.

**Table. 8.9.** Views on the problems caused by the park authorities' inability to enforce the management regulations.

*"INPARQUES should have a better rapid-reaction capability, in order to keep a constant watch and avoid people accessing restricted areas and be able to really protect them." (Owner of small posada)*

*"the [park's] institutions...need a lot more resources...and they also need the support, the financing -for example to have good boats- in order to protect the park and to be able to act in a much faster way to punish the offenders that are damaging or abusing the area." (Organiser of Tourism Operators Association)*

*"The system of buoys in the park is very interesting because it is wonderful that we have a secure place to tie up our boats. But...some members told me that the system is not working because when people arrive and there are no more buoys, they just lay anchor in any place." (Representative of the Sailboat Captains' Association)*

**3. The CCA was inefficient due to inadequate legislation that imposed unnecessary financial and bureaucratic loads.**

The third problem with the park regulations, mentioned by six stakeholders, was the inherent inefficiency of the Central Co-ordinating Authority, which was caused by the CCA structure and the mission that it had been assigned, which resulted in its original role being distorted.

Both former representatives of the CCA complained about a distortion in the institution's role, which forced it to be responsible for issues not encompassed in its original mission statement. This included the obligation to deal with the provision of fuel, materials, food and even salaries for other park institutions, such as INPARQUES, the National Guard and the Coastguard (Table 8.10). These changes to the CCA's role have occurred because it had been forced to assume the duties of other institutions that were not fulfilling their own roles. This had resulted in the creation of dependency patterns between the CCA and other park institutions that were assisted by them.

**Table. 8.10.** Views on the legislative inadequacies affecting the Central Co-ordinating Authority.

*"the National Guard has its own budget allocated by the government, and supposedly they should meet the needs of their personnel, but that hasn't ever happened. The Authority is the one that supplies them with everything, from petrol for their boats, to the food that they eat, everything...So the Authority has been overloaded with functions that it should supervise, but which are not its duty to fulfil." (Former CCA representative 2)*

*"What happens is that the CCA assumed roles that it shouldn't have...What happens is that as nobody did anything, the Authority had to do it... we ended up supplying water and electricity simply because the responsible institutions would fail to. The Co-ordinating Authority ended up buying computers for the Civil Authority, paying for the trips of the mayor, the expenses of INPARQUES, school expenses, medicine expenses, the doctor, everything, petrol, boats and spares for the National Guard...and for the Coastguard." (Former CCA representative 1)*

The former and current representatives of INPARQUES also argued that the large number of institutions included on the CCA's Directive Board hindered its efficiency, becoming overly bureaucratic because it involved so many institutions that were not interested in the park. The former representative of INPARQUES claimed that *"the intention of the Co-ordinating Authority to create institutional co-ordination is good, but perhaps it involves institutions that...have had little participation, or little interest, or little concern about the park. This results in a 19-member [Co-ordinating Authority] Directive Council, where only half of the members participate. And, when they do, another half does not has the slightest idea about many of the issues that must be decided on in these Council sessions."*

**4. INPARQUES and the CCA lack the necessary information and technical expertise to produce adequate management regulations.**

This fourth problem, mentioned by six stakeholders, was that INPARQUES and the Central Co-ordinating Authority lacked the expertise to produce appropriate management regulations. The CCA former representative 1 revealed that occasionally he had to improvise management decisions without adequate technical support. He argued that he was forced to do this due to the urgency of the problems and the lack of advisors in the CCA. The INPARQUES representative also suggested that his institution lacked the expertise required to adequately inform management decisions. He went on to argue that national

universities usually provided this information, and he acknowledged that *"we currently have too few research and advisory relationships with universities"*.

The current Central Co-ordinating Authority representative argued that budget constraints had impaired the completion of some studies that were essential to inform the park's management decisions, and he acknowledged that *"one of our weaknesses is a lack of knowledge about carrying capacity. And this is one of the things that we were unable to fulfil in the past year because this depended on a budget from the Spanish Economic Co-operation"*.

#### *5. Institutional pressures were leading to exceptions in regulation enforcement.*

Three stakeholders asserted that some government and tourism organisations were putting unacceptable pressure on the park authorities to make exceptions in the application and enforcement of regulations. However, the precise nature of these exceptions was unclear as the respondents did not elaborate, presumably because of the sensitivity of the subject.

To summarise the findings of this section, 24 stakeholders noted five types of management problem related to the park's regulations. The main one was the inadequacy of the current regulations in the face of the park's management problems, along with their constraining influence on the tourism and fishing industries. The second most often mentioned type of problem was the inability of the authorities to enforce the park's regulations, which resulted in them being infringed. The other three problems mentioned by respondents were the distorted and ever-widening role of the CCA, the inadequate capacity of the CCA and INPARQUES to produce appropriate regulations, and their inability to enforce some regulations due to bureaucratic and financial pressures.

#### **8.2.3. Problems related to the behaviour of tourism operators**

The third most frequently mentioned type of management problem related to the behaviour of tourism operators, and this can be broken down into five management issues. This type of problem was mentioned by 19 stakeholders, which included eleven tourism respondents, five government respondents and three NGO respondents. The five issues relating to operator

behaviour are presented in Table 8.11, and they are examined next in an order based on the number of mentions they received.

**Table 8.11.** Management problems related to the behaviour of tourism operators in the park.

PROBLEMS RELATED TO TOURISM OPERATORS' BEHAVIOUR	NUMBER OF STAKEHOLDERS BY INTEREST GROUP THAT MENTIONED THIS PROBLEM			TOTAL MENTIONS
	TOURISM N= 15	GOVERNMENT N= 9	NGO N= 6	
Some operators did not comply with the park regulations.	3	3	1	7
The operators and tourists damaged the natural resources and infringed zoning regulations, either intentionally or accidentally.	5	1	1	7
Some operators were poorly trained, resulting in an inadequate management of tourists and promotion of an inappropriate visitor profile.	2	3	2	7
Operators were providing a poor quality of service or were overcharging tourists.	4	2	-	6
Operators were not organised and many objected to working together.	3	-	1	4
<b>Total number<sup>1</sup> of stakeholders by interest group that mentioned the problem</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>TOTAL<sup>2</sup> STAKEHOLDERS= 19</b>

1: Since a stakeholder could mention more than one problem, this total reflects the number of *different* stakeholders in the interest group that had mentioned any problem related to operator behaviour.

2: Total number of stakeholders across all three interest groups that had mentioned any problems related to operator behaviour.

**1. Some operators did not comply with the park regulations.**

Seven parties asserted that some operators disregarded certain regulations and were causing negative impacts on the park's natural resources. Three government stakeholders that mentioned this issue linked it either to operators working in the park without some of the required permits, or to some airlines not handing in their passengers' arrival registration cards. Three tourism actors contended that some tourist boat operators did not have the legal permits required for their operations or the necessary safety equipment. The representative of the Sailboat Captains' Association argued that the tourist charter boats *"should be registered as commercial vessels and pay taxes, but when we are in Los Roques we see that these boats are not registered correctly, they are not bothered by the authorities, and they buy lobster from local fishermen even out of the legal fishing season."*

2. *The operators and tourists damaged the natural resources and infringed zoning regulations, either accidentally or intentionally.*

Seven stakeholders, of whom five were tourism actors, asserted that some operators and tourists accidentally or intentionally infringed the park's management zones and were also damaging some natural resources. Specific examples of this problem included operators who entered the Total Protection Zone, tourists and operators who consumed or bought under-sized or out-of-season lobster, and operators who allowed tourists to damage or collect coral. Among the explanations given for these problems were the operators' poor training and knowledge (this is discussed later as a management problem in its own right), a lack of information provided to operators by the park authorities, and inadequate information given to tourists about the park's value and importance. When discussing the problems caused by tourists, the Boat Operators' Association representative asserted that *"not everybody is ready to visit coral reefs, and tourism operators often fail to provide tourists with appropriate information about the coral and its fragility."* According to the small posada owner, some operators did not care about the park regulations and may have willingly infringed them in order to take their clients to scenic areas that were off-limit. This respondent claimed that they ignored the zoning regulations on purpose in order to meet tourists' requests and to gain a commercial advantage over law-abiding operators.

3. *Some operators were poorly trained, resulting in an inadequate management of tourists and promotion of an inappropriate visitor profile.*

As mentioned earlier, seven stakeholders considered that the poor training of some tourism operators was a significant management problem resulting in negative impacts. The tourist guide for the large airline held a typical view on this issue, complaining that *"some posada owners and boat operators aren't concerned about the environment and how tourists should be managed. There should be more emphasis on providing environmental education training to all tourism operators"*. It was felt that lack of training made many operators promote an inappropriate tourist profile and resulted in tourists being inappropriately managed.

4. *Operators were providing a poor quality of service or were overcharging tourists.*

Six stakeholders, of whom, surprisingly, four were tourism actors, asserted that some operators provided a poor quality service to tourists, and charged inflated rates for their services. As most respondents that mentioned this problem were knowledgeable about the Los Roques tourism industry, it is fair to assume that some service quality problems existed, which require attention before visitor perceptions of the destination are negatively affected.

5. *Operators were not organised and many objected to working together.*

One NGO and three tourism stakeholders raised this problem, contending that tourism operators were poorly organised as a group and that some found it difficult to work together. This resulted in ineffective co-ordination among tourism actors so they were unable to propose coherent management policy changes, and failed to gain support from the park authorities.

This section showed that several stakeholders, including some tourism actors, identified significant behavioural problems within the tourism industry. In many cases, this had resulted in management regulations being infringed and natural resources being damaged. Respondents gave various reasons for this undesirable behaviour, but many comments suggested that an inadequate training of the operators may have been a key influence.

#### **8.2.4. Problems related to conflicts among stakeholders**

This section discusses four management problems caused by conflicts occurring between the park's managing institutions. These problems were raised by 18 respondents, comprising mostly of tourism and government actors. These are presented in Table 8.12, and are examined in this section, along with their likely causes, according to the frequency that they were mentioned.

**Table 8.12.** Management problems relating to conflicts among stakeholders in the park.

PROBLEMS RELATED TO CONFLICTS AMONG STAKEHOLDERS	NUMBER OF STAKEHOLDERS BY INTEREST GROUP THAT MENTIONED THIS PROBLEM			TOTAL MENTIONS
	TOURISM N= 15	GOVERNMENT N= 9	NGO N= 6	
The park authorities had contradictory roles or poorly defined functions, resulting in conflicts between them and problems for park users.	7	5	1	13
The park authorities, and notably INPARQUES, resisted participation in management by non-governmental parties.	4	2	2	8
CORPOTURISMO had conflicts with INPARQUES and the CCA regarding the management of tourism.	-	3	-	3
Attempts to reduce overlapping roles between the CCA and INPARQUES had been resisted by the CCA	-	2	-	2
Total number <sup>1</sup> of stakeholders by interest group that mentioned the problem	8	7	3	TOTAL <sup>2</sup> STAKEHOLDERS= 18

1: Since a stakeholder could mention more than one problem, this total reflects the number of *different* stakeholders in the interest group that had mentioned any problem related to conflicts among stakeholders.

2: Total number of stakeholders across all three interest groups that had mentioned any problems related to conflicts among stakeholders.

1. *The park authorities had contradictory roles or poorly defined functions, resulting in conflicts between them and problems for park users.*

Conflicts created by the park authorities' contradictory roles or poorly defined functions was the most frequently mentioned type of conflict, being mentioned by 13 respondents. This problem in turn led to management conflicts that subsequently affected the tourism industry and the conservation of natural resources. One tourism management problem resulting from this situation was that permits granted to an operator by one park management institution would not be recognised by the other institutions. More commonly, different park institutions granted permits for the same tourism activity according to different criteria, thereby creating an inconsistent situation where *"people request approval from another authority if the one they went to first denies them their request, and they thus achieve what they want"* (Provider of tourism services). Other problems included the need for people to repeat the same administrative procedures with each of the park's managing institutions; and the authorisation of activities that adversely affected natural resources due to disagreements between institutions, such as the authorisation by the CCA of some activities or the building of infrastructure in areas deemed sensitive by INPARQUES. Some

comments made about the consequences of these conflicts between park institutions are presented in Table 8.13.

**Table. 8.13.** Views about the problems created by contradictory roles or poorly defined functions of the park authorities.

*"there are many institutions with different functions, but they sometimes overlap with each other and make some procedures cumbersome". (Director of Tourism Operators Association)*

*"I believe that one of the problems of Los Roques has been the permanent conflict between the authorities that operate there. If there was a truly co-ordinating authority there, and all others disappeared, Los Roques would be completely different. But the constant tug-of-war between them just reinforces the current situation". (Representative of conservation NGO 1)*

*"when a sailboat arrives, it needs to go to the National Guard, then to INPARQUES and then to the Central Co-ordinating Authority, because the owner has to present the required documents to all these authorities. I think that this should be dealt with in only one office, because this is negatively affecting the tourist experience. I think that this is very disorganised. With fishing the same thing occurs, you have to go to different places for the relevant permits". (Sport-fishing guide)*

It is notable that conflicts arising from the overlapping roles of INPARQUES and the CCA were emphasised by the former and current representatives of INPARQUES. These respondents pointed out that the decree that created the Co-ordinating Authority granted this institution a similar level of authority as INPARQUES over the allocation of land and tourism permits, particularly in Gran Roque island. According to these stakeholders, this situation resulted in *"huge legal uncertainty for those who are being administered, because both authorities could make equally valid but contradictory administrative decisions"* (Former INPARQUES representative).

The representative of the conservation NGO 1 argued that another cause of conflict between the park's managing authorities was their extreme power differences. He contended that *"there are authorities, such INPARQUES, which are too weak; which is a contradiction because, being responsible for the management of a national park, they should be the strongest. Thus, this reinforces the management conflicts, because the institution that should be leading the way doesn't have the capacity to do it"*. This actor compared the situation of the national park with a three-piece puzzle game, with these pieces

being "authority, capacity and responsibility". He felt that Los Roques was "like a game in which everyone has some of the pieces, but no one has them all, and they are always bickering between each other to have them all...All of them push the others to impose their views, but the net movement is zero". This stakeholder suggested that the problem should be tackled by either reducing the number of managing authorities in the park, or by clearly defining the roles and purpose of the existing authorities.

2. *The park authorities, and notably INPARQUES, resisted participation by non-governmental parties in park management.*

This management problem was mentioned by six stakeholders, mostly tourism actors, who stated that this resistance from the park authorities was manifested in the lack of formal participation mechanisms, and by the excessive length of time and considerable effort that was required from other parties to participate. According to these respondents, even in the few instances where there was participation by non-governmental stakeholders in decision-making processes, it seldom resulted in tangible results. Table 8.14 presents specific examples given by the respondents of the park authorities' resistance to public participation.

**Table. 8.14.** Examples of the park authorities' resistance to public participation.

<p><i>"it would be good for local participation to have more influence on the authorities. Because...the fact is that the Co-ordinating Authority manages the park as it wishes, sometimes even confronting other park institutions...For example, up to the present day no changes have been implemented as a consequence of the participatory workshop that agreed on modifications to the park regulations." (Recreational diving operator)</i></p> <p><i>" this workshop was held and all these proposals came forward, but the law currently only requires a public consultation. Thus, park authorities are not compelled to modify anything in their original proposals. If you bring something to a public consultation...and you are consulting these citizens, you must be required to take into account their views. A mechanism must be developed...that will make them take us into account." (Representative of the local conservation NGO)</i></p> <p><i>"It is very difficult to introduce new organisations into the park's management because the authorities involved in it are closely knit. They do not admit people other than themselves, or somebody with important political influence." (Headteacher of the school)</i></p>
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Three stakeholders offered different explanations as to why the park's authorities tended to resist non-governmental participation. For example, the provider of tourism services suggested that it was the *"result of a lack of participation policies, rather than the lack of operators' interest. I think this is occurring because of the Venezuelan tradition of lack of participation"*. The former representative of the Madrizky Group felt that their participation in park management had met strong resistance from INPARQUES at its top managerial level. This stakeholder asserted that INPARQUES' sought to protect its own position of power, as otherwise they might have felt that *"their power or control over the park would be compromised"*. The sport-fishing guide had concluded that *"when you want to participate or discuss some management changes it is impossible to do it"* due to the disorganisation of the park authorities and the lack of participation mechanisms. These findings suggest that the park authorities' had inadequately defined their roles and this also resulted in restricted opportunities for public participation in the park's management.

3. *CORPOTURISMO had had conflicts with INPARQUES and the CCA regarding the management of tourism;*

and

4. *Attempts to reduce overlapping roles between the CCA and INPARQUES had been resisted by the CCA*

The final two types of conflicts that were mentioned were the clashes between different institutions responsible for park management. These conflicts were mentioned only by the three government stakeholders directly involved in them, and they were attributed to overlapping responsibilities.

This section has identified various conflicts among park stakeholders, with these often attributed either to institutional roles that were not clearly defined, or to overlapping missions that resulted in conflict and contradictory decisions being made. This situation made it difficult to manage the park appropriately, and it was also adversely affecting the stakeholders that depended on the park authorities to achieve their objectives, including tourism operators. This situation may also have been used by some parties to their advantage, such as by using these institutional rivalries in order to obtain

favourable administrative responses despite them being detrimental to park conservation. The institutional conflicts and overlapping roles might also have encouraged these institutions to resist involving other stakeholders in decision-making as a way to protect their own influence on management decisions.

### 8.2.5. Problems related to the management of natural resources

A total of 15 stakeholders identified four problems related to the management of the park's natural resources. These are presented in Table 8.15, and they are examined here in a sequence based on the number of mentions they received.

**Table 8.15.** Management problems related to the management of the park's natural resources.

PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES	NUMBER OF STAKEHOLDERS BY INTEREST GROUP THAT MENTIONED THIS PROBLEM			TOTAL MENTIONS
	TOURISM N= 15	GOVERNMENT N= 9	NGO N= 6	
Natural resources were being damaged in several areas of the park.	7	3	2	12
The continuous growth of the local population and the lack of policies to deal with it were a threat to the park's sustainability.	3	1	1	5
The lack of clear resource management objectives among the park authorities resulted in resource damage.	1	-	2	3
The park authorities had encouraged activities that were in conflict with the park's principles and management	-	1	1	2
Total number <sup>1</sup> of stakeholders by interest group that mentioned the problem	7	5	3	TOTAL <sup>2</sup> STAKEHOLDERS= 15

1: Since a stakeholder could mention more than one problem, this total reflects the number of *different* stakeholders in the interest group that had mentioned any natural resource management problem.

2: Total number of stakeholders across all three interest groups that had mentioned any natural resource management problem.

#### 1. *Natural resources were being damaged in several areas of the park.*

This management problem was mentioned by 12 stakeholders, mostly the tourism actors. They explained that the management measures in the park had not avoided the occurrence of negative impacts and the gradual destruction of natural resources. Examples given of these negative impacts included damage to coral reefs in areas used by tourists, human-related impacts in areas closed to visitors and on fish and bird fauna. Several of the stakeholders

mentioning this problem shared a perception that "things used to be better before", perhaps suggesting that resource damage had indeed increased with time. Examples of stakeholder views referring to these impacts are included in Table 8.16. The natural resource deterioration was mostly attributed to inappropriate tourism management policies that resulted in negative impacts, or that failed to rectify these impacts once they had occurred. These negative impacts were further aggravated by the inappropriate patterns of resource use by tourists. However, most stakeholders implied that resource overuse by tourism was the underlying cause.

**Table 8.16.** Views on damage to natural resources caused by the inadequate management of the park's natural resources.

<p><b>Impacts on coral reefs</b> <i>"there are some places I haven't visited for two years, and when I went there I just saw dead coral...I think [that the park] is gradually deteriorating, and tourists are increasingly asking me: 'look, where can I see live coral?'" (Owner of small posada)</i></p> <p><b>Impacts on bird fauna</b> <i>"I can remember that when I arrived, I used to visit the islands that are off-limits nowadays, and then you could see nesting birds and all that. And with the simple presence of...a human, with a smoking boat, leaving petrol spills...I have witnessed how things have disappeared". (Former representative of the Tourism Operators' Association)</i></p> <p><b>Impacts on water quality</b> <i>"If you compare Los Roques with what it was 30 years ago, you realise that as a result of human pressure and excessive use, some changes or damage to the water quality is visible, especially around the Grand Roque. From a town of 600 people, now we are 1200 people living here and generating a pressure on the environment." (Provider of tourism services)</i></p> <p><b>Impact on Total Protection Zone</b> <i>"it has become more difficult for us to implement studies in areas which are supposedly free of human intervention, which we use as a benchmark to compare with other areas, because we find...that some kind of intervention has occurred." (Representative of the local conservation NGO)</i></p>
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Other causes for natural resource deterioration were the fragility of the park's resources and the increasing number of visitors in the park. Some of these comments are presented in Table 8.17.

**Table 8.17.** Views on the causes of degradation of the park's natural resources.

<p><b>Lack of information / management</b> <i>"people...damage the natural resources, often because they are not being told the regulations ". (Former representative of Madrizky Group)</i></p> <p><b>Resource overuse</b> <i>"there are 60 "posadas" in Los Roques, which means 600 beds, and they all offer fish on their menus, and all the fish served in Los Roques come from local fishing. I think these resources are obviously affected". (Tourist guide of large airline)</i></p> <p><i>"The impact of tourism is not yet that strong because Los Roques is quite expensive - people just come for a day- but the trouble is that more and more people are coming every day, and that has not been controlled." (Headteacher of the school)</i></p> <p><b>Inherent resource fragility</b> <i>"the ecological fragility of the environment does not allow too much [tourism growth]. We are talking about a system with a high ecological fragility...Hence, any increase in the amount of visitors has a strong effect on the environment, and it is immediately felt". (Representative of INPARQUES)</i></p>
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2. *The continuous growth of the local population and the lack of policies to deal with it was a threat to the park's sustainability.*

Five stakeholders mentioned this problem, which can be summed up by the following comment by the tourist guide for the large airline: *"the Gran Roque urban area can't support more population, and the remaining lands are wetlands."* Although the CCA had granted land plots and authorised the construction of new houses as a temporary response, the Neighbourhood Association representative asserted that this was a short-term solution, as *"the population keeps growing, and as it is likely to continue growing in the future. In about, let's say, four or five years more, we will again have the same problem"*.

The Central Co-ordinating Authority representative claimed to be very concerned about this problem and its implications, and acknowledged that it was their responsibility to find a solution. He explained that the CCA's long-term policy for the local population was to implement a management plan for Gran Roque village with a fixed limit to its size. However, he admitted that this management plan had *"a serious problem...because there are not going to be any more houses to accommodate the actual population growth"*. He acknowledged that the CCA did not have a policy to deal with future population growth once the proposed population limit had been reached.

3. *The lack of clear resource management objectives among the park authorities had resulted in resource damage.*

The third problem, mentioned by three stakeholders, was the lack of clear resource management goals, both for the CCA and INPARQUES, which had resulted in inappropriate management and natural resource degradation. The conservation NGO 1 representative summed up this issue: *"a number of problems exist related to the park's lack of management, or its inappropriate management...the park's authorities do not have a management process that is organised clearly within the context of policies, plans, programmes and projects"*. He contended that this lack of management policies meant that the authorities were managing the park *"blindly, without any order or sense"*, and hence there was likely to be *"environmental damage, and this damage will gradually increase, and it will become obvious in the future. Thus, a point can be reached where the park will lose part of its attributes."*

4. *The park had encouraged activities that were in conflict with the park's principles and management.*

The former CCA representative 1 argued that the park objectives were contradictory: while they allowed both small-scale commercial fishing and tourism to occur, they also had responsibilities for the conservation of natural resources. This point was expressed by the conservation NGO 1 representative: *"a conflict has always existed between tourism and the purpose of the park's management, because the promotion of tourism is not the end goal of the park, and thus there's always going to be use and interest conflicts."*

To sum up this section, 17 stakeholders contended that there were problems in relation to managing the park's natural resources, particularly their degradation due to ineffective management and various human activities. These stakeholders might well support some degree of increased protection for these resources. The findings again suggest that there is real cause for concern over the impact of human activities on the park's natural resources. While some stakeholders expressed concern about the unmanaged growth of the local population, none suggested any long-term management policy in response to this problem. Indeed, this problem might be aggravated by the Central Co-

ordinating Authority's intention to set a limit to the growth in the number of houses on Gran Roque island. Some actors considered that the park authorities lacked clear management policies for the park's natural resources, and some concluded that the park's management objectives were inherently in conflict. These problems are not unique to Los Roques National Park, as they are common to many natural areas where people live and work (Boyd, 2000; Butler and Boyd, 2000; Cresswell and Maclaren, 2000). However, the fragility of the park's natural resources and the fact that it is one of Venezuela's most popular tourist attractions, have put particular pressure on its authorities to manage the area in ways that minimised these conflicts and contributed to its conservation.

The park's management problems were organised here according to five thematic areas. The thematic area that appears to have caused greatest concern related to the management of tourism, and most stakeholders perceived that deficiencies in tourism management were the main problem for the park's management. The respondents' comments suggest that the lack of co-ordination and the weak institutional capacity of the park's authorities, together with the uncontrolled growth of the tourism industry, were the main causes of concern in relation to tourism management.

The park's management regulations also caused concern for many stakeholders due to their deficiencies and the inability of the authorities to enforce them properly. This area of concern also closely relates to the conflicts between management institutions. The difficulty of enforcing regulations appears to have been exacerbated by conflicts and overlapping roles between the institutions in charge of managing the park. The behaviour of tourism operators by infringing regulations was also thought to contribute to the park's management problems.

### **8.3 Stakeholder views on the advantages and disadvantages that they derive from the way the park was managed**

The study examined the advantages and disadvantages derived by the stakeholders from the ways in which the park's natural resources were

managed. This allows for the identification of who might benefit or lose from changes in the way the park is managed, and thus who might support or object to the proposed changes. This issue was assessed by asking all stakeholders the questions included in Table 8.18.

**Table 8.18.** Questions to assess the advantages and disadvantages derived by the stakeholders from the park's current management.

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Does your organisation derive any advantages from the way the park's resources are currently managed? If yes, what advantages?</i></li><li>• <i>Does your organisation derive any disadvantages from the way the park's resources are currently managed? If yes, what disadvantages?</i></li></ul> |
|---|

Nine out of 15 tourism stakeholders stated that they gained advantages from the current resource management system, whereas only five tourism actors experienced disadvantages, and these results are shown in Table 8.19.

Four of the nine tourism stakeholders claiming to derive advantages from the current management system mentioned advantages of benefit to all park users, such as *"adequate conservation of the park's resources"* or *"availability of the park for tourism use"*. Another five mentioned advantages of specific benefit to their own interests. For example, the Sailboat Captains' Association representative spoke of the installation of a mooring buoy system, and the local owner of the small posada noted the supply of abundant fresh water (Table 8.19). In another example, the Boat Operators' Association representative stated that they had requested and obtained a modification to the park's management that granted them *"an increase in the number of permitted visitors in Dos Mosquises and Cayo de Agua islands"*. As boat operators charged a high fee for these particular trips, a modest increase in the number of allowed passengers per boat represented a large increase in their income.

**Table 8.19.** Views of tourism stakeholders on the advantages and disadvantages they derived from the current way the park's resources are managed.

STAKEHOLDER NAME	ADVANTAGES OF CURRENT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	DISADVANTAGES OF CURRENT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
Owner of small posada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Recreational Diving Operator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good enforcement of regulations</li> <li>• Better solid waste management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Former rep. of Tourism Operators Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate conservation of the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Representative of Tourism Operators' Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of the park for tourism use</li> <li>• Protection of park ecosystems by INPARQUES</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Representative of large tourism company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of the park for tourism use</li> <li>• Logistic advantages because it allows the concentration of large groups in the same area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Representative of Friends of Los Roques Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privileges given by the park authorities to the local population</li> </ul>
Former representative of Madrizky Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Representative of Sailboat Captains' Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mooring buoy system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unnecessary bureaucracy forces sailboat users to travel to Gran Roque when visiting the park</li> </ul>
Local owner of small posada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abundant water supply provided by new water plant</li> <li>• Adequate conservation of the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of visitors coming to the park was not controlled, sometimes resulting in stretched public utilities</li> </ul>
Provider of tourism services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Representative of Boat Operators' Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased participation in management decision-taking</li> <li>• Management modifications that were favourable to their operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total Protection Zone was too large, excessively constraining the areas that boat operators could access</li> </ul>
Representative of sport-fishing "posada"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current regulations did not make it mandatory to use guides for sport-fishing, leading to resource damage</li> </ul>
Sport-fishing guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate conservation of the resources they used</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Owner of large "posada"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Tourist guide for large airline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of the park for tourism use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>

The large tourism company representative mentioned advantages that at the same time can be seen as contradictory to their interests. This respondent suggested that current management regulations were beneficial because they allowed them to bring large numbers of visitors to a relatively small area of the Tourism Zone, thus simplifying their transport logistics. This was considered *"an advantage, because...I am able to sell a day tour for 150 passengers, as I can have them all on the same cay. If there were restrictions, I wouldn't be able to*

*have large groups*". However, in reply to a question about management problems, this stakeholder asserted that the very same concentration of visitors in that particular area used by their tourists was detrimental to the park and disadvantageous to their own clients as it reduced the quality of the tourist experience.

Most of the disadvantages perceived by tourism stakeholders related to management problems constraining their activities. These included limits to the areas open to tourists due to the large size of the Total Protection Zone (mentioned by the Boat Operators' Association representative), having to deal with unnecessary bureaucracy when visiting the park (Sailboat Captains' Association representative), and an overloading of public utilities due to weak controls on visitor arrivals (local owner of small posada).

The representatives of the sport-fishing "posada" and of the Friends of Los Roques Foundation also mentioned disadvantages specific to their interests. The representative of the sport-fishing "posada" argued that *"many people nowadays come to practice fishing on their own...This damages the park because they are not properly guided...They can also take a boat to fish in any place, including prohibited places"*. These comments suggest that these visitors were regarded as inherently careless or destructive, and also that the interviewee may want to increase his business by forcing all fishermen to use professional guide services. The Friends of Los Roques Foundation representative contended that the management system provided the local population with privileges unavailable to other park users. He asserted that *"the Roqueno...is allowed to do whatever he wants, they do not pay electricity...The overexploitation of lobsters is exclusively done by Roquenos...in practical terms, those of us who have not been born here are treated in one way and they [the 'Roquenos'] in another"*.

In sum, nine of the 15 tourism stakeholders claimed that the current resource management system provided them with advantages related to use of the park's natural resources and to the use of specific utilities or services that benefited their business. Thus, it is likely that they would prefer to maintain

these advantages if the current management system was modified, and thus would oppose such modifications. Five stakeholders mentioned disadvantages that they derived from the management system. Some of these disadvantages related to management regulations regarded as inappropriate or constraining, and which they were likely to want modified if this management was reviewed. Two other stakeholders mentioned disadvantages related to the desire of protect their business interests (mentioned by the sport-fishing "posada" representative), and perceived benefits accruing to the local population (Friends of Los Roques Foundation representative).

Seven of the nine government stakeholders claimed to be gaining advantages from the current management system, while two asserted that they were disadvantaged by it (Table 8.20).

**Table 8.20.** Views of government stakeholders on the advantages and disadvantages they derived from the current way the park's resources are managed.

STAKEHOLDER NAME	ADVANTAGES OF CURRENT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	DISADVANTAGES OF CURRENT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
Former CCA representative 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowed the CCA to fund itself through tourism fees</li> <li>Granted the CCA autonomy and decision-making power over the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>
Former CCA representative 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowed the CCA to fund itself through tourism fees</li> <li>Granted the CCA autonomy and control over other park institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>
Representative of CCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Granted the CCA autonomy and decision-making power over the park</li> <li>Helped to formulate a common tourism management vision with other government institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Duplicity or function overlap between park's authorities</li> <li>The park organisations were weak and depended from the CCA</li> </ul>
Representative of INPARQUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowed achievement of its mission</li> <li>Adequately protected the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current regulations inadvertently might have allowed lobster overfishing</li> </ul>
Former representative of INPARQUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowed achievement of mission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>
Representative of National Guard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helped them to work in Los Roques</li> <li>Helped to create contacts with the Tourism Operators' Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>
Representative of Coastguard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helped them to achieve their mission</li> <li>Helped to avoid conflicts between the park's management institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>
Representative of CORPOTURISMO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>
School headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>

The main advantages that government stakeholders claimed to derive from the current management system were related to achieving their mission and attaining the park's resource conservation goals. For example, the CCA representative contended that *"the Central Co-ordinating Authority's legal basis is fully adequate, as it translates into a great management advantage for the park"*, giving the CCA a key co-ordinating role and unifies the management vision for the various park authorities. However, this actor and both former CCA representatives acknowledged that the CCA had clear advantages over other institutions through the funding arrangements and the legal framework that the CCA had with them. These gave the CCA considerable power and autonomy in decision-making and they tended to ensure that the other park institutions were subordinated to them. This situation was clearly recognised by all three CCA representatives. Thus, it was likely that any attempt to modify these conditions would be strongly opposed by the CCA. Only two government stakeholders (the CORPOTURISMO representative and the school headteacher) claimed they did not gain any advantage from how the park's resources were managed, and their responses suggested an indifference towards the park's management, implying they felt they were unlikely to gain either advantages or disadvantages from it.

Only two government stakeholders considered that their organisations were disadvantaged by the system of resource management (Table 8.20), either by limitations established by the resource management system (mentioned by the INPARQUES representative) or by the inherent institutional problems it created (CCA representative). The INPARQUES representative stated that changes recorded in the lobster population indicated that the regulations may have resulted in lobster overfishing, as *"we observe many lobsters with the legal weight but under the minimum size. This might be pointing...that there no longer are big lobsters"*. The CCA representative considered that the overlapping roles and inherent weakness of the park's institutions were specific disadvantages of the current management system. However, he emphasised that the CCA was in the process of overcoming these disadvantages, and that he had simply recognised them.

In sum, most government stakeholders obtained institutional advantages from the current management system, with these relating to the

accomplishment of their respective missions. The CCA representative was the only respondent across all three interest groups that mentioned disadvantages but also appeared sufficiently concerned to actually confront them. This suggests that most government stakeholders were satisfied with the current management system, and that at this time they would not seek to modify it. It is likely that most government stakeholders would oppose drastic changes to the current management system, unless these modifications originated from these institutions themselves.

With the NGO stakeholders, they were mostly indifferent to the current resource management system, asserting that they did not gain any particular advantage or disadvantage, the exceptions being the representatives of the Fishermen's Association and of the local conservation NGO (Table 8.21).

**Table 8.21.** Views of NGO stakeholders on the advantages and disadvantages they derived from the current resource management system.

STAKEHOLDER NAME	ADVANTAGES OF CURRENT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	DISADVANTAGES OF CURRENT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
Representative of development agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Representative of local conservation NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current management provides it with privileges to use some resources</li> <li>• The current management recognises and allocates an area for its operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Representative of Fishermen's Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total Protection Zone protects breeding grounds for valuable fish species and lobster</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of the Total Protection Zone includes areas without conservation value but with high fishing potential</li> </ul>
Representative of Neighbourhood Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Representative of conservation NGO 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Representative of conservation NGO 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>

The Fishermen's Association representative asserted that his organisation derived both advantages and disadvantages from the present management system because of the way the Total Protection Zone affected their activity. This stakeholder contended that this zone protected the breeding grounds of fish species of high commercial value, but it also excluded the fishermen from important fishing areas with low conservation value.

Although he was not outspoken about this issue, the representative of the local conservation NGO acknowledged that his institution gained specific advantages from the park's management system. For example, they were allocated land in the park and were given certain privileges within the management regulations. This actor was clearly aware of the unique advantages granted to their institution, as evidenced by his comments that proposed modifications to the park's management regulations might reduce the land allocations they had. This modification was vehemently opposed by his institution, and when asked if the proposed modification would affect them, the representative replied that *"it would be a very negative impact, particularly regarding the zoning."*

The findings in this section suggest that most stakeholders derived advantages from the current resource management system. Some of these advantages were not favourable for either the sustainable management of the park's resources or for other stakeholders. Thus the large tourism company representative admitted that although relaxed use regulations in certain cays were advantageous for them, they caused crowding and resource overuse in the Tourism Zone. Further, some of the advantages gained by the government stakeholders may not contribute positively to the park's management, this being because they distort the balance of institutional power between the different actors. However, the government stakeholders will not easily relinquish these advantages. Thus, some aspects of the current management system were clearly favourable for the Central Co-ordinating Authority, and their representatives believed that the current system granted the CCA significant powers to control the benefits gained by other stakeholders. It is likely that they will oppose changing these regulations unless it enhances those benefits.

Only a minority of stakeholders felt they were disadvantaged by the current management system. In spite of highlighting certain inconveniences none of the respondents stressed the need for immediate changes; except the CCA representative, who was already implementing changes. This suggests that if stakeholders were directly questioned about modifying the present resource management system, most would appear to be either satisfied with it, or indifferent to it. However, as demonstrated by the analysis of management

problems related to tourism (section 8.1), almost all the stakeholders believed that problems existed due to the current management system. The latter finding would suggest that most stakeholders would support modifications in the way in which park resources were managed.

#### 8.4 Stakeholder agreement with how tourism was managed

This section reviews whether the stakeholders agreed or disagreed with how tourism and the natural resources were managed in Los Roques National Park. The following question was used: *"Does your organisation agree with the way in which the park's resources are being managed, and the way tourists are using the park? Why do you agree / disagree?"* Table 8.22 summarises whether the stakeholders broadly agreed or disagreed with the park's management, thus highlighting those management aspects that the stakeholders considered were positive or successful. When stakeholders disagreed with how the park was managed, their replies are reported in Section 8.2 relating to the park's management problems, and thus this is not discussed here.

**Table 8.22.** Whether stakeholders broadly agreed with how tourism and the natural resources were managed in Los Roques National Park.

AGREEMENT WITH HOW TOURISM AND THE NATURAL RESOURCES WERE MANAGED	STAKEHOLDER INTEREST GROUP			TOTAL STAKEHOLDERS IN EACH CATEGORY
	TOURISM N = 15	GOVERNMENT N = 9	NGO N = 6	
Stakeholder agreed with how both the resources and tourism were managed	4 (27%)	5 (56%)	0 (0%)	9 (30%)
Stakeholder agreed with how the resources were managed, but disagreed with how tourism was managed	6 (40%)	2 (22%)	2 (33%)	10 (33%)
Stakeholder disagreed with how the resources were managed, but agreed with how tourism was managed	2 (13%)	1 (11%)	0 (0%)	3 (10%)
Stakeholder disagreed with how both the resources and tourism were managed	3 (20%)	0 (0%)	4 (66%)	7 (23%)
Stakeholder had an ambiguous position	0 (0%)	1 (11%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)

Table 8.22 shows that most stakeholders either fully agreed with how both tourism and the natural resources were managed (9 respondents), or only

agreed with how the natural resources were managed (10 respondents). The third largest group (seven stakeholders) disagreed with how both tourism and the park's resources were managed, while 3 respondents only agreed with the way tourism was managed.

The government stakeholders were the most supportive of current management practices, with five out of nine (56%) of these stakeholders approving the way in which tourism and the park's resources were managed. This result was expected, as these stakeholders were responsible for implementing the park's management regulations, and they were accountable for any management problems that might occur. A second group, of only two government stakeholders (22%), agreed with how the park's resources were managed, but they were dissatisfied with the management of tourism. Only one government stakeholder, the school headteacher, disagreed with how the park's natural resources were managed, but was satisfied with how tourism was managed, contending that the park's authorities were doing a *"good job"*. But when their views about the park's management problems were solicited (Sections 8.2.1 and 8.2.5), this and other government stakeholders (such as the former representatives of INPARQUES and CCA) did express disagreement with certain issues relating to the management of tourism and of the natural resources (such as the design and implementation of management policies).

The NGO stakeholders were divided into two opinion groups. Four out of the six (66%) disagreed with how both tourism and the park's resources were managed. Among the reasons given for their views were the park authorities' inadequate administrative capacity, their lack of management objectives, the overuse and degradation of natural resources, the profile of tourists who were attracted being inappropriate, and the negative impacts for the local population. The remaining two NGO stakeholders, the development agency representative and the Neighbourhood Association representative, agreed only with the way in which the natural resources were managed. These respondents asserted that the park's natural resources were adequately managed, but felt that the tourism management policies promoted an inappropriate tourist profile and granted privileges to the tourism industry that were detrimental for the local population.

The tourism stakeholders showed greatest variability in their views, which fell into all four opinion groups. Six stakeholders (40%) only disagreed with how tourism was managed, four stakeholders (27%) fully agreed with how both tourism and the natural resources were managed, and three respondents (20%) disagreed completely with how the park was managed. Two stakeholders (13%) only disagreed with how the natural resources were managed. The six stakeholders that disagreed with how tourism was managed contended that the park authorities lacked the administrative capacity to deal adequately with the industry and lacked clear management objectives to guide it. The four tourism stakeholders that agreed with how tourism and the park's natural resources were managed contended that the park authorities were adequately implementing and enforcing its management guidelines. As was the case for some of the government stakeholders, when their views about management problems were solicited elsewhere in the interview (Section 8.2, particularly Section 8.2.1), almost all of these stakeholders expressed disagreement with some aspects of the management of tourism and the park's resources.

Another three tourism stakeholders disagreed with how tourism and the park's resources were managed, complaining that the authorities lacked clear management objectives, the current regulations did not adequately protect the natural resources and hindered tourism, and that there were negative impacts for the local population. Two tourism stakeholders explicitly disapproved of the way in which the authorities were managing the park's resources, while they approved of their management of tourism.

In sum, if both the stakeholders agreeing with the park's overall management and those agreeing only with the management of resources are considered together, then about two thirds of all respondents agreed with the park authorities' management of natural resources. An equally significant number of stakeholders (one third) specifically disapproved of how tourism was being managed. These findings are consistent with the earlier assessment of the tourism and resource management problems, where most stakeholders identified problems relating to tourism management, but only a minority did so with regard to the management of the park's natural resources.

This section's findings suggest that, while many stakeholders voiced their overall agreement with the park's management, when questioned about management issues elsewhere in this study they identified numerous management issues with which they disagreed. Thus, there was a pattern of seemingly contradictory opinions about the same issues. These apparent contradictions suggest that to assess overall opinions it may well be insufficient merely to ask stakeholders about management issues. That may lead to misleading results by indicating that stakeholders agree with park management policies and by not showing that they actually hold apparently contradictory views.

This research indicates that such seemingly contradictory opinions might be expected during the assessment of resource and tourism management issues in a natural area. It is proposed that these apparent contradictions arise when stakeholders defend specific views about management issues because they affect their interests, or involve their specific obligations or responsibilities. In these cases they are likely to voice a positive opinion, as these reflect on their perception of their own actions. But, when stakeholders disassociate their views from their interests, then they are more likely to express more realistic perceptions about management issues.

### **8.5 The effects of park management on the stakeholders' ability to achieve their goals**

This section examines how the park's management practices affected the stakeholders' ability to achieve their own objectives, thus it assesses if there were discrepancies or a concurrence between the stakeholders' own objectives and those pursued by the park authorities. This was assessed by the following question: *"Does the way in which the park is currently managed affect in any positive or negative way the objectives pursued by your organisation? If yes / if no, in what way does it affect your organisation?"*.

Table 8.23 shows three defined stakeholder groups, categorised according to the relationship between their organisations' objectives with those of the park's management. These categories were: 1) stakeholders whose

objectives were similar to the park's management objectives, 2) stakeholders whose objectives were similar only in relation to tourism management, and 3), stakeholders whose objectives were not related with those of the park's management. In order to classify stakeholders into these three groups, the researcher identified keywords contained in the respondents' answers that were commonly used by them to express agreement or discrepancy with specific aspects of the park's objectives. Additionally, the answers of three stakeholders suggest that they misinterpreted the question, presumably because they have given particularly long interviews, and may have not understood, or preferred to ignore, this relatively complex question at the end of the interview schedule.

**Table 8.23.** Relationships between the stakeholders' own objectives and the management objectives of Los Roques National Park.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STAKEHOLDER OBJECTIVES AND PARK MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	STAKEHOLDERS IN THIS CATEGORY
STAKEHOLDER OBJECTIVES WERE SIMILAR TO THE PARK'S MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>5 Government / 4 NGO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representative of INPARQUES</li> <li>• Former representative of INPARQUES</li> <li>• Representative of the Coastguard</li> <li>• Representative of the National Guard</li> <li>• Representative of the CCA</li> <li>• Representative of the local conservation NGO</li> <li>• Representative of the Fishermen's Association</li> <li>• Representative of the Neighbourhood Association</li> <li>• Representative of conservation NGO 2</li> </ul>
STAKEHOLDER OBJECTIVES WERE SIMILAR ONLY IN RELATION TO TOURISM MANAGEMENT, NOT TO RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>8 Tourism / 1 Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owner of small posada</li> <li>• Recreational diving operator</li> <li>• Representative of the Tourism Operators' Association</li> <li>• Former representative of Madrizky Group</li> <li>• Representative of the Boat Operators' Association</li> <li>• Owner of large "posada"</li> <li>• Sport-fishing guide</li> <li>• Tourist guide of large airline</li> <li>• Former CCA representative 1</li> </ul>
NO RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STAKEHOLDER OBJECTIVES AND THE PARK'S MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>5 Tourism / 2 Government / 2 NGO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former representative of the Tourism Operators' Association</li> <li>• Representative of the Friends of Los Roques Foundation</li> <li>• Representative of the Sailboat Captains' Association</li> <li>• Local owner of small posada</li> <li>• Provider of tourism services</li> <li>• Representative of CORPOTURISMO</li> <li>• Headteacher of school</li> <li>• Representative of development agency</li> <li>• Representative of conservation NGO 1</li> </ul>
QUESTION MISINTERPRETED	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>2 Tourism / 1 Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representative of large tourism company</li> <li>• Representative of sport-fishing "posada"</li> <li>• Former CCA representative 2</li> </ul>

Table 8.23 demonstrates that there was an equal number of stakeholders in each of the relationship categories. Most government and NGO stakeholders (five and four, respectively) considered that their own institutional objectives were similar to those of the park's management. Slightly more than half of tourism stakeholders (eight), and one government stakeholder, considered that their own objectives were similar only in relation to tourism management, and that they were not similar in relation to the management of natural resources. Further, five tourism stakeholders, along with two government and two NGO stakeholders, considered that their own objectives were not similar at all to those of the park's management. Finally, two tourism stakeholders and one government stakeholder misinterpreted the question, and gave replies that could not be classified.

In the first relationship category were those stakeholders whose organisational objectives were similar to those of the park's management, and they included five government and four NGO stakeholders. It is not surprising that the INPARQUES representatives fall into this category, as this institution is responsible for the design and successful implementation of most park management guidelines. The Former representative of INPARQUES described the park's management as extremely conducive to his institution achieving its goals, and the current representative of INPARQUES asserted that the park's management has made it *"easy to manage the current amount of visitors, to have the ease...of having...a highly controlled tourism operation."*

The position of the Coastguard and National Guard representatives was very similar to that of INPARQUES, in that their mission objectives were closely related to the park's management regulations. Their mission was not only foreseen in the park's management regulations, but was also clearly supported by them, leading the Coastguard representative to declare that the park's management *"doesn't create any conflicts with our function or our mission"*. The National Guard representative, however, admitted that the park's seasonal visitor peaks did not allow them to fully comply with their mission, suggesting that large visitor numbers were overwhelming their management capacity. Although he stated that the park's management generally allowed them to

achieve their mission, he felt that in *"some periods, especially during peak seasons...visitor numbers are so large that it becomes a bit more difficult to implement the appropriate controls which we should maintain"*. He suggested that this problem may have also affected other institutions in the park, asserting that *"it is during every peak season that...all the authorities have problems in maintaining control, because tourist numbers are so large that it is really difficult to keep track of all the activities taking place."*

The CCA representative, who was included in the first relationship category, contended that the institutional framework involving the Central Coordinating Authority made Los Roques *"the best managed national park of Venezuela"*, and he attributed this situation to *"the existence of an institution [the CCA] that makes this management effective."*

The four NGO stakeholders included in the first relationship category had contrasting opinions as to why their objectives were similar to those of the park. The local conservation NGO representative grudgingly admitted that there were no conflicts between his organisation's objectives and those of the park's management, asserting that the latter has *"allowed us to achieve"* its organisational objectives. The respondent's reticence may have been because during the interview this stakeholder had previously manifested strong disagreement with some of the park management regulations. Conversely, the Fishermen's Association representative unequivocally indicated that the park's management, and specifically the implementation of areas set aside as biodiversity reservoirs, was beneficial for its own activities. He asserted that he *"fully agreed with INPARQUES that the Total Protection Zone needs to be protected, because it is beneficial not only for me, but for my sons, who don't want to do anything but fishing. And they will derive a benefit from there in the future... because lots of small lobsters and small fish are spawned in this area, and then migrate to deeper water where you capture them"*. The remaining NGO stakeholders, these being the Neighbourhood Association representative and the conservation NGO 2 representative, expressed their agreement with the park's current management without further elaboration.

The second relationship category, which included eight tourism stakeholders and the former CCA representative 1, associated their own objectives only with the number of visitors attracted to the park. They did not perceive any relationship between their own objectives and the management of the park's natural resources. The answers given by most tourism respondents suggest that they were mostly concerned with the effect that a restriction on the volume of park visitors would have on their goals. This was probably to be expected, particularly for the posada operators, as their income directly related to visitor numbers in the park. The small posada owner's views were typical, asserting that *"it would be ideal if the high season was year-round"*. The Boat Operators' Association representative held a similar view, stating that *"if the park's management...allowed the implementation of new activities, we would have the possibility of further development. If management changes were to limit our operation, however, we would be negatively affected"*. Thus, with the exception of the recreational diving operator and the large "posada" owner, most tourism stakeholders included in the second relationship category could not find any similarity between their own business and the management objectives of the park's natural resources. This was particularly the case for posada owners, who always referred to their guests and not themselves as the ones making use and depending on the park's natural resources.

Similarly, when the former CCA representative 1 was questioned about their own objectives in relation to the park's management objectives, he replied that any such relation was *"irrelevant. Financially speaking, it is the number of visitors, from a monetary point of view, that concerns us. Thus, if you get less visitors you increase the fees...In other words, it is an issue of demand and supply."* This reply was unexpected, as the CCA was closely involved with the park's management. However, the CCA receives its entire operational budget from the revenue for visitor fees. This may explain why this respondent had a similar view to that of tourism operators, linking the well-being of his organisation to the income generated by visitor fees, and disregarding their more ample involvement in the park's management.

Finally, a third group of stakeholders stated that no relationship existed between their organisational objectives and those of the park's management. This group was composed of five tourism stakeholders, and two government and NGO stakeholders. They gave diverse reasons to account for their response.

The views of the former representative of the Tourism Operators' Association were typical of these stakeholders. He asserted that the park's management did not concern the posada operators as long as it did not affect their own businesses. He suggested he was indifferent to the park's management *"because it is simply a set of rules that we must comply with...And, hence, as long as we can provide our service and keep our operation going, I don't believe we are affected by the park's management"*. The Sailboat Captains' Association representative shared this view, asserting that *"our activity does not have anything to do with the park's management...in reality we do not depend on the park"*. Thus, tourism stakeholders in this category viewed the park's management only as a set of regulations that they had to comply with in order to operate. Presumably, they did not link these regulations to the park's wider management, nor did they recognise the importance of such management for their own and the park's well-being. The views of the NGO stakeholders included in this third relationship category were similar to those of government actors. Thus, the school headteacher argued that there wasn't any relationship between the school objectives and the park's management, as *"the park's management does not affect us in a direct way, there isn't a direct contact between the children and the tourists"*. This can hardly be the case, given that the school shares the small village community of Gran Roque with about 60 posadas located within it, and with a tourist population that regularly exceeds the number of local residents. The development agency representative explained that even if their project complemented the park's management actions, once it had been implemented it was largely unaffected by any changes to it. Thus, this respondent asserted that the park's management *"doesn't make any difference, because the project is directed toward specific use problems related to the users, and to enhance the park protection, and these objectives do not depend on that"*.

The only government stakeholder representative in the third relationship category, the CORPOTURISMO representative, contended that her institution had had little involvement in the management of the park, and thus to a certain extent they were hardly affected by changes in this management. This was also the case for the conservation NGO 1 representative, who considered that their institution's absence from the park resulted in few links between their respective objectives.

Summarising this section's findings, most government and NGO stakeholders considered that their institutional objectives were largely similar to those pursued by the park's management and, as a consequence, both sets of objectives were mutually supportive and complementary. Arguably, these stakeholders would lend greater support to management proposals looking to enhance the park's conservation objectives.

The second group of stakeholders, composed almost exclusively of tourism stakeholders, regarded their own objectives as largely unrelated to the park's management, as long as visitor numbers were not affected. These stakeholders did not relate their own objectives to the wider objectives of natural resource conservation that the park pursues. However, they directly linked park visitor management with their income, and prioritised this issue in their objectives. This view represents a risk for the achievement of the park's management objectives, as these stakeholders do not relate the well-being of park resources to those of their businesses. Further, they are likely to support an increase in visitor numbers, which can only increase the already existing risk of resource overuse.

The third group of stakeholders perceived no relationship between their own objectives and those of the park's management. Their perceptions depended on the type of relationship that they held with the park, with the NGO and government actors lacking relationships mostly due to institutional reasons. Tourism stakeholders, however, who composed a large proportion of this group, apparently did not recognise the importance of the park's management for the

well-being of the natural resources, and they did not relate the management of these resources with the attainment of their own objectives.

Presumably, then, the objectives of about two thirds of the organisations and institutions interviewed for this research were supportive, or at least mostly indifferent, to the conservation goals enforced through the park's management regulations. However, for many tourism stakeholders, the number of visitors coming to the park was a very important part of their objectives, and thus they are likely to feel distinctly affected by any attempt to modify the present situation. Conversely, for at least one government stakeholder, the National Guard representative, this same issue was starting to expose the insufficient capacity of the park's institutions to deal with further tourism expansion.

## **8.6 Conclusion**

Five thematic areas related to the park's management problems were identified. The management problem that caused stakeholders the greatest concern was that of tourism management. Most stakeholders perceived that the inadequate management of tourism was the main problem faced by the park's management. The lack of co-ordination and institutional capacity of the park authorities, coupled with the uncontrolled growth of tourism, were the main problems relating to tourism management.

In relation to the park's management regulations, the second of the five thematic areas, the main areas of concern for most stakeholders were the inadequacy of the current park regulations, and the inability of the authorities to properly enforce them. As was also shown in the third thematic area - concerning conflicts between institutions- conflicts and the overlapping of roles amongst several of the park's institutions caused management problems and negative consequences for most stakeholders.

The results of the fourth thematic area suggest that some tourism operators contributed to the park's management problems by infringing its regulations. In relation to management problems with the park's natural

resources -the fifth thematic area of this study- the only problem frequently mentioned by the respondents was that tourism caused negative impacts on the resources, due to both the particular characteristics of the tourism industry and the fragile nature of the park's resources.

Most stakeholders claimed to gain advantages from the park's resource management system. A few of them, particularly government actors, considered some situations to be advantageous which were not necessarily favourable for the sustainable management of the park or for other stakeholders. Only a minority of stakeholders stated that they were disadvantaged by the current management system, but none of them stressed the need for immediate changes. However, almost all stakeholders believed that problems existed with the current management system, and thus they were likely to support management proposals intended to improve it.

About two thirds of all stakeholders agreed with how the park authorities managed the park's natural resources. However, one third of respondents specifically disapproved of the way tourism was being managed. These figures are consistent with the assessment of tourism and resource management problems, where most stakeholders identified problems related to the management of tourism, but only a minority did so with respect to the management of the park's natural resources.

Most stakeholders asserted that the goal and objectives of their organisations either agreed or were indifferent to the park's management objectives, as long as the current visitor volumes were not affected. This suggests that the objectives of most stakeholders interviewed for this research currently did not collide with the conservation goals enforced through the park's management regulations.

## **Chapter 9**

# **Resource Management Preferences and Options**

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### **9.1 Introduction**

The fourth and final step of the Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA), stakeholder management, formulates options which take into account the management preferences of stakeholders, while addressing the area's management problems. The purpose of this step is to avoid or ameliorate the conflicts that often occur when management regulations are implemented without prior consultation with the affected stakeholders. Although the fourth step of the STA was not fully implemented in this study, this chapter examines the preferred management scenarios of stakeholders, and compares them with the management scenarios that are most likely to occur. In doing so, it identifies conflicts that may arise as a result of the differences between these two scenarios, with their understanding being relevant to the problems and pitfalls that resource management may entail. Thus, in the first part, this chapter identifies the preferred management scenarios of stakeholders. It then asks the stakeholders with most management authority within Los Roques National Park to identify the management scenarios most likely to be implemented. Finally, a comparison is made between the likely management options and the stakeholders' preferred management scenarios, and the opportunities and problems arising from this comparison are identified and discussed.

### **9.2 Stakeholder management preferences as expressed in the interviews**

As detailed in Sections 5.4.2 and 5.4.3 (Methods chapter), stakeholder management preferences were assessed using both an interview and a decision pathways questionnaire (Satterfield and Gregory, 1998). The use of this two-pronged approach enabled a triangulation of stakeholder management preferences, and also tested for possible "hidden agendas" in terms of what the stakeholders considered to be desirable management options. The application of the decision pathways questionnaire also gave an indication of the stakeholders' commitment to their expressed management preferences. This

section examines the stakeholder management preferences as expressed in the interviews, while the next section reviews the results of the decision pathways questionnaire.

In order to assess the stakeholders' ideal management scenario in relation to tourism and the park's natural resources, they were asked *"From your organisation's perspective, how would you prefer the park's natural resources and number of visitors to be managed?"*. However, the information used for this assessment also includes other management preferences expressed by the stakeholders during the interview in response to other questions. Overall, the stakeholders expressed a broad range of management preferences which were condensed into four thematic areas, these being 1) desired changes in management procedures, 2) desired changes in park objectives, 3) desired changes in park institutions, and 4) desired changes in park regulations. In order to generate the list of management preferences relating to these four thematic areas, which are contained in Tables 9.2, 9.5, 9.9 and 9.12, the researcher condensed stakeholder comments into 'standard management preferences', obtained by identifying keywords commonly used by all interviewees to express specific management preferences.

These four thematic areas are summarised in Table 9.1, and each is discussed at length in the following sections, according to the number of stakeholders that mentioned them, starting with the most mentioned. The complete list of stakeholders' management preferences is contained in Appendix 9.1.

**Table 9.1.** Thematic areas covered by the stakeholders' management preferences.

THEME	TYPE OF ISSUES RAISED FOR THIS THEME
Desired changes in management procedures	Preferences relating to the modification of the park's current management procedures.
Desired changes in objectives	Preferences relating to the formulation of new management objectives for the park or the modification of current ones.
Desired changes in institutions	Preferences relating to desirable changes in the institutions responsible of managing the park.
Desired changes in regulations	Preferences relating to the modification of current management regulations.

### 9.2.1. Desired changes in management procedures

As many as 25 of the 30 stakeholders made comments about desired changes in management procedures, particularly about the way regulations and procedures were implemented, making this the most frequently mentioned type of management preference. The stakeholders' comments were condensed into eight desirable management statements (Table 9.2), which are examined according to the number of mentions they received, from the most to the least mentioned.

**Table 9.2.** Stakeholder views about desired changes in the park's management procedures.

DESIRED CHANGES IN MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES	NUMBER OF STAKEHOLDERS BY INTEREST GROUP THAT MENTIONED THIS ISSUE			Total mentions per statement
	TOURISM N= 15	GOVERNMENT N= 9	NGO N= 6	
Tourists and operators should be given additional information and education through a management programme that protects the park's natural resources, particularly in heavily used areas.	8	5	3	16
The park's stakeholders should have a greater participation in management decision-making, and the authorities should actively co-ordinate and exchange information with them.	3	2	2	7
Waste management should be better controlled, and include the education and participation of operators and the local population.	2	1	1	4
Fees collected from operators and tourists should be reinvested into the park, particularly in public utilities.	4	-	-	4
A monitoring mechanism should be implemented to assess the management of the park's natural resources and its tourism activity.	-	-	3	3
The authorities should have better supervision of boat operators to ensure they comply with all relevant regulations.	3	-	-	3
The Tourism Zone should be spread or rotated around different park areas.	1	1	-	2
Only stakeholders with adequate education and income should participate in management decision-making processes.	1	-	-	1
<b>Total number of stakeholders by interest group that suggested changes<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>TOTAL<sup>2</sup> STAKEHOLDERS= 25</b>

1: Since the same stakeholder could make more than one management preference, this total reflects the number of *different* stakeholders by interest group that had mentioned management preferences.

2: Total number of stakeholders across all three interest groups that had mentioned management preferences.

1. *Tourists and operators should be given additional information and education through a management programme that protects the park's natural resources, particularly in heavily-used areas.*

Table 9.2 shows that 16 out of 30 stakeholders considered that the implementation of a specific management programme providing information and education to tourists and operators was the most desirable change in management procedures. This programme would also support the supervision and enforcement of park regulations, particularly in heavily-used areas. Most respondents, particularly tourism stakeholders, argued that this programme was necessary because the majority of the tourism industry's environmental impacts were caused by the lack of appropriate information and *"the absence of adequate controls"* (Representative of the Sailboat Captains' Association). A common view among these stakeholders was that *"there is a problem of lack of information: many people arrive and no one informs them about the park or what they can or can't do"* (Local owner of small "posada"). Table 9.3 presents representative stakeholder views about the type of measures that this programme should include.

**Table 9.3.** Examples of stakeholder views about the specific measures that a tourism management programme must include.

*"supervising that no damage is caused to the park's natural resources, including the prevention of pollution by boats". (Representative of the Sailboat Captains' Association)*

*"people have to be managed directly, a park ranger must be there permanently so he can certify that operators are acting properly" (Representative of the CCA)*

*"I wish I would have 40 park rangers, but park rangers that were not only enforcers, but also educators...All tourists guides should have their license accrediting them as guides for Los Roques or else they cannot work, the 'posadas' should have training courses, information campaigns should be done with travel agencies about what a national park is" (Former CCA representative 1)*

2. *The park's stakeholders should have a greater participation in management decision-making, and the authorities should actively co-ordinate and exchange information with them.*

Seven stakeholders mentioned the need to have greater participation in park management, making this the second most desired modification in

management procedures. The respondents specifically referred to having greater involvement in decision-making, including the allocation of planning priorities, and having a more active and co-ordinated exchange of information with the park's management institutions. The Tourism Operators' Association representative contended that it was important for them *"to participate in the determination of priorities, particularly when there is limited funding to attend to those priorities"*. The Tourism Operators' Association former representative asserted that the park's authorities should *"consult with all those involved with this park...so that everyone can present their point of view about how they could be affected"*. Additional stakeholder comments about this issue are presented in Table 9.4.

**Table 9.4.** Stakeholder views about the need for increased stakeholder participation in decision-making for park management.

<p><i>"we [the Association] would like to participate more, and know in detail what the authorities are planning. We would like to participate in planning in an active way, to be involved in deciding what is it going to be done." (Representative of the Tourism Operators' Association)</i></p>
<p><i>"it would be good that local participation would have more influence on the authorities...I do believe that the Co-ordinating Authority and INPARQUES should try to have periodical workshops to get together with the community and to precisely force this community, which is composed of both the local population and operators, to exchange ideas and information." (Recreational diving operator)</i></p>
<p><i>"A general consultation shall be made to see what can be done, how it is going to be done, and in reality, how the national park is perceived by everyone of us...I believe that it is necessary to consult all those that have to do with this park, and well, see which could be the different alternatives [to our problems]" (Former representative of the Tourism Operators' Association)</i></p>

3. *Waste management should be better controlled, and include the education and participation of operators and the local population.*

The adequate management of waste products was mentioned by four stakeholders, who contended that the park authorities could not deal with this issue on their own, as they considered it necessary to educate and involve tourism operators and the local population. In this sense, the recreational diving operator argued that *"more pressure must be put by the authorities...to involve tourism operators regarding waste management education, so that the operator*

would be the one that classifies the rubbish". Similar comments were made by the large tourism company representative.

4. *Fees collected from operators and tourists should be reinvested into the park, particularly in public utilities.*

Four tourism actors asserted that the fees collected by the park authorities from the tourism industry should be directly reinvested into park protection and improvement of the public service utilities. One of these stakeholders contended that, even if some regulations already existed for this purpose, these were not being consistently applied, and their modification was required to guarantee their enforcement and the proper use of the collected funds.

5. *A monitoring mechanism should be implemented to assess the management of the park's natural resources and its tourism activity.*

Three NGO stakeholders considered it desirable to establish a permanent and reliable monitoring mechanism to assess, through the use of indicators, the impact that tourism was having on the park's natural resources. The local conservation NGO representative argued that this was necessary because nobody knew what impacts tourism was having on the park's natural resources, nor which specific behaviours or activities tourists were engaging on while visiting the park.

The conservation NGO 1 representative contended that this monitoring mechanism should *"establish three types of indicators: one for environmental or ecosystem conditions..., another set of management indicators that assesses how good your operation is, and finally some policy indicators regarding how you manage your area, how your information is collected, how you take your decisions, and so on"*. Given the importance of such a mechanism for the adequate management of the park, it was significant that it did not exist, and that none of the park's management institutions mentioned this as a necessary or desirable management modification. This may be a contributing factor to the apparently disorderly management that the park's tourism industry has experienced.

6. *The authorities should better supervise boat operators to ensure they comply with relevant regulations.*

Three tourism actors contended that the park authorities should implement a better supervision of boat operators to guarantee that they comply with all the relevant service, safety and environmental regulations set up for their activities. As tourism operators were the main users of boat operators' services, their comments suggest that some tourist boat operators were not complying with park regulations, and they may be affecting both the quality and safety of tourists' experiences and also the park's natural resources.

7. *The Tourism Zone should be spread or rotated around different park areas.*

Both the large tourism company representative and the former CCA representative 1 asserted that it was necessary to spread or rotate the areas used by tourism. According to the former CCA representative 1, this would prevent the current situation of tourist concentration in the "Francisky" cays, where all the operators were *"together in the same cay"*. Both respondents argued that these measures would reduce tourism's negative impacts on the current Tourism Zone. According to the large tourism company representative, this rotation would allow the Tourism Zone resources *"to regenerate themselves"*. However, these stakeholders did not appear to perceive the inherent risk of their proposals, which may lead to the spread of tourism impacts into unaffected areas, nor did they suggest how this could be avoided.

8. *Only stakeholders with adequate education and income should participate in management decision-making processes.*

This suggestion, made by a tourism stakeholder, is a representative example of the elitist attitude that sometimes has prevailed in the park's decision-making processes. In those rare instances when park authorities have decided to include other stakeholders, they have usually included only those with significant political or economical power. This stakeholder asserted that *"if you are going to promote people's participation...you must request opinions only from those that have the capacity to participate, and not...from the populace and the disadvantaged...because...that's the way it must be done here"*. This stakeholder thus expected that an elitist approach to the park's

decision-making processes would be maintained in any future management changes.

### 9.2.2. Desired changes in park objectives

The second thematic area, mentioned by 22 stakeholders, related to preferences concerning the formulation of new management objectives for the park. Their comments were condensed into nine desirable management statements (Table 9.5), which are examined according to the number of mentions they received, from the most to the least mentioned.

**Table 9.5.** Stakeholder views about desired changes in the park's management objectives.

STAKEHOLDERS' DESIRED CHANGES IN MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	NUMBER OF STAKEHOLDERS BY INTEREST GROUP THAT MENTIONED THIS ISSUE			Total mentions per statement
	TOURISM N= 15	GOVERNMENT N= 9	NGO N= 6	
Appropriate goals and objectives must be defined by park institutions for the management of tourism and natural resources.	3	1	2	6
The park's management should lead to a sustainable balance between conservation and tourism, with a economically successful industry that generates minimum negative impacts and sustains the park's natural, cultural and social resources.	4	2	-	6
A scientific assessment must be done to establish the park's tourism capacity and the impacts of human activities on its ecosystems.	1	4	-	5
All stakeholders must define and promote a visitor profile suited to the park's characteristics.	-	3	2	5
Visitor numbers should be kept unchanged and the building of facilities should not be allowed in the cays.	2	2	-	4
The park should be promoted as a showcase for nature tourism promoting wildlife observation.	1	2	1	4
The park should be promoted as an expensive destination for privileged tourists, and the park entry fee should be increased to reduce visitor pressure.	2	2	-	4
The park's management should balance the needs of the tourism and fishing industries and the conservation and local population needs.	1	2	-	3
The park must serve as a biodiversity protection area, with sustainable nature-based tourism promoted as its main activity.	-	-	1	1
<b>Total number of stakeholders BY INTEREST GROUP that suggested changes<sup>1</sup></b>	10	8	4	<b>TOTAL<sup>2</sup> STAKEHOLDERS= 22</b>

1: Since the same stakeholder could make more than one management preference, this total reflects the number of *different* stakeholders by interest group that had mentioned management preferences.

2: Total number of stakeholders across all three interest groups that had mentioned management preferences.

1. *Appropriate goals and objectives must be defined by park institutions for the management of tourism and natural resources.*

Six stakeholders explicitly asserted that the park institutions should develop appropriate management goals and planning objectives, particularly in relation to tourism (Table 9.5). The local conservation NGO representative voiced a general concern when he stated that *"the first thing [for the park authorities] is to define goals and objectives...what is considered desirable for the park"*. They also felt that, in contrast to current regulations, new ones should reflect the park's goals and objectives and should act as guiding tools to achieve them. These respondents contended that the park authorities guided their management actions with conflicting objectives, or lacked objectives altogether. This was further supported by the INPARQUES former representative, who asserted that the park's management plan lacked *"a vision that reflects the policy or direction that should be embraced by INPARQUES and all other park authorities in terms of management "*. According to this actor, such a guiding vision was necessary for the authorities to be able to guide the park's future growth and development. Given that this stakeholder represented one of the park's two institutions with most management responsibilities, this suggests that the park's management regulations did not reflect any specific management goals. In order to overcome this situation, the former representative of INPARQUES suggested that *"an open debate must be encouraged regarding which direction the park's management policy is going to follow, and this guiding vision should be reflected in the management regulations...directing the future of this area"*.

The CCA representative provided further evidence of the park managers' lack of management goals by admitting that they were planning to hold a workshop with other stakeholders to define a management vision for the park. He stated that such a vision was necessary because *"everyone should be clear about what Los Roques should be like in 20 years, in order to take the right management actions now. Furthermore, I believe that...in a protected area like Los Roques we need to think in even a longer time-scale, because in the time-scale required for sustainability 20 years is not enough"*.

2. *The park's management should lead to a sustainable balance between conservation and tourism, resulting in a economically successful industry that generates minimum negative impacts and sustains the park's natural, cultural and social resources.*

Using somewhat different words and ideas, six stakeholders asserted that the park's management should strive to achieve a sustainable balance between the conservation of the park's natural resources and a successfully managed tourism industry. They felt that this balance would lead to an economically viable tourism industry that would satisfy their users' needs while minimising its negative effect on the park's resources. Some of their comments are presented in Table 9.6.

**Table 9.6.** Stakeholder views about the desirability of achieving a balance between natural resource conservation and the tourism industry.

<p><i>"The most important thing to achieve is a balance between resource conservation and the successful economic management of tourism, so that tourism will still be an activity that gives an acceptable income, but which does so without harming natural resources." (Owner of small "posada")</i></p> <p><i>"We think that this should be kept a sanctuary...visited by a group of tourists, with a specific capacity...which is visited in a quantified way, it is measured, things work well, the tourist goes happy, the park is kept in excellent conditions". (Tourism Operators' Association representative)</i></p> <p><i>"the idea is to understand that a tourism industry exists and it is necessary...but it should never be disregarded that their use of the [park] resources must be done in an orderly way, without affecting the park or its fauna. Thus, the idea is that the park's tourism industry would be able to develop, that a good infrastructure will exist to be able to bring tourists, but always complying with all the norms and issues that could exist so that this activity won't affect the environment in which it is developing." (National Guard representative)</i></p>
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3. *A scientific assessment must be done to establish the park's tourism capacity and the impacts of human activities on its ecosystems.*

Five out of 30 stakeholders considered it desirable to implement scientific studies that can establish a 'tourism capacity', with this capacity then being used to regulate the number of visitors coming to the park, thus minimising the environmental damage associated with this activity. They were concerned that the current tourism load might be exceeding the park's capacity to withstand visitor use without suffering negative effects. All but one of the stakeholders

making this suggestion represented government interests, with only one tourism actor (the recreational diving operator) also considering this necessary. This suggests that the determination of a park tourism carrying capacity is not a priority for most stakeholders, particularly within the tourism industry. Furthermore, one additional tourism actor (the sport-fishing guide), asserted that this study was necessary to justify further increases in visitor numbers. He argued that it was *"necessary to...determine the park's visitor capacity...so visitor numbers can be increased...because the park's tourism use is minimal, and they [the park authorities] say that it is too heavily used, but they don't have any support to say so"*. This suggests that other stakeholders might use such a study to justify further increases in visitor numbers. A selection of stakeholder views on this issue is presented in Table 9.7.

**Table 9.7.** Stakeholder views about the desirability of assessing the park's tourism capacity.

<p><i>"It would be good if I could know what really is the [visitor] load that the park is currently receiving." (Recreational diving operator)</i></p> <p><i>"undertake a good study that tells us when, or how much, tourism growth can be allowed, because we won't create obstacles to tourism demand, but we must guarantee that a minimum impact is caused on the resources." (Representative of INPARQUES)</i></p> <p><i>"In the case of the tourism industry...we also have to...establish use capacities for each activity, such as for boat anchoring, for overnight stays, for sport fishing, and for diving...We really have to have the technical data that allows us to shape the tourism industry within this context of integrated development that should be allowed in the park" (Former representative of INPARQUES)</i></p>
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**4. All stakeholders must define and promote a visitor profile suited to the park's characteristics.**

Five respondents considered it desirable to define and promote a tourism visitor profile suited to the park's delicate natural conditions, as opposed to the mass-oriented, 'sun and beach' profile promoted by most tourism operators (Table 9.8). Although most of the nine government stakeholders commented on the problems associated with the current type of tourism during their interviews, only three of them (the CCA former and current representatives and the INPARQUES former representative) were included in the group that considered

it necessary to change the tourist profile. This suggests that most government actors do not regard the current tourist profile as problematic.

**Table 9.8.** Stakeholder views about the desirability of defining a tourism visitor profile appropriate to the park's characteristics.

<p><i>"The main management problem in relation with tourism is the lack of direction about the type of tourists that visit the park...tourists visiting the park should have a high degree of appreciation for its natural resources...and this is not what we have in the park." (International development agency representative)</i></p> <p><i>"INPARQUES has to be less timid, or rather more aggressive, in defining what is the tourism orientation or the kind of tourism activity that it is desirable to promote within the park." (Former representative of INPARQUES)</i></p> <p><i>"the character of the tourism activity must change. Los Roques shouldn't be sold as a day tour, 'sun-and-beach' day, that's totally wrong...We should be looking for tourists who are appreciative of the park's natural characteristics, and who come only to practice the activities which are appropriate for the park". (Former CCA representative 1)</i></p>
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5. *Visitor numbers should be kept unchanged and the building of facilities should not be allowed in the cays.*

Four stakeholders (two tourism and two government actors) considered it desirable to establish a fixed limit to the number of tourists coming to the park, asserting that the current number of visitors was ideal and should be left unchanged. The owner of the large "posada" was representative of this view, contending that the current level was "ideal", because "if we keep this growth rate and number of people we might operate for many years, but if the visitor capacity is increased the park will deteriorate". These stakeholders also argued that current visitor levels were generating adequate income for tourism operators. These stakeholders were also concerned about the building of new tourism infrastructure, both on Gran Roque Island and on nearby cays. The owner of the large "posada" said that "as long as the islands are preserved in their natural condition, without houses, 'posadas' or anything, this park is a paradise. But if more infrastructure is allowed in the islands, we are not going to have this paradise any more". They expressed their fear that further tourism facilities would increase tourism's environmental impacts on the park's natural resources, and lead to overcrowding and public utility shortages in Gran Roque. It might also be argued that such limits would reduce competition for these

tourism businesses.

6. *The park should be promoted as a showcase for nature tourism promoting wildlife observation.*

This and the next three observations broadly relate to future scenarios or 'management visions' that some stakeholders considered desirable for the park, as they all agreed that the park's management goals should help to achieve them. The management scenario discussed here was shared by four of the 30 stakeholders, and related to the idea of promoting the park as a showcase natural tourist destination, in which wildlife observation should be promoted as its main tourism activity. The CCA representative asserted that his institution's goal was to create a tourism profile which promoted activities *"more closely related to a sustainable profile, which would allow the tourism industry to carry on through time...the vision that we want to establish is to transform the park into a showcase of environmental tourism in Venezuela"*. Other stakeholders who expressed similar thoughts were the provider of tourism services, the CORPOTURISMO representative and the representative of the conservation NGO 2.

7. *The park should be promoted as an expensive destination for privileged tourists, and the park entry fee should be increased to reduce visitor pressure.*

Another four stakeholders considered it desirable to manage the park in a way that would project an exclusive destination image, catering only for upmarket, affluent tourists. These respondents, who included both former representatives of the CCA and two tourism stakeholders, also suggested that a substantial increase in entry fee prices was the most appropriate mechanism to achieve this goal and reduce visitor pressure on the park. The tourist guide for the large airline suggested that if he was given the opportunity to manage the park's visitor strategy, he *"would increase the [tourist] package prices and keep the same volume of visitors or even reduce it, and then offer an exclusive product. I think this can be a good strategy because people could come to a very exclusive place"*.

8. *The park's management should balance the needs of the tourism and fishing industries and the conservation and local population needs.*

Three out of 30 stakeholders contended that the park's main management goal should be to achieve a balance between the park's two main economic activities, tourism and fishing. The former representatives of INPARQUES and the Madrizky Group, along with the CCA representative, asserted that a balance must be sought between fishing, tourism and the conservation of the park's natural resources. They asserted that local fishermen have been negatively affected by tourism's rapid growth and earlier conservation efforts, where the prevailing perception was that fishing had negative effects on park resources. The former representative of the Madrizky Group considered it necessary to seek a balance between these two activities, asserting that *"we can't pretend that the park exists as an isolated space only to protect fish and conchs. I think they are very important, but we have to find a balance in which human beings and the park can co-exist. I think that finding a balance between park and community needs should be the most important rationale of the Central Co-ordinating Authority."*

9. *The park must serve as a biodiversity protection area, with sustainable nature-based tourism promoted as its main activity.*

One stakeholder, the local conservation NGO representative, stressed that the park's main goal should be to serve as a biodiversity reservoir and a natural nursery for ecologically fragile species. He asserted that nature-based tourism should be the main, if not the only, human activity allowed in the park, and even this activity should be subordinate to the main goal of conservation.

The four management visions examined here reflect the park stakeholders' very different interests and priorities, and suggest that there was not much agreement among them regarding the future direction that the park's management should take. This suggests that management conflicts may arise among different interest groups over this issue, as each group will presumably try to give greater priority to their own management vision, particularly in the case of government stakeholders with management authority. Notably, although 22 respondents expressed management preferences relating to the formulation

of objectives or guidelines, only six of them explicitly mentioned the need to modify the park's current management objectives. This suggests that many stakeholders do not agree with these objectives, but they do not relate their disagreement with the need to formulate new ones. Some stakeholders considered it desirable to secure a balance between the park's economic activities and the conservation of its natural resources, as well as between tourism and the local fishing industry. These stakeholders were likely to be aware of the potentially conflicting goals that the park must pursue to be managed sustainably, and of the need to reach compromises between conservation and economic development.

### 9.2.3. Desired changes in park institutions

Sixteen out of a total of 30 stakeholders desired changes in the institutions involved in the park's management. Their comments were condensed in five preferred management statements, which are presented in Table 9.9, and are examined in this section according to the number of mentions they received, from the most to the least mentioned.

**Table 9.9.** Stakeholder views about desired changes in the park's management institutions.

STAKEHOLDERS' DESIRED CHANGES IN PARK INSTITUTIONS	NUMBER OF STAKEHOLDERS BY INTEREST GROUP THAT MENTIONED THIS ISSUE			Total mentions per statement
	TOURISM N= 15	GOVERNMENT N= 9	NGO N= 6	
Park authorities should have better defined and co-ordinated roles, become less bureaucratic and have centralised services in one institution only.	4	2	1	7
Park authorities should have the resources to comply with their mission and adequately control the park.	4	-	1	5
The local conservation NGO and national universities should provide the information required for park management.	1	2	1	4
The CCA should have greater power and autonomy and their management role should be strengthened.	3	-	-	3
Tourism operators should work together in their Association, and should become more involved in the protection and management of the park.	2	-	-	2
<b>Total number of stakeholders by interest group that suggested changes<sup>1</sup></b>	10	3	3	<b>TOTAL<sup>2</sup> STAKEHOLDERS= 16</b>

1: Since the same stakeholder could make more than one management preference, this total reflects the number of *different* stakeholders by interest group that had mentioned management preferences.

2: Total number of stakeholders across all three interest groups that had mentioned management preferences.

1. *The park's authorities should have better defined and co-ordinated roles, become less bureaucratic and have centralised services in one institution only.*

Seven of 30 stakeholders considered it necessary for the park's institutions to reduce their bureaucracy and to have clearly established management responsibilities. Four of these actors were from the tourism sector, with a further two being governmental and one being an NGO stakeholder. Most respondents argued that the park authorities must carefully define and co-ordinate their roles, and at least two stakeholders said that their services should be centralised in one institution, or alternatively, in one place only. According to the local owner of the small "posada", the park authorities *"should be concentrated in only one place...with representatives of each authority, allowing people to obtain all the information and do all paperwork at once."*

Most stakeholders made specific reference to the Central Co-ordinating Authority, suggesting that this institution should take a central role in park management, and become a more efficient administrator. The conservation NGO 1 representative said that *"in order to properly manage Los Roques National Park you need only one authority...because a Co-ordinating Authority exists there, but there are also other authorities that are covertly or openly influencing park policy"*. This stakeholder asserted that it was thus desirable to *"reduce the number of authorities to the minimum possible. The second step would be to clearly define their roles regarding the park's management"*.

The comments of the sport-fishing guide summarised this issue when he asserted that *"when the Central Co-ordinating Authority takes a decision the rest of the authorities don't support it...There are too many institutions involved in park management and decision-making, and thus any issue becomes too difficult to manage. There should be only one institution that takes decisions, an institution that...has the knowledge to properly manage all the park-related activities...with competent and well-informed staff"*.

2. *The park's management institutions should have the resources to comply with their mission and adequately control the park.*

Five stakeholders, mostly from the tourism sector, asserted that the park's management institutions should be provided with the necessary funds and equipment for them to properly fulfil their missions, and allow them to adequately manage the different activities that take place in the park (Table 9.10).

**Table 9.10.** Stakeholder views about the desirability of the park's managing institutions having adequate resources.

*"And the park's managing institutions need a lot more resources. They also need the support, the financing, for example to have good boats, in order to protect the park and be able to act in a much faster way to punish any offenders". (Former representative of the Tourism Operators' Association)*

*"And the other thing is to have resources...if you want to control access to certain areas with park rangers, or the impact on the natural resources, you have to have the resources for those rangers to do their job. It isn't worth anything to fill papers and afterwards, when action is really needed, not to have the means to control inappropriate activities." (Representative of the local conservation NGO)*

Typically, these stakeholders felt that the lack of equipment, funds and personnel were hindering the capacity of these institutions to adequately protect the park's natural resources. The owner of the small "posada" felt that given adequate resources, INPARQUES would then be able to *"keep a constant watch, and avoid people accessing restricted areas and really protect them [park resources]"*.

*3. The local conservation NGO and national universities should provide the information required for park management.*

Four stakeholders asserted that national universities and the local conservation NGO should be more proactive in their involvement with the park's management. Their comments, however, suggest that they expected such participation to be only as providers of scientific information for decision-makers, rather than as stakeholders fully involved in the park's management process (Table 9.11). If their involvement was restricted, it is likely that the universities, and the local conservation NGO in particular, would feel that their right to participate in the park's management was being constrained, and could reject any further involvement with other stakeholders.

**Table 9.11.** Stakeholder views about the desirability of incorporating universities and the local conservation NGO in park management.

*"The information required for park management has been partly taken from the scientific results provided by the local conservation NGO...we would like to restart that link with them, in order to have the information required to implement the best possible management. In relation to the universities, there currently are few contacts, but the ideal thing would be to improve these relationships, because they...can provide us with the information required for the management of the natural resources." (Representative of INPARQUES)*

*"Institutions related to scientific research, including national and foreign universities, foundations such as the local conservation NGO...they all must have a very close relationship with INPARQUES, because it is them, or the work they do, that is going to enable us to optimise the park's management." (Former representative of INPARQUES)*

*"It is necessary, one of the things that the park lacks is the participation of universities, it is definitively necessary...Henceforth, yes, the main institutions to involve would be the universities". (Former representative of international development agency)*

*4. The CCA should have greater power and autonomy and their management role should be strengthened.*

Three tourism stakeholders asserted that *"the Central Co-ordinating Authority should have more power and autonomy"* to manage the park, as this would allow the CCA to centralise decision-making and administrative procedures. The views of these three stakeholders give further support to the first preference discussed at the beginning of this section, relating to the need to streamline the park's management structure and make it less bureaucratic. It also suggests that several stakeholders, particularly in the tourism sector, would prefer INPARQUES to have a much reduced role, or none at all, within park management, thus passing all decision-taking responsibilities to the CCA. As discussed in Chapter 3, in the past INPARQUES has acted in a highly centralised and authoritarian way, with their decision-making ability affected by a very slow response capacity and a lack of flexibility to adapt to new issues. In contrast, the Central Co-ordinating Authority has gradually reduced its response time and become more flexible, acquiring a participative approach in its management. These differences were also exacerbated by the fact that the CCA was an institution with the localised and very specific responsibility of managing Los Roques National Park, whereas INPARQUES has a national and

widely dispersed responsibility. These marked operational differences, coupled with the stakeholders' preference for a concentration of management power within the CCA, may indicate that INPARQUES has started to lose power, and may presumably end up being relegated by the CCA in the administration of the park.

5. *Tourism operators should work together in their Association, and should become more involved in the protection and management of the park.*

Finally, two tourism stakeholders considered it desirable that tourism operators should work in a more co-ordinated fashion in their Tourism Association, becoming more involved and proactive in the protection and management of the park, as this would advance both their commercial interests and the park's well-being. The small "posada" owner asserted that *"even if I had been working for a long time without a Tourism Operator Association, I think it would be much better if we were all associates, and we had a common tourism policy to apply"*. This comment reflects the contradictory views that most tourism operators seemed to have regarding the Tourism Operator Association. During the first fieldwork most tourism operators had joined and were actively involved in the Association, mostly due to the conflict with the park authorities' decision to suspend sales of alcoholic beverages in the "posadas". Approximately a year later and with no crisis in sight, however, all tourism operators questioned by this researcher regarded the Association as inactive and a *"waste of time"*. When asked to elaborate, one operator said that the Association's members were involved in constant quarrelling among themselves and the organisation was not serving any useful purpose.

The evolution of the Los Roques Tourism Operator Association might be regarded as characteristic of certain stakeholder organisations in Venezuela, where typically an organisation is created and works successfully while it responds to the crisis situation that was the catalyst for its conception. Once the crisis situation is over, however, their members' personal interests tend to prevail over the common good, and the organisation quickly disbands or ceases to work. This has been characteristic of the Los Roques Tourism Operator Association, which has had long periods of inactivity and of extended quarrelling

among its members since it was first created in 1991. Prior to September 1999, the last actions of this organisation were taken approximately in 1993-94.

#### 9.2.4. Desired changes in park regulations

Slightly less than half of all stakeholders (12 of 30) stated preferences relating to changes in park regulations. These preferences were condensed in five statements, which are presented in Table 9.12 and examined according to the number of mentions they received, from the most to the least. Eight tourism stakeholders made most of the comments, along with three government and one NGO stakeholders.

**Table 9.12.** Stakeholder views about desired changes in the park's management regulations.

STAKEHOLDERS' DESIRED CHANGES IN PARK REGULATIONS	NUMBER OF STAKEHOLDERS BY INTEREST GROUP THAT MENTIONED THIS ISSUE			Total mentions per statement
	TOURISM N= 15	GOVERNMENT N= 9	NGO N= 6	
A limit to the number of accommodation facilities in Gran Roque should be implemented, and visitor numbers should be limited accordingly.	3	2	-	5
In order to avoid natural resource degradation by tourism, all operators should be adequately trained and certified, and strict environmental regulations should be implemented.	3	1	-	4
Tourism management regulations should be made less restrictive and bureaucratic.	4	-	-	4
Some areas of the Total Protection Zone should be opened to specific tourism activities.	3	-	-	3
The Total Protection Zone must be kept free of a human presence and use.	-	-	1	1
<b>Total number of stakeholders by interest group that suggested changes<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>TOTAL<sup>2</sup> STAKEHOLDERS= 12</b>

1: Since the same stakeholder could make more than one management preference, this total reflects the number of *different* stakeholders by interest group that had mentioned management preferences.

2: Total number of stakeholders across all three interest groups that had mentioned management preferences.

#### 1. *A limit to the number of accommodation facilities in Gran Roque should be implemented, and visitor numbers should be limited accordingly.*

Five stakeholders asserted that a legal limit should be established for the number of new accommodation facilities in the park. The Sailboat Captains' Association representative emphasised that *"it is important that a limit or cap is established in Gran Roque regarding the building of tourism facilities"*, whereas the local owner of a small "posada" specifically referred to *"the current number*

*of posadas allowed in the park*". The views of the National Guard representative were representative of these stakeholders, who generally felt that such a limit would automatically impose a control over *"the development [of tourism], of its growth in the park, particularly here in Gran Roque"*. The local, small "posada" owner suggested that this restricted park accommodation capacity should then be used as a legal guideline to establish a fixed limit to the number of visitors. These stakeholders appeared to believe that implementing an accommodation limit would control the impact caused by tourists. However, Lindberg, McCool and Stankey (1997) argue that the relationship between tourist numbers and resource impacts is tenuous at best, and that many other factors come into play to cause such impacts. Thus, these five stakeholders might falsely believe that setting a limit for the number of accommodation facilities would necessarily effectively reduce tourism impacts on the park's natural resources.

2. *In order to avoid natural resource degradation by tourism, all operators should be adequately trained and certified, and strict environmental regulations should be implemented.*

Four stakeholders wanted there to be regulations making it mandatory for all tourism operators to undergo training and certification in order to be able to operate in the park. They also contended that more stringent environmental regulations specifically aimed at tourism operations were required, as this would lead to a significant reduction in negative impacts on the park's natural resources, thus making it possible that *"tourism won't cause any damage"* (Sailboat Captains' Association representative). The Tourism Operators' Association representative also contended that the implementation of harsher penalties for offenders who damaged the park's natural resources would deter further offences and contribute to the reduction of negative impacts. The former CCA representative 1 suggested that one of these regulations must be a compulsory training course for all tourism operators.

3. *Tourism management regulations should be made less restrictive and bureaucratic.*

Four tourism stakeholders considered that some park regulations were too restrictive or bureaucratic, hindering the adequate operation of tourism

activities. They asserted that park regulations created *"administrative routines that are very irritating"*, and forced them *"to go to three different authorities, which are spread all over the town, requesting their stamps"*. According to them, if these regulations were modified by concentrating decision-making powers in only one institution, this would lead to a more streamlined management process and would simplify tourism operations.

4. *Some areas of the Total Protection Zone should be opened to specific tourism activities.*

Three tourism stakeholders asserted that the regulations relating to the park's Total Protection Zone should be modified to allow some tourism activities in them. The recreational diving operator stated that diving operations should be allowed in selected areas of this zone, with the sport-fishing "posada" representative and the sport-fishing guide arguing a similar case for sport-fishing activities. These three tourism actors contended that their operations were essentially harmless to the park's natural resources, and also that theirs was the only type of tourism activity with this characteristic. The comments of the sport-fishing "posada" representative were typical of their point of view: *"the areas which are currently off-limit for fishing should be opened, not for everybody but just for sport-fishing, because I think we wouldn't affect these areas, as the fish are not injured"*. The recreational diving operator had a similar view, arguing that opening this zone for diving only would allow them *"to alternate sites, once that you have proved with concrete facts and numbers that nothing happens...And this would allow us to operate in other areas that right now are under the Total Protection designation"*.

Even if the activities practised by these stakeholders did have a low environmental impact, the regulation changes that they proposed would establish a dangerous management precedent in the park. By allowing tourist activities in areas set apart to act as biodiversity reservoirs, this measure could eventually subject Total Protection areas to long-term environmental impacts. Furthermore, this could also open a floodgate of demands from other operators requesting similar privileges, thus defeating the original purpose of these areas. Regrettably, the comments made by the Central Co-ordinating Authority

representative appear to suggest that they would be prepared to support some of these demands, thus undermining the possibility of INPARQUES resisting changes to these regulations.

**5. The Total Protection Zone must be kept free of human presence and use.**

The Fishermen's Association representative contended that the Total Protection Zone should be kept *"protected...and...should not be open [to human use], because if they do, it is going to be altered. And that zone is good for lobster reproduction, and if they open it, it would be damaged"*. Thus, this actor regarded the Total Protection zone has a valuable biodiversity reservoir in which he, as a resource user, had a vested interest in its future preservation. This position was not only unique, but also contrasts sharply with the preferences discussed in the previous statement. Given that some tourism operators were proposing the modification or deregulation of these areas, the comments of this stakeholder may be an early warning of an impending conflict between these two interest groups. Furthermore, the park's managing authorities might unwillingly be getting involved or even fomenting these conflicts by supporting the expansion of tourism activities.

**9.2.5. Summary of stakeholder management preferences as expressed in the interviews**

Summing up the findings of the four previous sections, it is notable that most respondents who felt that changes were needed to the management system were tourism stakeholders, as evidenced by their majority in three of the four thematic areas (Table 9.13).

**Table 9.13.** Percentage of stakeholders by interest group that expressed views on each of four management preferences.

SUBJECT OF MANAGEMENT PREFERENCES	PERCENTAGE OF STAKEHOLDERS BY INTEREST GROUP THAT EXPRESSED PREFERENCES IN EACH MANAGEMENT THEME		
	TOURISM N= 15	GOVERNMENT N= 9	NGO N= 6
CHANGES IN MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES	86%	77%	83%
CHANGES IN MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	66%	88%	66%
CHANGES IN PARK ORGANISATIONS	66%	33%	50%
CHANGES IN PARK REGULATIONS	53%	33%	16%

This finding suggests that tourism stakeholders were the most dissatisfied with the current management situation, and also that they were the most likely to press for changes to it. Table 9.13 also shows that management preferences relating to procedures and objectives elicited the most attention from stakeholders across all three interest groups.

With regard to the desired changes in management procedures, slightly more than half of all stakeholders (16 of 30) identified the need for tourists and operators to be given more information and education through a management programme that would protect the park's natural resources. Many of these stakeholders considered that such a programme could significantly reduce the environmental impacts caused by the tourism industry. The second most common preference in terms of management procedures was the desire for increased participation in the park's management decision-making, and for increased co-ordination and information exchange between the park authorities and other stakeholders. Although the current level of participation was regarded as inadequate by these respondents, this situation appeared to be changing rapidly at the time of the second fieldwork, mostly under the guidance of the Central Co-ordinating Authority. Another issue relating to desired changes in management procedures was the need to establish a monitoring and indicator programme to assess the efficiency of the park's resource and tourism management. The fact that this programme did not then exist and that none of the park's managing institutions regarded it as necessary, suggests that the park's management was mostly reactive, responding to problems rather than trying to anticipate them.

Most of the respondents identifying the need for changes in the second area of management preferences, the formulation of park management objectives, were from the government sector. Six stakeholders argued that the park's management institutions should develop more adequate management goals and objectives, particularly in relation to tourism management, because the authorities were managing the park through confusing or conflicting goals, or they lacked them altogether. Not surprisingly, only one government stakeholder expressed this preference, suggesting that the park's managing

institutions did not perceive their objectives to be inadequate, or were choosing to ignore it. Another six stakeholders considered that the park's main management goal should be to achieve a sustainable balance between the needs of an economically successful tourism industry and the conservation of park resources. Another three stakeholders contended that a similar balance must be achieved between tourism and the local fishing activity. Hopefully, this is an indication that these stakeholders were aware that successful management implies some degree of conflict between conservation and economic development, as well as reaching compromises between these two activities. In the future some of these organisations could thus act as facilitators and might help to "sell" any compromise to other members of their own interest group. The three remaining preferences related to changes in management objectives concerned park visitors. Five stakeholders asserted that the park's visitor capacity should be assessed, another four expressed the need to maintain a fixed level of visitation and infrastructure, and another four supported the development and implementation of an appropriate visitor profile. This suggests that several stakeholders were concerned about maintaining the current volume of visitors and about the effects that those visitors might have on the park.

It is notable that 12 stakeholders, including some institutions with managerial responsibilities, expressed five management visions that reflected different and in some cases opposing management goals. This suggests that no consensus existed regarding the goals that the park should be pursuing, although most stakeholders appeared to support further development of the park's tourism activities. However, what form and in what ways this development would proceed was likely to be a source of future disagreements and conflicts among the different interest groups.

The third area of management preferences relates to changes in the park's organisations, with many stakeholders considering it necessary for the park authorities to have better defined and co-ordinated roles and more centralised functions, particularly in the case of the Central Co-ordinating Authority. However, the government stakeholders did not perceived there was a

need to improve their own operation. This perception contrasted sharply with that of many tourism actors who seriously questioned the ability and resources of the management authorities to adequately deal with the park's needs. Three tourism stakeholders also considered that the role of the CCA should be strengthened, giving more decision-taking power to this institution. Other issues included the perception of four tourism stakeholders that the park authorities lacked the necessary legal framework and resources to comply with their mission and to protect the park's resources adequately. Some stakeholders suggested the involvement of the universities and the local conservation NGO in the park's management but only as providers of scientific information, a role likely to produce frictions with the local NGO.

The fourth and final area of management preferences relate to the modification of park regulations. Here, the stakeholders had preferences that were contradictory, with some suggesting more training and regulations for tourism operations, whereas others wanted less restrictions and bureaucracy associated with tourism activities. And some stakeholders considered it desirable to open the park's Total Protection areas to some tourism uses, whereas another stakeholder remarked on the importance of keeping them off-limit to any human activity. This area of management preferences has two notable characteristics. First there was potential for strong disagreement between the stakeholders who expressed these preferences, and this may be a source of conflict among the interest groups, particularly with regard to the use of the Total Protection zone. Secondly, most stakeholders believed that the implementation of new regulations may be enough to solve complex management problems, such as the regulation of visitor levels and the impact of tourism on natural resources. These stakeholders may falsely believe that regulations on their own will suffice to correct serious management problems, thus encouraging them not to accept other equally necessary management measures. There was, however, some coincidence among the stakeholders who preferred the implementation of a limit to tourism development, even if the proposed means were somewhat different.

### 9.3 Stakeholder management preferences as identified in the decision pathways questionnaire

The decision pathways questionnaire allowed stakeholders to select their organisation's preferred management scenario from a small range of options which were considered to be relatively feasible in practice. These management scenarios were designed around various degrees of resource conservation, expressed in terms of modifications of two criteria: the current level of visitor numbers, and the present level of management measures applied in the park. In order to make the questionnaire user-friendly and to reduce complexity in its application, it was assumed that a modification in the number of visitors was roughly equal to a modification in the amount of resource use. Hence, when assessing stakeholder views about modifying the amount of use to which the park's natural resources were subjected, the questionnaire only referred to changes in visitor numbers. Further details about the questionnaire design and application are given in Section 5.4.3 of Chapter 5.

Taking into account the existing management constraints and the range of visitor and management combinations that were realistic at the time of questionnaire design, seven feasible management scenarios or "paths" were generated. These scenarios are ascribed to three different levels of visitor numbers, these being "unchanged", "increased" or "reduced". The corresponding paths are described in Table 9.14, and the original questionnaire is included in Appendix 5.2.

**Table 9.14.** Description of the management paths built into the decision pathway questionnaire.

PATH NUMBER	PATH DESCRIPTION
<b><i>Management paths with unchanged visitor numbers</i></b>	
PATH 1	Maintained visitation and maintained management. Represented as (V= M=), where "V" is visitor numbers and "M" is management measures.
PATH 2	Maintained visitation and reduced management. (V= M-)
PATH 3	Maintained visitation and increased management. (V= M+)
<b><i>Management paths with increased visitor numbers</i></b>	
PATH 4	Increased visitation and maintained management. (V+ M=)
PATH 5	Increased visitation and increased management. (V+ M+)
<b><i>Management paths with reduced visitor numbers</i></b>	
PATH 6	Reduced visitation and maintained management. (V- M=)
PATH 7	Reduced visitation and increased management. (V- M+)

Table 9.15 shows the management path choices resulting from the questionnaire's application and the number of stakeholders by interest group that selected each of them. It must be noted that seven of the 30 stakeholders interviewed (three tourism, three government and one NGO stakeholder) did not return the questionnaire and thus it was not possible to include them in this analysis. There were also two stakeholders (the Tourism Operators' Association former representative and the local conservation NGO representative) whose choices were contradictory and thus invalidated the questionnaire. Finally, the recreational diving operator was the only respondent to select a path of unchanged visitor numbers, but was inconclusive in his choice of management measures.

**Table 9.15.** Paths resulting from the application of the decision pathways questionnaire and number of stakeholders that selected them.

MANAGEMENT PATH DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF STAKEHOLDERS BY INTEREST GROUP THAT SELECTED THIS PATH			Total stakeholders per path
	TOURISM N= 12	GOVERNMENT N= 6	NGO N= 5	
Unchanged visitor numbers and increased management	5	3	1	9
Increased management, but no clear choice about visitor numbers	3	1	2	6
Reduced visitor numbers and increased management	2	2	1	5
Invalid choices	1	-	1	2
Unchanged visitor numbers, but no clear choice about management	1	-	-	1

Table 9.15 suggests that the stakeholders' choices led to three broadly defined management paths. However, one of these paths was not originally designed in the questionnaire, this being the path of "increased management, but ambiguity about visitor's numbers". This management path was created by six stakeholders who consistently chose options which in every case led to increased management measures, but which were contradictory in relation to visitor numbers, thus resulting in choices with both increased and reduced numbers of visitors. This indicates that these stakeholders did not want to commit themselves to management options that would affect the number of visitors or, alternatively, that their commitment to change visitor numbers would depend on the park's state of resource conservation and on trends in the

economic well-being of its inhabitants. Three of the stakeholders that selected this path of increased management but who were ambiguous about visitor numbers represented tourism interests. Even if the motivations behind their choices cannot be discerned, it is obvious that any increase in visitor numbers should lead to a proportional increase in the customer base of tourism operators. Such an increase was likely to be beneficial in the short term and most probably was desired by them, even if, as some of them recognised when discussing the management problems of the park, this increase will or was already affecting the park's natural resources.

The need to compromise and make concessions was to some extent built-in to the questionnaire, by management choices being provided that had an effect either on the economic well-being of the park's inhabitants or on the environmental health of its natural resources. This design tried to reflect the real-life choices that the stakeholders might have to confront during the decision-taking process involved in any management proposals. However, a result path with ambiguous choices about visitor numbers might show that the stakeholders who selected them were resisting compromise, and would prefer to choose management options that did not generate negative effects either on economic income or natural resources. But these "ideal" management solutions seldom exist within the scope of natural resource management, particularly when trying to achieve a compromise over such contrasting interests as conservation and economic development.

In contrast, the other paths were within the design parameters of the questionnaire, with nine stakeholders choosing a path of "increased management, unchanged visitor numbers", and five others choosing an "increased management, reduced visitor numbers" path. The first path suggests that these nine stakeholders regarded an increase in park management measures as the most appropriate management alternative, as long as the number of visitors was kept unchanged. This suggests that they were not willing to accept a reduction in the number of visitors, but would eventually accept both stability in their numbers as well as the implementation of new management regulations to minimise their impact. Not surprisingly, five out of these nine

stakeholders belong to the tourism interest group, which was potentially the most affected by any modification in visitor numbers.

The remaining five stakeholders chose a pattern of increased management measures and reduced visitor numbers as the most appropriate management alternative. This suggests that they were highly concerned about the health of the park's natural resources, and considered that a reduction in visitor numbers and thus in resource use might help to ameliorate the negative impacts. These stakeholders appeared willing to make concessions over the well-being of the park's economic activities, prioritising the need to conserve the natural resources on which these activities depended. This result reinforces the findings of the in-depth interviews, in which these same five stakeholders tended to express concern over the impact that tourism might be having on the park's resources, as well as over the possibility that current visitor levels might be overusing those resources.

With regard to the recreational diving operator, his preferred resource use choice was to keep the number of visitors unchanged, while his management choice was inconclusive, as he chose paths that considered both increased and maintained management measures. Coupling this result with the management preferences expressed by this stakeholder during the in-depth interview, it is probably safe to assume that his preferred management choice would be one of maintained management measures and visitor numbers. However, his interview comments and the questionnaire results appear to suggest also a preference for a reduction in management measures directly related to his particular business operations. This was clearly illustrated by his comments regarding the possibility of modifying the park's current management zones, where he stated that they *"have proposed several times to INPARQUES the possibility of diving in the...Total Protection Zone, but by giving proof that our activity...does not causes any harm"*.

There were also two stakeholders whose replies to the questionnaire were considered invalid given the contradictory paths that they selected. In the case of the former representative of the Tourism Operators' Association, this

seems to be due to misinterpretation of the questionnaire as this stakeholder did not follow the questionnaire's instructions and replied to all the questions. Thus, in effect, this stakeholder took all the possible paths that the questionnaire allowed. In the case of the local conservation NGO representative, given his extensive knowledge about park issues and his extremely contradictory choices, it seems unlikely that this was the result of misinterpretation, and it would rather seem a conscious choice made by this stakeholder. It is possible that this was an attempt by the respondent to defeat the questionnaire's purpose in order to avoid taking a position with regard to the management issues.

To conclude, three well-defined, broad paths emerged from the application of the decision pathways questionnaire, and all of them supported an increase in management measures in the park. This result suggests that most stakeholders believed that the current management system was not dealing adequately with tourism's impacts, and that they would support further management measures to protect park resources. However, there was some variability in relation to management preferences concerning visitor numbers, with nine stakeholders supporting the maintenance of current levels, five expressing a preference for a reduction, and six stakeholders stating no clear view. This suggests that any management proposal attempting to change visitor numbers will be a source of considerable controversy, and it is likely to be opposed by some stakeholders, particularly the tourism sector. In sum, the decision pathways questionnaire results suggest that most stakeholders were likely to support further management measures to control tourism's negative impacts, as long as these measures did not affect visitor numbers.

#### **9.4 Future management options that were most likely to be implemented**

Representatives of the institutions with most authority over the park's management were interviewed to obtain the management scenarios most likely to be implemented, and to contrast them with those preferred by individual stakeholders. For this purpose, a short, specific interview was undertaken with representatives of the Central Co-ordinating Authority and INPARQUES (see

Appendix 9.2). As the representatives of both institutions had been replaced at the beginning of the first fieldwork in August 1999, both the former and current representatives of these institutions were interviewed. By the time the second fieldwork was commenced in February 2001, the CCA representative had again been replaced, so a new interview was completed with the new representative. A short update interview was also completed with the INPARQUES representative (see Appendix 9.3) in order to identify if, according to his perception, any significant management issue had occurred between the two field visits. Table 9.16 presents an overview of the views of these five stakeholders on considerations affecting the management options that were most likely to be implemented for the park.

The assessment revealed that, in spite of some divergence about how and why it will happen, the five respondents generally expected sustained growth in tourism development as the most likely future management option for Los Roques National Park. Even, the former CCA representative 1 suggested that his own policies of tourism growth containment were likely to be discontinued after his departure. He also expressed fears that very strong *"social and economic pressures"* were being placed on the new CCA authorities to implement such detrimental management policies. This respondent felt that these pressures were *"so immense, that already the current authorities are considering the idea...of de-regulating the Gran Roque as a national park and of allowing further urbanisation"*. If these pressures were successful, he expected a dramatic increase in the provision of public utilities and tourism infrastructure, possibly outside of Gran Roque island. He also believed that, as this development would be excluded from the park's zoning regulations, it would result in a vast increase in visitor numbers.

The former CCA representative 2 suggested that that the CCA goal was to promote the park as an up-market but still mass tourist destination, and that this meant more selective control on tourist access into the park. This stakeholder strongly emphasised the up-market, mass tourism aspect, asserting that *"what we want is a 'Mediterranee' [referring to an expensive, all-inclusive resort chain]. What we really want is that the people that visit Los Roques are*

well-off, and can really enjoy it. We don't want just anyone being able to get there...this selective development that we want to project means exclusiveness".

**Table 9.16.** Summary of considerations affecting the management options for the park that were most likely to be implemented, according to five past and present representatives of the CCA and INPARQUES.

STAKEHOLDER ORGANISATION	CONSIDERATIONS FOR LIKELY MANAGEMENT OPTIONS
Former CCA representative 1 <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The park authorities were being pressured into modifying regulations to exclude Gran Roque island from the areas subjected to management, to allow further tourism development and the increase in accommodation infrastructure.</li> </ul>
Former CCA representative 2 <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More exhaustive and meticulous control of visitor characteristics were being implemented.</li> <li>The promotion of the park with an image of an up-market, mass-tourist destination was being delivered.</li> </ul>
Representative of the CCA <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CCA wished to increase the local population's quality of life, as well as their participation in management.</li> <li>The CCA wanted to define a tourism vision common to all stakeholders, based on a sustainable orientation appreciating the park's social and natural resources. Once this common tourism vision was defined, it would be used to guide the park's management.</li> <li>The priorities that were commanding the CCA's immediate attention and management efforts were: the determination of tourism carrying capacity, the management of tourists in Gran Roque, the assessment of the tourism industry's environmental impacts, the implementation of the wastewater system, and the strengthening of control and vigilance.</li> <li>Tourism would be managed according to the management capacity of the park's institutions. Further tourism growth would be limited until this management capacity was assessed. Eventually, however, visitor numbers would be increased as the park institutions' management capacity increased.</li> </ul>
Former representative of INPARQUES <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The park authorities were being pressured into allowing further tourism development and the increase of the accommodation infrastructure, possibly out of Gran Roque to other park areas, and the park was being promoted as an up-market mass-tourist destination. Tourism growth threatened to lead to intensive use of current tourism areas and the opening of new ones, leading to increased use impacts.</li> <li>Unless sustainable management policies were developed to balance fishing and tourism, conflicts were expected between these two activities, with the former being gradually eliminated from the park.</li> </ul>
Representative of INPARQUES <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current management provisions assumed that the amount of park visitors would keep growing, along with tourism services and accommodation infrastructure. An increased demand in current and new tourism areas was also expected.</li> <li>INPARQUES would support the implementation of scientific studies to assess how much tourism growth could be accepted with minimum damage to natural resources.</li> <li>If and when the park's management plan modification was approved, some fishing and tourism management issues would be improved.</li> </ul>

1 = Stakeholder interviewed during the first field visit

2 = Stakeholder interviewed during the second field visit

3 = Stakeholder interviewed during both field visits

The former and current INPARQUES representatives described future management scenarios that continued the contradictory way in which the park

was then being managed. Yet they expressed optimism about the changes contained in the proposed modification to the park's management plan, as well as in the management studies that INPARQUES intended to implement in the future. Moreover, the former representative of INPARQUES suggested that the proposed modifications would begin to address for the first time the way in which tourism was developed within the park, assessing and regulating the capacity of the park for certain activities and areas, as well as establishing guidelines for the use of these areas. He believed that *"what would happen in the next five years is a consolidation, a strengthening of all these [management] processes. In the case of tourism activity...we also have...to establish use capacities for each of the areas in relation to boat anchoring, overnight stays, sport-fishing and diving"*. However, in spite of his optimism about the expected results of implementing new tourism management strategies, the INPARQUES former representative reiterated the views of the former CCA representative 1 about the strong pressures faced by the park's managing institutions. These pressures were directed at modifying the park's management to allow for a continuous and not necessarily desirable or controlled tourism growth. The former representative of INPARQUES believed that if these modifications were allowed, they would lead to intensive use by tourism of both current and previously unused natural areas, increased resource impacts and an expansion of public utilities and tourism accommodation, with these perhaps extending beyond Gran Roque island to other areas (Table 9.17).

**Table 9.17.** Views of the former INPARQUES representative concerning future management options for the park.

*"There really is a vision of the park as one of the country's more important tourist destinations, and let's be clear, the fact that the park's management is directed in this way has to imply that...we are going to accept that areas that are not currently used would be occupied and developed, and that the services that people require will be provided there."*

*"if the Los Roques tourism industry is going to be increased up to its maximum allowable capacity, this implies of course an increase of the services being offered. We could perhaps be talking of tourism expanding outside Gran Roque island, which could then increase visitor numbers in other areas in which the industry currently has a very low profile and a very low impact. And this apparently is one of the possibilities that are in the air regarding the future of Los Roques."*

The current INPARQUES representative also asserted that tourism demand was continually growing in the park: *"tourism will keep growing...We presume that with time the demand would be bigger...We know that this could shoot up; there would be a bigger demand; there would be a larger number of people in the area"*. It is evident that these stakeholders saw growth of the park's tourism industry as an unavoidable trend that was beyond their control.

The former and current representatives of INPARQUES also suggested that approval of the proposed modification to the park's management plan had been resisted by the Venezuelan government, hinting that pressures originating from the Central Co-ordinating Authority might have been the cause of this delay. According to the INPARQUES representative, the park's management plan has not yet been implemented because *"there is a correction regarding that overlapping in roles [between INPARQUES and the CCA], and perhaps that is why it was not approved during the past government"*. This situation again highlights the contradictory management situations due to the park's two managing institutions.

The respondents interviewed during the second field visit confirmed the views collected during the first fieldwork about park management being purposefully directed toward an increase of visitor numbers. They expected that this increased visitation would put additional pressure on the areas currently used, as well as creating new pressures in areas currently unused. During the update interview, the INPARQUES representative claimed that the most significant management change that had happened between the two field visits was that *"the Central Co-ordinating Authority has supported a major promotional campaign that has increased the visitor arrivals"*. According to this stakeholder, the increased visitation brought about by this campaign had meant that *"the work load and the responsibilities that we had have also grown incrementally"*. Given that they were facing *"a high number of activities to control but little personnel and a limited capacity to perform the necessary controls"*, this stakeholder felt that their ability to adequately manage the park's tourism activities was declining. With regard to the proposed modifications of the park's management plan, the INPARQUES representative confirmed that

they had not yet been approved. Given that the proposed modifications had already been delayed by more than five years, this stakeholder felt that most of the measures contained in them were obsolete already.

The INPARQUES representative also felt that the Central Co-ordinating Authority was taking a more prominent role in the park's management. When asked if any of the park's institutions had modified its duties or responsibilities with regard to the park management, he said that *"the only one that has been experimenting with changes is the Central Co-ordinating Authority, mainly in how they manage the park and its resources. It has been promoting the park's attributes in tourism fairs, on television. It is like a boom to promote the park in our country and abroad"*. During the second field visit INPARQUES was still taking most management decisions in relation to the use of natural resources outside Gran Roque island, but the development and implementation of management policies appeared to be shifting from INPARQUES to the Central Co-ordinating Authority. During the update interview, the INPARQUES representative commented that his institution was not foreseeing any new plans or policy changes in relation to the park's management. His institution also appeared to have taken a more passive role with regard to major management decisions, mostly limiting itself to waiting for these decisions to be taken by the CCA. Supporting evidence on this situation was also provided in the interview with the representative of the CCA.

The CCA representative listed a set of priorities that his institution considered of key importance, most of which were already being implemented by the Co-ordinating Authority, or which they were planning to undertake in the very near future. Although some of these priorities simply responded to specific and localised management problems, such as implementing the wastewater treatment system for the Gran Roque, others related to the formulation of strategic, long-term management policies. The CCA representative explained in relation to CCA's main management priorities that *"the first thing is to clearly determine what the tourism vision is that we want to offer in Los Roques. To formulate it, and for this vision to be shared by most stakeholders, in order to have what has been termed a corporate image"*. Another major departure from

the park authorities' traditional management style was this stakeholder's view that *"the only way to advance the park's management strategy and its environmental administration is for the stakeholders to participate in a very active way, that they comprise part of the decision-making, so that it is possible to have an arena where these conflicts can be discussed from their different perspectives"*.

In relation to the park's future management changes, the CCA representative asserted that *"up to now Los Roques has been sold as sun, beach, sand, good climate. We now want to sell Los Roques as culture, gastronomy...we want, more than to sell, to offer culture; that the people of Los Roques can offer their culture, their history, their natural environment, offer all this as a product. Thereby, the activities generated out of this [tourism] product are more closely related to sustainable activities, which will allow tourism to carry on through time"*. When referring to the management implications of this newly-defined tourism product, the interviewee stated that the CCA's management strategy was to use *"the vision that we have established...to transform the Los Roques National Park into a showcase of environmental tourism in Venezuela"*. Other goals with long-term effects for the park's management were to increase the local population's quality of life, to determine the park's tourism carrying capacity and to implement a local site management plan for the local population and tourism operations in Gran Roque island.

With regard to future tourism management, the CCA representative stated that further tourism growth, and particularly the construction of new "posadas" in Gran Roque, would be limited until the park's institutional management capacity had been assessed. However, this stakeholder contended that *"the tourism carrying capacity is going to be determined by our ability to manage the park"*, implying that visitor numbers would increase as the park's institutional management capacity increased. He further suggested that an increase in management capacity would allow the CCA to increase tourism's level of resource use without negative effects for the park.

To summarise the findings of this section, the park's most likely future management option was broadly that of an increase in tourism activities and facilities, with this development framed by a common tourism vision previously defined by the Central Co-ordinating Authority with the participation of other stakeholders. According to the CCA representative, this tourism vision would hinge on the park's cultural and natural patrimony, and would be "*closely related to sustainable activities*", with the aim of making Los Roques a model of environmentally appropriate tourism. The CCA has already taken concrete steps to fulfil this management vision, including an increased promotion of the park, coupled with policies of increased stakeholder participation in park management. The implementation of the promotion policy also appears to have resulted in an increase in visitor numbers in the park. According to the CCA representative, tourism development was limited by the management capacity of the park's institutions, which he regarded as constrained at present. However, he expected that institutional improvements would enhance this capacity and allow further increases in visitor numbers.

Although it is too early to assess the effects of this likely management option, it was apparent that the increased tourist visitation was further straining INPARQUES' already limited capacity to adequately control and deal with tourism impacts. The INPARQUES representative felt that their management capacity was declining, and he admitted that there was no policy intention to increase their management capacity or to reduce tourism pressure on the park's resources. Further, this respondent referred to the future increase in tourism pressure in the park as an unavoidable development that was outside of his institution's control.

The fast-changing and complicated nature of public administration in Venezuela makes it difficult to predict changes in the balance of power among the park's institutions with management authority, but it appears that INPARQUES is losing its decision-taking authority and management prerogatives to the Central Co-ordinating Authority. If this tendency were to continue then it is likely that INPARQUES will become a secondary institution, dealing only with the implementation of policies and mostly limited to

safeguarding the park's natural resources. To conclude, it seems likely that the overall level of resource use by the park's tourism industry will increase in the future. It remains to be seen whether this growth will be guided by purposeful and strategically-oriented management choices, as proposed by the CCA representative, or whether it will occur through an uncontrolled and poorly managed expansion of the industry, as the INPARQUES representatives appeared to expect.

### **9.5 Differences between stakeholder preferences and the most likely future management options**

This section examines the stakeholder's preferred management scenarios and compares them with those most likely to be implemented, with the intention to identify conflicts that might arise if they are poorly matched. As stated in the previous section, it was likely that increased development of tourism activities and facilities would occur in the park, with this development defined and directed by the Central Co-ordinating Authority, with different degrees of participation from other stakeholders.

The main concern for most stakeholders across all three interest groups was that natural resources were not being managed adequately, and that tourism was having negative effects on them. Also, some stakeholders wanted the level of visitation to be kept unchanged at current levels and a ban on further construction of tourism facilities, particularly in the cays surrounding Gran Roque island. Given the expectations of the park authorities, it appears that in reality visitor numbers will increase. Further, the Central Co-ordinating Authority in particular appears to be promoting the park both within the country and abroad as a mean to increase visitation. This suggests that stakeholders that wanted visitor numbers to remain unchanged were likely to be disappointed, although how much conflict results will depend on the protection and management measures that may be built into the park's current management structure in order to accommodate the increased demand. The evidence so far suggests that the park's institutions already struggle to appropriately control tourism's impacts due to their limited management

capacity, and so far the main management institutions have not introduced new measures to cope with increased visitor numbers. According to the INPARQUES representative, the increased visitation was already affecting their management capacity to adequately control tourism impacts. This, coupled with its lack of provision to increase its management capacity or to reduce tourism pressure was certain to create conflicts between INPARQUES and the CCA and between tourism and government stakeholders.

When questioned about the park's likely management scenarios, the CCA representative stated that their goal was to increase tourism in a sustainable way, that they were preparing more sustainable policies and objectives to this end, and that they were already implementing additional management measures. Nevertheless, the visitor numbers had increased before any of the CCA's planned management measures have been introduced. Thus, it was likely that further increases in visitors would exacerbate existing management problems and tourism's negative environmental impacts. Therefore, at least in the short term, the CCA was contradicting the stakeholders' management preference for the implementation of better controls over tourism's negative effects, and also of managing visitor numbers and the construction of accommodation facilities in Gran Roque. It remains to be seen if the CCA will implement the management policies, goals and measures that its representative claimed they were preparing.

Assuming that there will be further increases in tourism that are inappropriately managed, it is likely that many stakeholders will feel that the park authorities are ignoring their management preferences. Many are also likely to press for additional management measures or a reduction in visitor numbers. This may cause further conflict between park authorities and those stakeholders who want to see a reduction of tourism negative effects.

One positive feature of management trends in the park was an apparent increase in stakeholder participation in decision-making and management, this being expressed as a preference by several of the actors that were interviewed. During the second field visit the CCA appeared to be giving significant priority to

increasing stakeholder participation. So far this participation process has mostly been led by the CCA, with little or mostly passive participation by tourism and NGO stakeholders. This is not surprising given the lack of tradition of participation in Venezuelan public administration, so that stakeholders may lack the confidence and knowledge to take part effectively in this process. It remains to be seen if in the future the park management will be negotiated through power sharing arrangements among stakeholders groups, or if it is largely a token gesture from the park's administrators in order to placate stakeholders who want greater participation.

Several stakeholders, particularly within the tourism sector, complained about the unnecessary complexity, bureaucracy and lack of co-ordination that permeated the park's institutions, and they wanted a streamlining of the government stakeholders involved in the park's management. Although the CCA representative was taking some purposeful steps in this direction, these were relatively minor and related mostly to a reduction in the paperwork required of small-scale tourism operations. A much more significant step, however, appeared to be occurring mostly in an indirect and unplanned way, through the shift in power and decision-making authority from INPARQUES to the CCA. During the second field visit it appeared that the CCA was assuming most policy-making and decision-taking roles, with INPARQUES assuming a more passive role. This in itself could lead to a better co-ordinated and less bureaucratic management process, since it was reducing one of the main management conflicts afflicting the park's administration since the CCA was created.

Some stakeholders considered it desirable to have a monitoring system to keep track of the condition of park resources and how well the managers were performing. A minority of stakeholders also wanted a study to be undertaken of the tourism carrying capacity. No environmental or managerial monitoring system existed in the park, and so far a systematic study of tourism's impacts was merely in the planning stages when the second field visit took place. A "carrying capacity" study for the Gran Roque accommodation infrastructure was also supposed to be undertaken in the near future. Thus, it

looks likely that none of these stakeholder preferences will be fully met in the near future, although, if the two proposed studies took place and their management recommendations were implemented, then the park would be far better off. The managing authorities would also be in a much better position to assess the need for new studies, and this would satisfy some of the hopes of stakeholders for improved management.

In sum, some preferences expressed by a significant number of stakeholders were likely to go unsatisfied given the management scenario that is most likely to be implemented. These preferences included a reduction in tourism's negative impacts on park resources through increased management measures, stability in visitor numbers coming to the park, and a monitoring system that would assess how the park and its resources were being managed. If these expectations are not fully satisfied, it is likely that significant conflicts will arise between stakeholder groups, particularly between government and tourism interests. These conflicts around discrepancies between preferred and likely management scenarios could create further strains in the park's management system and make appropriate management even more difficult to achieve. The fulfilment of these preferences would help to manage these conflicts, and they would assist in the sustainable management of the park. If steps to achieve these goals are not taken in a consistent and orderly way in the near future, it is likely that natural resource degradation by the park's tourism industry would increase to levels that would be unacceptable to most stakeholders.

## **9.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has examined stakeholders preferred management options, and contrasted them with the management options that are most likely to be implemented. The stakeholder management preferences were divided in four thematic areas, namely desired changes in management procedures, changes in park objectives, changes in park institutions and changes in park regulations. Overall, the tourism actors most often mentioned the need for changes in the park's management system. Most respondents across all three interest groups

(25 of 30) considered that changes needed to be made in management procedures, particularly in terms of additional tourism management and information measures and stakeholder participation in decision-making. Some respondents also wanted there to be a monitoring programme to assess the effectiveness of the park's management. Such programmes did not exist and nor were they considered necessary by the government stakeholders, and this suggests that the park's management was largely reactive, with problems being confronted rather than anticipated.

The second area of stakeholder management preferences related to the formulation of park objectives, with 22 of the 30 stakeholders mentioning this area. Even if only a few actors directly suggested the need to formulate new management objectives, clearly many of them, particularly government stakeholders, were dissatisfied with the current management goals. This was further complicated by the differing views about the goals that the park should be pursuing. A total of twelve stakeholders expressed five management visions that reflected varying, and in some cases opposing, management goals for the park. Even if many stakeholders appeared to support further tourism development, these divergent management visions suggest that no consensus existed regarding the goals that the park should pursue. In future this was likely to cause disagreements and conflicts among the different interest groups.

The third area of management preferences related to changes in institutions, with most stakeholders considering it necessary for the park authorities to have more clearly defined and co-ordinated roles, and for the Central Co-ordinating Authority to have more centralised functions. While the tourism stakeholders seriously questioned the capabilities of the park's institutions, it seems that the government actors did not recognise the need for improvements. Some stakeholders also considered that the park authorities required better legislation and resources for them to succeed in their mission.

The modification of park regulations was the thematic area that attracted the least number of preferences. These preferences were mostly contradictory, particularly in relation to the management zones into which the park was

divided. There was some coincidence, however, among several stakeholders who suggested the implementation of a limit to tourism development. The disagreement between respondents in relation to modifying the Total Protection Zone suggests that the potential exists for considerable conflict between the different interest groups. Furthermore, these stakeholders did not perceive that new regulations would be insufficient on their own to solve the complex management problems confronting the park.

The assessment of management preferences through the decision pathways questionnaire resulted in three well defined broad paths, all of which supported the application of further management measures. This suggests that most stakeholders felt that the current management system was not dealing adequately with tourism impacts. There were divergent views about the management of visitor numbers, with nine stakeholders supporting the maintenance of current levels, five expressing a desire to reduce their numbers, and six expressing an ambiguous attitude. This suggests that any proposed change in visitor numbers was likely to be controversial, and may be opposed by some stakeholders, particularly those in the tourism sector.

The management option most likely to be implemented involved the increased development of tourism activities and facilities, with this development framed by a common tourism vision previously defined by the CCA, with some participation by other stakeholders. According to the CCA representative, this tourism vision would be based on the park's cultural and natural resources and would be directed at achieving a sustainable tourism industry. The CCA had also increased the promotion of the park, a policy that was leading to increased visitor numbers. Although this stakeholder admitted that the park's institutional management capacity was inadequate to deal with current visitor numbers, he expected that institutional improvements would increase this capacity and would thus enable there to be further increases in visitor numbers.

Even the recent increases in tourist visitation were affecting the already limited management capacity of INPARQUES to control tourism's significant impacts, but this institution lacked a policy to increase their management

capacity or to reduce the pressure of tourism on the park's resources. INPARQUES appears to be losing decision-making power to the CCA, and if this tendency increases, the role of INPARQUES might be reduced to solely safeguarding the park's natural resources.

The comparison between preferred and likely management scenarios suggests that some important stakeholder preferences were likely to go unsatisfied in the near future. If this happens, then conflicts may occur between stakeholder groups, particularly between government and tourism actors. These conflicts may make the park's management considerably more difficult to achieve. The fulfilment of the stakeholder preferences was not only desirable to avoid conflict, but often it would also help to avoid levels of natural resource degradation that would be unacceptable to most stakeholders, and it would promote more sustainable management practices in the park.

#### **10.1 Introduction**

This study covered three main aims. The first was to develop a conceptual framework for the management of tourism and natural resources, this being the Stakeholder and Resource Management Framework (STREM), that takes into account the character of public participation and the potentially conflictive nature of conservation and development goals in tourist destinations in less developed countries. This framework was assessed only in part. Related to this first aim, this study then developed another, more detailed conceptual framework for the identification and assessment of stakeholders relevant to tourism and natural resource management, the Stakeholder Assessment (STA) Framework, which can identify and assess the needs and preferences of stakeholders under conditions of limited participation. The study's second aim was to assess the STA framework in a natural tourist destination in a less developed country, in order to identify the stakeholders affected by tourism and resource management, along with their resource needs and management preferences. The third aim of this study was to strengthen the conceptual frameworks, and the STA framework in particular, by drawing on the lessons learnt during their application.

In order to achieve these three aims, the study considered eight specific research objectives.

#### *Objectives related to the first overall aim of developing conceptual frameworks*

1. To develop a conceptual framework linking visitor and natural resource management issues to stakeholder analysis, with this framework for "Stakeholder and Resource Management" (STREM) intended to assist in the management of tourism in a less developed country under conditions of limited public participation. Only part of this framework is applied in this study.

2. To develop a conceptual framework for the identification of resource management planning objectives based on a process of "Stakeholder Assessment" (STA).

*Objectives related to the second overall aim of assessing the conceptual frameworks*

3. To apply the selected approach to identifying stakeholders relevant to tourism and natural resource management proposals in a tourist destination.
4. To examine the views of stakeholders on the resources in a tourist destination and on the issues or problems to be addressed in relation to tourism resource use.
5. To identify and evaluate stakeholder interests or needs in relation to destination's resources and their management.
6. To evaluate the extent to which stakeholders are interested in, and have the capacity to influence, the management of tourism and resources in a destination.
7. To develop and apply an approach to interviewing stakeholders about tourist "carrying capacity" and natural resource management issues, with the interviews providing much of the primary research evidence.

*Objective related to the third overall aim of revising and strengthening the conceptual frameworks based on the research findings*

8. To review the lessons learnt through the partial application of the STA framework and to use these findings to revise and strengthen the conceptual frameworks developed in the study.

In order to achieve the first aim of developing the conceptual frameworks, this chapter reviews how this study's analytical frameworks, and specifically the Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA), relate to wider bodies of theory. In doing so, this chapter assesses the original contributions made by the study's conceptual frameworks. It then moves on to the study's second aim of assessing the use of the conceptual frameworks, and it reviews the key findings resulting from their application to the case study of Los Roques National Park. It also highlights the implications of these findings for the park's management. To

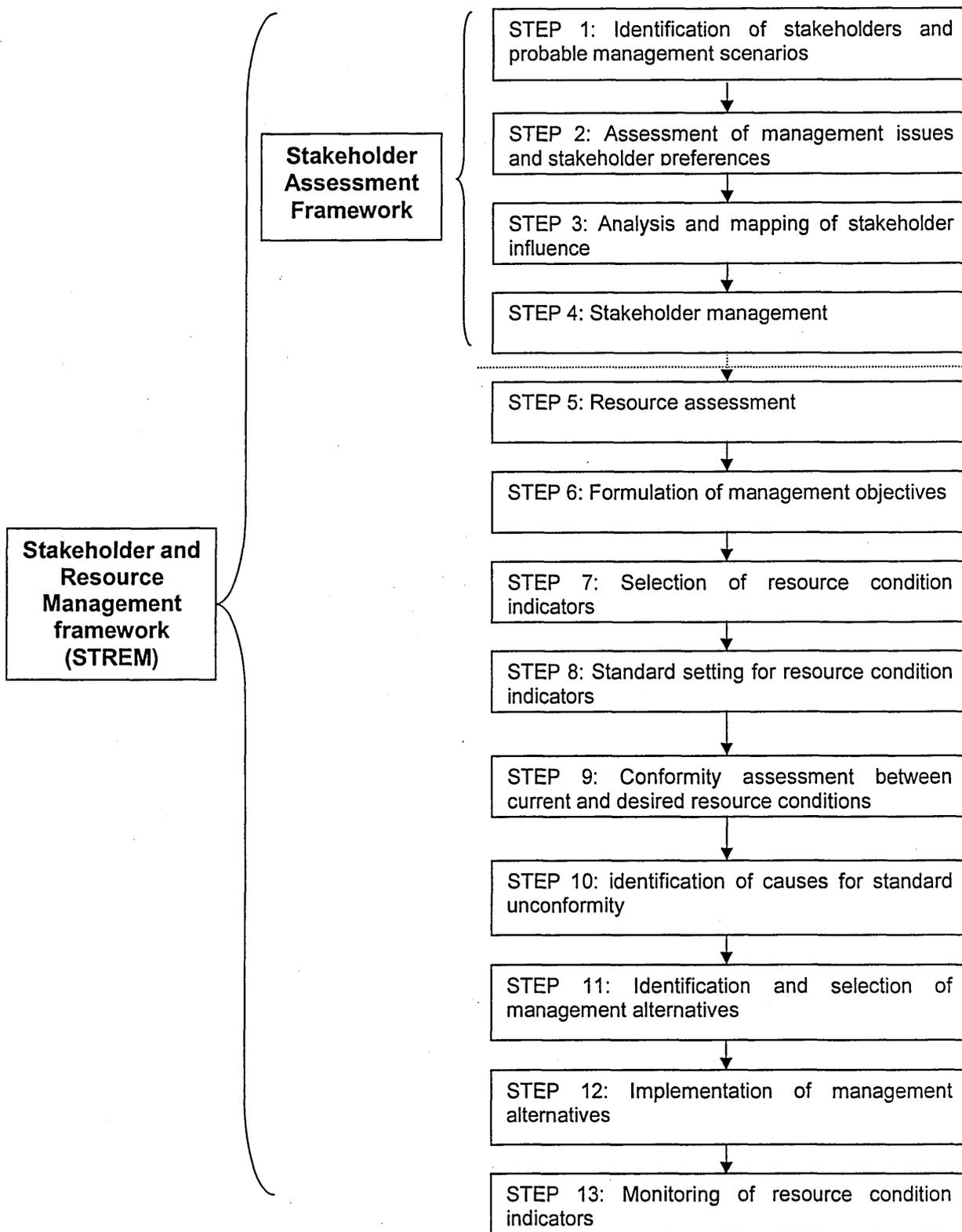
fulfil the third overall aim of revising and strengthening the conceptual framework based on lessons learnt from applying the STA framework to the case study, this chapter reviews the framework's strengths and weaknesses. The chapter concludes by reviewing some of the research avenues opened up by the study.

## **10.2 The study's research frameworks**

This section reviews how the analytical frameworks developed for this study relate to tourism and environmental management and to the identification and inclusion of stakeholders in management initiatives. There is a review of the theoretical underpinnings of the Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA), highlighting the original contributions made by this study, as well as its potential strengths and problems. The formulation of the STREM and STA frameworks constituted the first aim and the first two objectives of this research.

This study was premised on the notion that the identification, analysis and involvement of stakeholders affected by tourism and resource management can be assisted by applying Stakeholder Theory. When Stakeholder Theory is coupled with visitor management issues in a natural area it can help to identify affected parties, define the problems to be solved, and establish stakeholders' resource needs and conservation needs of the area. In order to connect Stakeholder Theory and visitor management in a natural area, the study developed a model for stakeholder identification and analysis, the Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA), and this was embedded in a larger framework for the determination of adequate levels of resource use by visitors, this being the Stakeholder and Resource Management (STREM) framework.

STREM is a framework for the management of tourism and resources in natural areas by objectives. Adequate levels of tourism and resource use in the area are defined through the perceptions of stakeholders affected by resource use and management (Figure 10.1). The STREM framework takes an original approach where Stakeholder Theory is explicitly applied to tourism management in natural areas, by identifying and analysing tourism stakeholders



**Figure 10.1**  
Stakeholder and Resource Management Framework (STREM)

and their perceptions of appropriate resource use through the rigorous application of analytical steps. This analytical process results in the formulation of management strategies that attempt to take into account the resource interests of stakeholders and the area's conservation needs. In line with Hunter's (1997) concept of sustainability as an adaptive paradigm, the framework's ultimate goal is to promote sustainable resource management in an area as interpreted by relevant stakeholders. The intention is to provide managers with a fuller assessment of stakeholder views so that potentially they can be taken account of in management decisions. It is possible that staff employed by key stakeholders in tourist destinations might undertake this assessment. However, it might be considered more advisable to bring in outside advisers or consultants for this work. Such advisers might be seen as more independent and less clearly aligned to the interests of any one stakeholder. University academics potentially could be well placed for this research activity. While managers will still decide on the final balance between stakeholder needs and between these needs and those of the destination, this would be based on a much more thorough, informed and, hopefully, sensitive process.

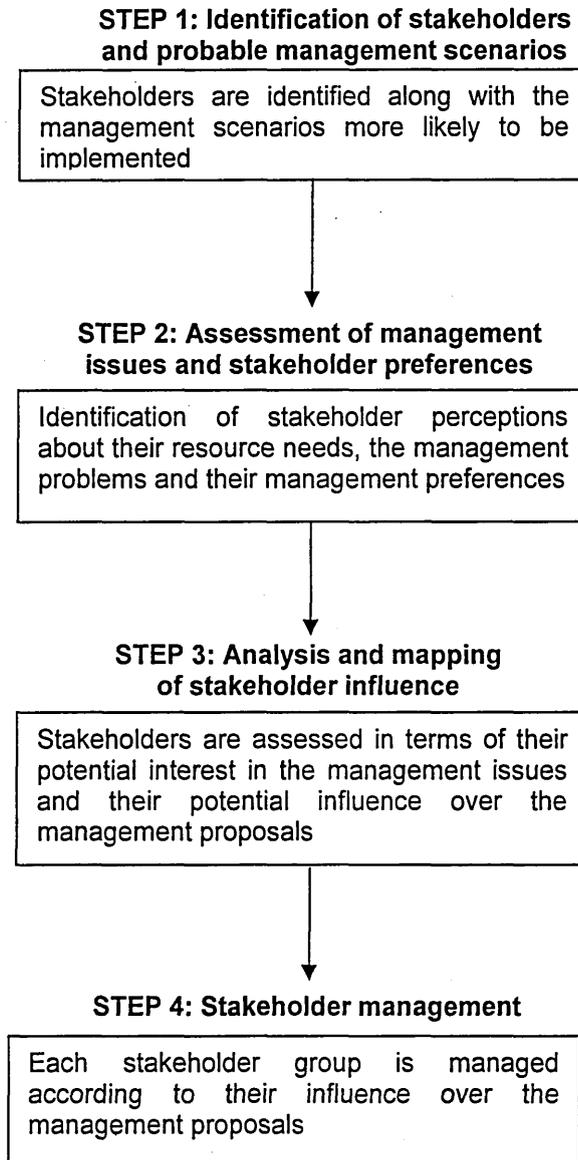
The STREM framework was developed to take into account the characteristics of natural areas in less developed countries that were highlighted in Chapter 3 (Venezuela and Los Roques), notably the existence of people living in these areas that depend on their natural resources (Few 2001; Gusic, 1993, 1997; Morah, 1996; Mowforth and Munt, 1998; Ornat, 1997; Richter, 1984; Tosun, 2000; Twyman, 2000). In theory, conservation can be more easily prioritised in developed countries without there being major impacts for communities, but a similar approach in less developed countries can often threaten the very survival of communities near to or within natural areas. Here the STREM framework acknowledges Henry and Jackson's (1996) argument that a delicate balance exists between ecological, cultural, social, economic, managerial and political sustainability, and that these policy dimensions can strongly contradict each other. The framework recognises that in less developed countries the use of some resources might have to be considered a more desirable alternative to pristine conservation, particularly if the management

priority is social and economic sustainability. Hence, the STREM framework is premised on a definition of sustainability that focuses on perceived human needs or ethnocentrism, where the value of natural resources is derived from human perceptions about their usefulness, rather than by any inherent value that they might possess (Henry and Jackson, 1996; Hunter, 1997; O'Riordan, 1981; Sharpley, 2000). The STREM framework accepts that economic and community sustainability may take precedence over environmental and cultural sustainability, as long as stakeholder perceptions of environmental standards are given consideration.

The Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA) constitutes the first four steps of the STREM framework. Its purpose is to identify stakeholders affected by tourism and resource management and to assess their resource needs (Figure 10.2). The STA framework uses Stakeholder Theory to attempt to reduce some of the problems of public representation and participation associated with tourism management in natural areas. It does so, first, by identifying stakeholder perceptions of who should participate in decision-making; and, second, by examining stakeholder views on what should be preserved and the best way to achieve this.

The STA framework has a clear advantage over other visitor and resource management approaches, such as LAC or VERP, as it involves a systematic process of stakeholder identification and consultation, substituting the manager's perceptions of whom to involve with a practical and readily applicable management tool. In the STA framework, stakeholders are identified through the perception of relevant stakeholders, thus taking advantage of their local knowledge and insights and potentially reducing the likelihood of the selection of stakeholders being inappropriate. The participation process is also systematically structured, as stakeholders are consulted methodically through the use of interviews to establish their resource needs and management interests, thus increasing the chance that these needs and interests are taken into account in management measures. In sum, the STA framework's value is that it establishes a stakeholder identification and participation process, which

reduces or avoids the failure of managers to recognise and consult with some stakeholders, which is associated with other management frameworks.



**Figure 10.2**  
Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA).

Another strength of the STA framework is that it incorporates stakeholder identification and assessments of their interests and views into a process of tourism and resource management (the STREAM framework). This helps to give

focus to the evaluation of stakeholders because they are examined in relation to their interests in the destination's management. It also increases the value of stakeholder inputs into the management process, as stakeholders are assessed according to their management interests and preferences. This approach could reduce the conflicts associated with manager-led approaches where the needs of affected actors are not actively considered.

The STREM framework uses an iterative approach, with parties being asked for their views at several stages of the management process. Thus they have several opportunities to make inputs, to review the results of previous inputs, and to modify their views accordingly. This iteration strengthens the reliability of the framework and also facilitates consideration of changes in the needs and aspirations of stakeholders. The framework is intended as a heuristic device: its presentation as a step or stage model simplifies and facilitates understanding of a more complex reality. A fully iterative or interactive approach actually necessitates that the STREM framework incorporates multiple, complex feedback loops. This allows for participants to return, review, and to reinforce or modify the results obtained in previous management stages. Hence, the STREM framework proposed in this study is best viewed as circular model where earlier steps are revisited subsequently and where the process builds cumulatively, as shown in Figure 10.3.

Both the STA and STREM frameworks involve a process of consultative participation by stakeholders affected by resource use and management in tourist destinations. Consultation is used in particular to define appropriate levels of tourism resource use in natural areas. The term consultative participation is used here in accordance with its use in Pretty's (1995) levels of citizen participation, which were examined in Chapter 2. Several commentators argue that consultation can help to guide the process of identifying management alternatives that are acceptable to most parties (Long, 1993; Mowforth and Munt, 1998; Medeiros de Araujo and Bramwell, 2002). But consultation is located at the lower end of the participation typology described by Pretty (1995), as decision-makers may decide not to respond to the views of stakeholders revealed in this way. But particularly in developing countries

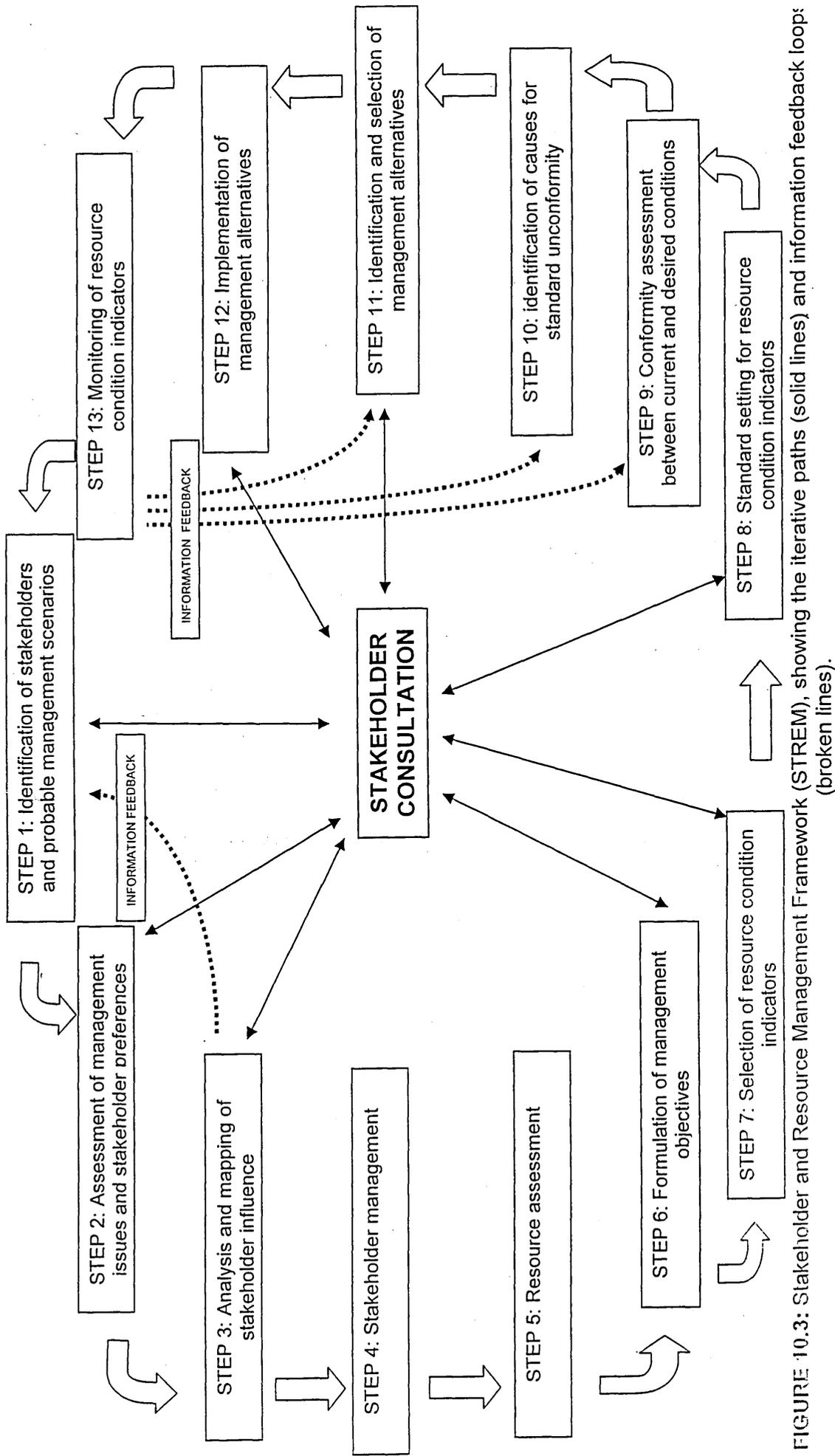


FIGURE 10.3: Stakeholder and Resource Management Framework (STREM), showing the iterative paths (solid lines) and information feedback loop (broken lines).

where there is little tradition of stakeholder participation in decision-making, consultation can allow a range of voices to be heard quite effectively and this can influence decision-making. Consequently, it can represent a real step forward. As Medeiros de Araujo and Bramwell (2000) argue, it may not be necessary to establish high participation levels in order to secure some benefits for groups affected by tourism issues. They assert that, for example, consultation with stakeholders at several planning stages can provide a two-way interchange of information between planners and stakeholders. Such bilateral information exchange is promoted in the STREM framework through an iterative approach, with stakeholders' opinions considered at several stages.

The STA framework can provide managers with a much enhanced understanding of stakeholder perspectives, and potentially they can then make more informed decisions. This might be particularly useful in contexts such as less developed countries where there is a limited tradition of participation and where policy-makers tend to make decisions without consulting affected stakeholders. In places where participation is virtually non-existent, even a small increase in democratic participation in decision-making represents an improvement, and can bring *"democratic empowerment and equity, operational advantages, and an enhanced tourism product"* (Bramwell and Lane, 2000:2). By considering the characteristics of less developed countries with non-participative, top-down planning approaches, the STA framework can also establish an initial building block onto which other more participative forms of governance could later be added.

Both frameworks are suitable for developing countries because they are based on consultation and because of the STREM's iterative loops. These features help in identifying and assessing stakeholders in situations where funds are in short supply, and where the assessed stakeholders are not interested in being involved in decisions or have a limited participation capacity. The STREM and SAF frameworks may also be implemented by consultants or external advisors, which can speed up the process of stakeholder identification and assessment, while retaining stakeholder interaction and inputs and allowing them to review their previous inputs. This provides considerable flexibility to

adapt the frameworks to the level of interest and participative capacity of stakeholders, while reducing the time and costs required to obtain relevant information.

The STA framework may have wider applications as it allows researchers to keep track of who is affected by policy issues and outcomes, and of how they are affected. The framework could be applied to many social research situations where it is useful to identify and assess relevant stakeholders. The frameworks are of particular value to policy makers seeking to identify parties affected by management proposals and who want to address their needs and interests. One way in which it makes policy-makers more accountable to their constituencies is that they can then no longer claim ignorance about stakeholder needs or interests. Table 10.2 summarises the potential strengths of the research frameworks developed in this study.

**Table 10.2.** Summary of the potential strengths of the STREM and STA frameworks.

<b>Potential strengths of the STREM and STA Framework</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both frameworks were designed for multiple-use areas characteristic of less developed countries, but they are also applicable in other situations involving the management of tourism and natural resources.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The STREM framework uses an iterative approach that allows far better consideration of stakeholder values in the management process, thus potentially reducing conflicts.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In places with limited participatory traditions and top-down planning approaches, the STA framework can increase managers' understanding of the different perspectives of affected stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The STA framework provides a systematic process of stakeholder identification and consultation that can reduce reliance on the approaches and perceptions of a single manager.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The integration of the STA framework within a framework for the management of tourism and natural resources (STREM) provides a management-oriented focus to the assessment of stakeholder needs, thus increasing the applicability and value of their inputs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of consultation makes the STA framework suitable for places where time and financial resources required by more participative approaches are not available, or where stakeholders have limited participation capacity or interest.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The STA framework can be used in social research situations where researchers want to identify and assess relevant stakeholders.</li> </ul>

One potential shortcoming of the STREM framework is that managers still retain the right to make final decisions about how stakeholder needs are incorporated into policies, if they are incorporated at all. Managers may also be

required to strike a compromise between the needs and interests of stakeholders, the resource protection mandates for the destination, and also their own management constraints. Thus, because the STREM framework relies only on public consultation and on consideration of stakeholder needs, managers ultimately may decide to ignore the resulting findings. Hence, where stakeholders have the capacity and interest to be fully involved in management processes, then the STREM framework may be less desirable than other more participative arrangements, such as collaboration and partnerships. Both the STREM and STA frameworks rely on consultative participation, and this may be less effective than other more participative approaches. Some commentators have highlighted how consultation processes might fall short of involving stakeholders enough to avoid conflicts, or fail to produce management options that adequately reflect the concerns of all affected parties (Mowforth and Munt, 1998).

### **10.3 Description and review of the STA framework**

The design and partial testing of the STA framework were key objectives of the study. This section briefly describes the aims of each step in the framework, as well as the conceptual and practical issues surrounding its development and use. The STA framework involves four distinct steps or stages; these being, first, the identification of stakeholders and probable management scenarios; second, the assessment of tourism and resource management issues and stakeholder preferences; third, the analysis and mapping of stakeholder influence; and, fourth, stakeholder management.

#### *10.3.1. Identification of stakeholders and probable management scenarios*

The main purpose of this step is to identify all stakeholders affected by the management of tourism and natural resources in a tourist destination. This is achieved by identifying a "core" group of parties relevant to destination management. A snowballing process is then implemented by which this "core" group of actors are asked to name additional stakeholders who may also be relevant to the area's management. Another aim of this step is to generate feasible and realistic management scenarios for the destination, and these

provide benchmarks against which stakeholders' preferred management options can be compared. These feasible scenarios describe the management actions most likely to be implemented, based on stakeholders' knowledge and understanding. This step results in the identification of stakeholders affected by the management of tourism and natural resources in the destination, along with the most feasible management scenarios. The successful determination of parties affected by a management problem involves several conceptual and practical issues, including establishing criteria for stakeholder identification, setting procedures to initiate the identification process, and establishing a limit or boundary to the number of stakeholders for inclusion.

As outlined in Section 4.5.1 of Chapter 4, in order to address these issues the study adapted Rowley's (1997) approach to stakeholder identification. The snowball process involves an initial subset of stakeholders being interviewed to identify other actors linked to them by various relationships, thus facilitating the construction of a stakeholder network. To initiate the identification process, a "core" subset of stakeholders was selected by examining documentary and field evidence to determine who used or benefited from the area's natural and tourism-related resources and who had key roles in regulating and managing them. Their stakeholder role was then confirmed by assessing if they met at least one of six identified criteria relating to the area's resources and their management. These criteria are loosely based on Knoke's (1994, cited by Rowley, 1997:105) criteria for setting a stakeholder network boundary, in which a particular event or issue brings together and defines all stakeholders. In this research the unifying issue was that of a change in the management of the destination's tourism and natural resources.

Once an initial or "core" group of actors was established, they were interviewed and asked to nominate other stakeholders. Further stakeholders were identified subsequently by examining their relationships with the "core" group of stakeholders, according to Criteria A4 examined in Section 4.5.1 of Chapter 4. The interview process was repeated with the nominated stakeholders until the cut-off point was reached, this being where very few or no new stakeholder relations emerged. The practical limitations to involving

stakeholders in a sequential interview process have been well documented, particularly in situations where managers and academic researchers have limited available resources (Barr and Huxham, 1996, Jamal and Getz, 1995). If this limit is surpassed, then the process becomes ineffective, for example, because the amount of data produced is no longer manageable, or because the interviewer would be unable to interview all proposed stakeholders within the allocated time or resources. In order to avoid this situation, all nominated organisations had to be mentioned a minimum of three times during the snowballing process in order for them to be included as stakeholders in this study. As explained in Section 5.5.3 of Chapter 5, a list of all proposed organisations was kept and was immediately updated after the completion of each new interview.

The STA framework can minimise more subjective influences on decisions about who is a stakeholder and where to stop the identification process. Instead, the list of stakeholders and the limits to the network were constrained only by the perceptions of people involved in the management process and the cut-off rule. It is the researcher's contention that the most relevant representation of stakeholders is obtained through the perceptions of the stakeholders themselves. A similar, slightly less systematic process was successfully applied by Medeiros de Araujo (2001) in order to identify parties not included in planning procedures for a tourism development project in Northeast Brazil.

This step also identified management scenarios considered by stakeholders to be most likely to be implemented, the purpose being to identify the resource and management conditions likely to occur in the future. These scenarios were then compared with the actors' preferred management options. The scenarios were developed by interviewing representatives of institutions with most management authority in the destination. The objective was not to have precise figures for expected visitors or very specific predicted future conditions for resources, but rather to provide a general indication of future visitor and management scenarios that the authorities considered most likely. In fact, several likely or probable future management scenarios that reflected the

key actors' varying preferences were identified. This approach recognises that in Venezuela the chain of decisions and events affecting natural area management are influenced by many factors, including parties other than government agencies, and that the outcomes do not always conform to the expectations of management authorities. But the use of just a few probable management scenarios in this way also recognises that government decision-makers in Venezuela retain a great deal of power in deciding on these management strategies.

### *10.3.2. Assessment of management issues and stakeholder preferences*

The first part of this step involves using stakeholder perceptions to define the destination's valued resources and to identify which resources are used by tourism. The second part entails examining stakeholder perceptions of management problems related to the area's resources and to tourism, as well as their views about their own resource needs and management expectations.

Before deciding on what is an acceptable use of destination resources for tourism, it is necessary for the relevant stakeholders to determine what those resources are and to explain why they consider their protection to be important. This step resembles the approach in partnership exercises where stakeholders involved in a problem domain define the issue needing to be addressed (Gray, 1989; Trist, 1983). Although the STA framework is not a partnership or collaboration exercise, it borrows from collaboration theory the concept of problem domain to define what problems should be solved. This requires that the problem be defined at the beginning of the process in a sufficiently broad way so that it can accommodate the interests of all those affected (Gray, 1989; Gregory and Keeney, 1994).

The STA framework values destination resources according to stakeholder perceptions rather than their inherent features. This is similar to the Environmental Capital approach (CAG Consultants, 1997), in which natural resources are valued by stakeholders according to the perceived services that they can provide for society, and in particular to the place attributes they consider matter for sustainability. The STA framework assesses stakeholder

views on the value of tourist destination resources and also why they value them, and these views are used to indicate stakeholder management preferences. These preferences, however, are also identified through the use of a decision pathways questionnaire (Gregory and Keeney, 1994; Ritchie, 1998; Satterfield and Gregory, 1998), in which stakeholders are asked directly about their management preferences. This two-pronged approach assists in establishing whether there are hidden agendas or contradictions in terms of these management preferences.

### *10.3.3. Analysis and mapping of stakeholder influence*

This third step identifies stakeholders' potential interest in, and influence over, management proposals in order to assess how much effect they are likely to have on management processes and outcomes. It does this by assessing the degree to which the stakeholders meet three attributes: those of legitimacy, urgency and power. Hence, all stakeholders are assessed in terms of their right (legitimacy) to use the area's resources, the urgency of their claim to use them, as well as the extent to which they can influence the management proposals (power). Stakeholders who lack these attributes may not hold a significant stake, and thus in principle they may not be affected by the management proposals and their outcomes.

The STA framework adopts a modified version of an approach suggested by Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997) for the assessment of stakeholder attributes. It uses the attributes of legitimacy, power and urgency to assess stakeholder influence, with specific assessment criteria developed for each. This is an original contribution of this study, as there are no similar studies reported in the tourism or environmental management literature where stakeholder attributes have been evaluated in such a systematic manner. This study contributes also to the wider field of the analysis and mapping of stakeholder influence by adopting a modified version of Eden's (1996) matrix to describe potential stakeholders' interest in, and influence over, management proposals (Section 4.5.3 of Chapter 4). The STA framework follows Eden's matrix by using interest and power attributes to assess how stakeholder groups might react to an issue, the intention being to identify actors who may support or sabotage specific

policy directions, as well as the management options in relation to anticipated stakeholder dynamics. The resulting stakeholder classification is particularly useful for designing management measures that reflect the various stakeholder interests and degrees of influence.

The STA framework uses specific criteria to assess stakeholder interest and influence over management proposals. The interest attribute was linked to the degree to which actors are dependent on the area's resources. Stakeholders with high interest were recognised because they either have high urgency in relation to using the resources, they were direct resource users, or both. In turn, parties with a high degree of influence were recognised because they possessed both legitimacy and power. Legitimacy was chosen as a measure of influence because it indicates that stakeholders have a recognised right to use destination resources and to participate in their management. Likewise, stakeholder power was selected as an influence indicator because stakeholders with this attribute are capable of influencing destination management.

#### *10.3.4. Stakeholder management*

In this fourth step the STA framework develops management objectives that may be applied to avoid resource overuse by tourism, whilst producing the least adverse consequences for stakeholders. While this step's main aim is to formulate management objectives that prioritise the area's sustainable management, it also formulates strategies that help enlist maximum stakeholder support, or at least reduce opposition. This stakeholder management step is beyond the scope of this study's detailed research, but an outline of its design was provided in order to integrate the stakeholder assessment framework (the STA framework) into the resource management framework (the STREAM framework).

Stakeholder support is encouraged by proposing management options that stakeholders believe might maximise benefits and minimise adverse consequences both for the destination and themselves. This step resembles Harrison and St. John's approach (1994) in that resource and stakeholder

management alternatives are identified by comparing the current management situation with stakeholder needs and management preferences (Section 4.5.4 of Chapter 4). This comparison identifies which stakeholder needs and demands are currently being met, and which management preferences that increase destination sustainability are shared by stakeholders. The management preferences that are common to the destination's sustainability and the stakeholders are then revised and strengthened, and these form the basis of new management strategies.

The management options generated in this step of the STA framework are directed toward the promotion of sustainable resource use, and the framework recognises that this priority may override individual stakeholder preferences. However, ideally this step should ensure the continuation of stakeholder activities and avoid adverse consequences for the perceived problems.

#### **10.4 Key findings of the case study**

This study fulfilled five specific objectives related to the application of part of the STA framework to the case study in a less developed country. These objectives were:

1. To apply the selected approach to identifying stakeholders relevant to tourism and natural resource management in a tourist destination.
2. To develop and apply an approach to interviewing stakeholders about tourism "carrying capacity" and natural resource management issues.
3. To examine the views of stakeholders on resources in a tourist destination and on the issues or problems to be addressed in relation to tourism resource use.
4. To identify and evaluate stakeholder interests and needs in relation to destination resources and their management.
5. To evaluate the extent to which the stakeholders are interested in, and have the capacity to influence, the management of tourism and of resources in a destination.

Thus, this section reviews the key findings from applying the first three steps of the STA framework to a natural area visited by tourists in a developing country, this being Los Roques National Park in Venezuela. Although the findings are specific to the case study, they have implications for tourism development in other marine national parks and for other types of natural areas in less developed countries. In addition, the study results have important implications for managing Los Roques National Park itself.

#### *10.4.1. Identification of stakeholders in Los Roques National Park*

The first step of the STA framework is to identify stakeholders potentially affected by the management of tourism and natural resources in Los Roques National Park. This was achieved through a snowballing process, which assessed stakeholder involvement with park resources and their management. A total of 22 organisations were mentioned as potentially having a stake in the park, including 11 tourism organisations, six government institutions, and five NGOs. Interviews were secured with 31 representatives from these organisations. These representatives were assessed against seven criteria to appraise their relationships with park resources and their management. These criteria identified stakeholder organisations that, for the purposes of this research, were relevant to managing the park's tourism and resources.

It was found that the tourism interest group affected park management mostly through their use of park resources, while organisations in the government interest group were stakeholders primarily due to their interest in park management, often due to legal requirements. NGOs had both types of stake, with local organisations mostly involved through their resource use and with national NGOs affected because of their interest in park management. However, based on the assessment criteria, one government organisation, the Ministry of Health, seemed not to hold a stake in the management of tourism or of the park resources, and thus was not considered further. Hence, the list of stakeholders was reduced to 21 and the list of interviewees from 31 to 30. This decision is explained fully in Section 6.3 of Chapter 6.

#### *10.4.2. The potential interest and influence of stakeholders in relation to park management*

All stakeholders were located in a potential interest and influence matrix in order to identify actors who might support or sabotage future tourism and resource management proposals. This matrix may be used subsequently to identify strategic options for managers to pursue in the context of the potential behaviour of stakeholders whose interests are affected. All stakeholders were classified in the matrix within four categories for stakeholder management purposes: these being, first, participant-active; second, participant-dependent; third, non-participant-active; and, fourth, non participant-passive stakeholders (see section 4.5.3 of Chapter 4).

It is suggested that participant-active and participant-dependent stakeholders should be closely involved in tourism and natural resource management proposals for Los Roques National Park. Failure to do so would risk derailing the management process because these stakeholders are able to block or sabotage management decisions, particularly if their interests are not taken fully into account. Additionally, participation of non-participant-active and non-participant-passive stakeholders is likely to produce additional knowledge and resources to incorporate in the management process and which otherwise might not be available. The resulting stakeholder categorisation also facilitates the design of stakeholder management measures tailored to each group's characteristics, thus increasing the potential success of implementation work.

This matrix and related analysis of potential stakeholder interest and influence are similar to those proposed by Eden (1996) and Finn (1996). In the STA framework these are tailored for the analysis of stakeholder interest and influence in relation to tourism and natural resource management.

#### *10.4.3. Stakeholder views concerning the value of park resources*

All stakeholders were asked which park resources they considered most valuable and which were most valuable for tourism. They were also asked to identify the resources they felt were already used for tourism purposes. The findings suggest that the park's natural and social resources are being given

inadequate consideration by the tourism parties, despite those resources being vital for the long term well-being of tourism. Further, several tourism parties mentioned that the tourism industry itself was a valuable park asset, perceiving it as a separate park feature almost unrelated to the natural resources. Similarly, despite it constituting a significant part of the tourism workforce and potentially a tourist attraction in its own right, the local population and related cultural resources were given little attention as important tourism resources.

The park's scenic beauty and its associated uses for tourism are the most valued park attribute for tourism stakeholders, and to some extent also for other stakeholders. They appear to value the park largely because they use it and because of tourism's benefits, and not because of the park's inherent physical, biological or social characteristics. This represents a major threat to park conservation and management as it may result in resource overuse in favour of tourism. As Hardy and Beeton (2001) stress, achieving sustainable tourism depends in great measure on stakeholder perceptions about tourism's appropriateness. If stakeholders favour short-term returns, or if they are not involved in park management, the risk exists that "*maintainable tourism*" perspectives would dominate (Hardy and Beeton, 2001:168), perhaps resulting in long-term inappropriate management and resource damage.

In contrast to the perceptions of tourism parties, the government and conservation-related NGO representatives recognised the park's biological, ecological and social characteristics as inherently highly valuable. The latter actors felt that long-term conservation of these assets was essential if current activities in the park are to be sustainable. They are likely to oppose excessive use of the park's natural resources under a tourism-led management agenda, and conflicts may well occur between stakeholders when deciding which park attributes must be preserved.

#### *10.4.4. Appropriateness of tourism in Los Roques National Park*

The study examined stakeholder perceptions about the appropriateness of different types of activity and about how much tourism, measured by visitor numbers, should be allowed in the park. Perceptions of the appropriateness of

current tourism activities varied across different interest groups. Most tourism actors perceived the present activities to be appropriate; basing this, first, on their perception of a lack of negative impacts resulting from tourism; second, on the ability of park management to deal with these activities; and, third, on the financial benefits from tourism. By contrast, about half of stakeholders from the two other interest groups concluded that current types of tourism activity were inappropriate. They considered some activities inappropriate because they produced negative impacts on park resources, or else because they did not promote the conservation or the improved understanding of the park's rich biodiversity. Most government stakeholders attributed these problems to inappropriate tourist expectations and behaviour, or to inadequate tourism operator training. However, the NGO representatives contended that poor management within the tourism industry was the prime cause of these problems, arguing that the industry promotes an unsuitable tourist profile involved in inappropriate tourist activities. NGO stakeholders argued that government and tourism interest groups were equally responsible for these problems, the former due to their lack of appropriate management policies, and the latter due to their lack of training and their desire to maximise their profits with minimum effort.

Most stakeholders felt that the current tourist volumes in the park were appropriate. The degree of approval, however, varied by interest group, with the highest level expressed by tourism actors and the lowest by NGO members. Among the 30 stakeholders, 17 considered that current visitor numbers in the park were appropriate, nine considered them inappropriate, and four responded somewhat ambiguously.

Several tourism and government actors discussed visitor numbers only in relation to the tourism infrastructure's ability to meet the resulting level of demand. This suggests a potential threat to the long-term conservation of park resources, with these parties highlighting the possibility of further increasing visitor numbers simply by building new accommodation infrastructure. These stakeholders did not appear to link the management of visitor volumes and its associated resource use to the conservation of park resources, suggesting they

were not fully aware that these resources are essential for tourism as a resource-related activity.

Only five of the 30 stakeholders believed that tourism was not having negative impacts on the park's natural resources. The other stakeholders identified a range of negative environmental impacts on specific natural resources, and they pinpointed geographical areas in the park where these impacts had occurred. Most of these impacts were in the Tourism Zone, in particular in the "Piscina", in the waters around Gran Roque and in the Maximum Protection Zone. The natural resources most often mentioned as negatively affected were the marine fauna, notably the coral reef and fishing resources. While specific studies are required to assess these impacts more precisely, members of all interest groups were clear in their belief that the tourism industry had negative consequences for park resources. This might be taken by park managers as an early warning that there are environmental impacts requiring urgent attention.

#### *10.4.5. Resource access and use issues relevant to park stakeholders*

The assessment of stakeholder dependence showed that the tourism interest group depended for their livelihood on continuous access to natural resources in the park that are in good condition. This suggests that the access needs of tourism stakeholders should have a high priority in management proposals affecting these resources. Although the resource needs of NGO stakeholders were less complex than those of tourism stakeholders, their dependence on the park's natural resources was actually much higher. Accordingly, a higher priority might be accorded to the interests of these stakeholders in decisions concerning park resource management.

Consideration was given to stakeholder ability to access alternative natural resources to those currently used and to their ability to accommodate new patterns of resource access and use, specifically in relation to moving their activities to other areas or replacing them with other activities. Almost all stakeholders could accommodate new patterns of resource access and use, such as by using other geographical areas, but it was not feasible for them to

use different resources or to change their activities. Hence, while the acceptable and feasible management options are limited, there is scope to reach agreements that could improve park resource management without having detrimental effects on stakeholder interests. These agreements could be based on modifying current patterns of resource access and use, notably the use of new areas of the park rather than areas currently used for tourism. Most stakeholders considered this option acceptable, particularly those highly dependent on natural resources. However, this strategy could simply spread the tourist load and replicate existing management problems in new areas, and thus the park managers must consider this option with caution.

#### *10.4.6. Management problems in relation to tourism*

There were five categories of management problem related to tourism in the park, these being (1) tourism-specific management problems, (2) regulation problems, (3) conflicts among stakeholders, (4) tourism operator behaviour, and (5) problems of natural resource management. The stakeholders expressed most concern about tourism-specific management problems, with 27 of the 30 stakeholders arguing that the park's greatest problem was inadequate tourism management. They identified the main causes of this problem as inadequate co-ordination among the park authorities, lack of resources for the park authorities to manage the park adequately, uncontrolled tourism growth, and tourist concentration in a few small areas.

The park management regulations were considered the second most serious management problem, with most stakeholders contending that the regulations did not deal adequately with the area's specific problems, such as waste management. Another common complaint was that the regulations often hindered economic activities and particularly tourism. Several stakeholders also remarked on the park authorities' inability to enforce regulations. Numerous stakeholders cited institutional conflicts as a third source of management difficulties, with this compounded by the overlapping roles of the institutions responsible for park management. These institutional shortcomings led to further management problems and adverse consequences for stakeholders.

The fourth thematic area relates to tourism operator behaviour, this being mentioned by several parties, even including a few in the tourism sector. They asserted that some tourism operators regularly infringed park regulations, although often unintentionally due to insufficient training. In turn, these problems related to the issue of inappropriate resource management, but there was little agreement among stakeholders about their cause. The only issue frequently mentioned was that the industry damaged some resources due to its particular characteristics and the inherent fragility of the resources.

In relation to tourism management problems, the stakeholders asserted that many could be solved by formulating adequate regulations and appropriate implementation. However, as discussed in Chapter 3, Venezuela itself and the Los Roques National Park face severe problems that often prevent the effective design and application of management policies. These problems include discontinuities associated with constant government reorganisation, a lack of co-ordination and technical expertise among key personnel, an improvised and largely reactive management approach, and a lack of public participation in decision-making. As discussed in Section 2.6 of Chapter 2, these problems are generally rooted in operational, structural and cultural limitations associated with prevailing social, political and economic structures in many less developed nations (Tosun, 2000:625). It may be naive to suggest that new regulations or appropriate implementation mechanisms can fully solve the tourism-related problems in Los Roques, as this would require changes in the dominant socio-economic and political structures, including change in some national institutions.

#### *10.4.7. Stakeholder views on the advantages and disadvantages of park management*

While most stakeholders were dissatisfied with how the park was managed, several stated that either they gained personal advantages from this management or it did not affect them directly. Some of these advantages were not necessarily favourable to the park's sustainable management or for other stakeholders. For example, one tourism operator gained from the zoning regulations that allow them to bring large tourist groups into the park, but she also recognised that this resulted in crowding and resource overuse in the

Tourism Zone. Only a minority of stakeholders asserted that they were disadvantaged by the management system, and just one stressed the need for immediate changes. However, as the assessment of tourism and resource management problems demonstrated, almost all stakeholders believed that problems exist with the way the park was managed. Thus, they may well support proposals to improve park management.

#### *10.4.8. Effect of park management on stakeholder ability to achieve their goals*

The assessment of compatibility between stakeholder objectives and park objectives suggests that stakeholders formed three groups. A group composed mostly of government and NGO organisations largely agreed with the park's institutional objectives. They appear more likely to support management initiatives that enhance conservation objectives. A second group mostly of tourism actors agreed with how tourism is managed in the park, but not with how the park's resources are managed. Their organisational objectives, including their business income targets, focused largely on the park's management of visitor volumes, and these organisations were likely to prefer that these volumes are either left unchanged or increased. This might conflict with park management objectives as these actors tended to want increased visitor numbers, which will likely result in resource overuse. The third group included stakeholders in all three interest groups, and they claimed that their objectives did not match those pursued by the park. Their specific responses varied according to their role in the park, with NGO and government stakeholders having different objectives for institutional reasons, notable their limited involvement with issues related to park management. However, the tourism stakeholders, that formed a large proportion of the group, asserted that their objectives differed completely with those of park management because the latter had no effect whatsoever on their organisations.

In sum, most stakeholders considered that their own objectives were either supported or not affected by the park's management objectives. However, several tourism stakeholders contended that the volume of visitors was an important issue for them, and thus they felt that visitor numbers should at least remain unaltered.

#### *10.4.9. Stakeholder management preferences*

The assessment of stakeholder management preferences indicated that the tourism interest group was pushing with most urgency for changes in the present management system. This urgency stemmed mainly from their belief that tourism was inadequately managed and that this had resulting in a deterioration of park resources, in dissatisfaction among visitors and in operational problems for operators. Hence, the tourism stakeholders are likely to be most supportive of changes to the management system. Many stakeholders wanted alterations to what they perceived to be an uncoordinated and reactive management system, with a more systematic approach and greater stakeholder participation in decision-making. A recurrent issue for many parties was the need for the park authorities to formulate appropriate management objectives. Most stakeholders, and particularly the representatives of government organisations, were unhappy with either the current management goals or their application.

Some parties seemed aware of the potentially conflicting nature of the goals that the park must pursue if it is to be managed in a more sustainable way, and of the need for compromises between conservation and economic development. This finding illustrates the contradictory nature of managing sustainable development (Sharpley, 2000), and how its application in tourist destinations depends on the cultural and institutional context and the views of affected stakeholders (Hardy and Beeton, 2001; Williams, 2001). The application of the concept of sustainability in tourism is likely to bring about conflicts, and it may be difficult or even impossible for actors with different interests to reach agreements compatible with more sustainable management (Henry and Jackson, 1996; Hunter, 1997). However, in the cultural and institutional context of South America and of Venezuela in particular, the pattern of tourism development in Los Roques could be regarded as relatively sustainable as the destination's resources are not being used for other more damaging activities. Even if some stakeholders felt that Los Roques is not being managed according to sustainability goals, the current situation might be more sustainable than intensive commercial fishing or larger-scale tourism development. This is reflected in Hunter's (1997) contention that sustainable

tourism should not be constrained by narrow concepts relying on balance, but rather should be based on an *"over-arching paradigm within which several different development pathways may be legitimised according to circumstance"* (p. 859). Central to these considerations is the host community's needs and desires, as well as consideration of impacts on environmental resources, but Hunter stresses that these competing aspects need not be balanced for sustainable tourism to be achieved. A similar view is advanced by Clarke (1997), who contends that the sustainability concept has, and still is, evolving, and that *"sustainable tourism is not an inherent characteristic of any existing form or situation, but a goal that all tourism must strive to achieve"* (p. 224). Thus, she suggests that the concept of sustainability depends on the particular characteristics, and not on the scale, of the tourism development being considered.

#### *10.4.10. Future management scenarios that are likely to be implemented*

The use of the decision pathways questionnaire with the respondents resulted in three well defined patterns of management preferences or paths, with all involving further resource management measures in the park. The main reason why most stakeholders might support such new measures is because they felt that the current management system did not deal adequately with tourism impacts. However, there were differences of opinion about the management of visitor numbers, suggesting that proposals concerning this issue will be controversial and may be opposed by some groups, particularly by tourism stakeholders.

By contrast, the management scenarios most likely to be implemented involve increased tourism development, with this framed by a tourism vision developed by the Central Co-ordinating Authority with the participation of other groups. According to the CCA representative, this tourism product could well be based on the park's cultural and natural resources and be directed at achieving sustainable tourism. During 2001 the CCA has increased the park's promotion, a policy that seems to have boosted tourist numbers. Its representative expected that institutional improvements would raise the CCA's capacity to control tourism's impacts, thus allowing them to expand visitor

numbers in the park. At the same time, the minor role of INPARQUES in relation to the park's long-term management is likely to further decline. If this trend continues, then this institution's functions may be relegated to that of environmental enforcement, with only minor participation in the park's long-term policy making.

#### *10.4.11. Potential conflicts between preferred and likely management scenarios*

The scenario most likely to be implemented may partly satisfy the management preferences of many stakeholders. This scenario involves the enhanced management of tourism together with increased development of tourism activities and facilities and a growth in visitor numbers. Most parties expressed a preference for tourism being managed more effectively, particularly with regard to controlling tourism impacts, and the CCA claims it will be taking these steps in the future. However, other management preferences expressed by a minority of tourism and NGO stakeholders are unlikely to be implemented in the near future. These preferences included implementing a limit to visitor numbers and applying tourism monitoring programmes and "carrying capacity" studies. If these expectations are not satisfied it is likely that conflicts will arise, particularly between government and tourism interests, making it more difficult to secure an effective management plan. Fulfilling these preferences could result in less potential conflict, and it could help avoid natural resource degradation at levels that would be unacceptable to most groups, and help promote more sustainable park management.

### **10.5 Implications for the framework**

The design of the STA framework has followed a "inductive → deductive → inductive → deductive" cycle, where initially, while starting to develop the frameworks for this study, the cognitive process was influenced by the researcher's own experiences in the context of the problems of participation in developing countries, his previous involvement in management, and the reading of literature related to the subject of inquiry. Then, the guiding principles of the framework were derived deductively by integrating and synthesising literature pertaining to visitor and resource management and stakeholder theory. This

was followed by an inductive stage where the STA framework was applied to a case study in order to assess and then refine the framework. This section provides the final deductive stage of framework refinement and fulfils the eighth and last objective of the study, this being *'to review the lessons learnt through the application of part of the STA framework and to use these findings to revise and strengthen the conceptual frameworks'*. Hence, this section examines the benefits and problems that emerged during the application of the STA framework in Los Roques. Based on lessons learnt, it also suggests some modifications that strengthen the STA framework. In addition, related avenues for further research are discussed.

#### *10.5.1. Stakeholder identification*

The STA framework provided a fast, structured and rigorous process for stakeholder identification that was also relatively simple (Bryson and Crosby, 1992; Boiko *et al.*, 1996; Harrison and St.John, 1994; Rowley, 1987; Medeiros de Araujo and Bramwell, 2000). The related snowballing process identified several organisations relevant to managing Los Roques National Park, and these were confirmed as stakeholders when screened using specific stakeholder identification criteria. The only apparent drawback was that the use of the cut-off of three or more mentions resulted in a minority of organisations being included, some of which were subsequently considered irrelevant, while some relevant organisations were excluded. However, this problem was easily overcome using specific stakeholder identification criteria (Sections 6.2 and 6.3 of Chapter 6). In sum, the STA provides an effective and simple solution to what Mark and Shotland (1985:606) have termed *"the basic issue in stakeholder-based evaluation: choosing stakeholder groups for participation"*.

However, the stakeholder identification process was not very effective for such parties as tourists or *"multinational organisations"* that lack easily identifiable representatives or spokespersons. These "diffuse" stakeholder groups are a problem for the STA framework as it remains unclear who best represents them. For example, the composition of tourist groups constantly changes and at any given moment there are likely to be contrasting and even contradictory interests within this group. Thus, the management preferences of

birdwatchers may contrast sharply with those of tourists engaged in motorised recreation or sun and beach tourism. Inevitably, any single representative of park tourists will probably at best only express the views of one sub-group among them (Section 6.2.1. of Chapter 6). However, this limitation of the STA framework also applies for other studies where tourist opinions need to be represented, and the approach taken to this problem by other researchers (Mitchell and Eagles, 2001; Brown *et al.*, 2001) is similar to that used here, and at best it only partially addresses the challenge.

#### *10.5.2. Stakeholder accountability*

The STA framework does not consider whether stakeholder representatives simply present their personal views rather than those of their organisation or of others in the sector that they belong. Neither does it examine whether these representatives consult with, or gain approval from their constituency. Such issues were outside the study's scope and it is recognised that this represents a potential limitation. This limitation may be particularly problematic in places like Los Roques, and in less developed countries more generally, where it is common for public officials and elected representatives to be relatively unaccountable to their constituency and where one individual can represent several constituencies. To an extent this problem was addressed in the Los Roques case study by interviewing influential members of stakeholder groups known to have dissenting opinions to that of their main representative. But it is acknowledged that it would be important to modify the STA framework in cases where there are significant problems of accountability or diverse opinions within groups. One such modification could be to couple the STA framework with a modified version of Bramwell and Sharman's (1999) framework used to assess the extent to which tourism collaborative arrangements are inclusionary. Their approach could be modified to assess the accountability of stakeholder representatives involved in the STA process, although it would increase the framework's complexity.

#### *10.5.3. Identifying feasible management scenarios*

The application of the STA framework in Los Roques perhaps put too much emphasis on the scenarios considered feasible by stakeholders with most

decision-making influence. Furthermore, the process for comparing the preferred and likely management scenarios is relatively loosely structured in the STA framework, leaving much to the discretion and subjectivity of the researcher or manager conducting the assessment. Ultimately, they decide on the scenarios considered feasible and those that are not. It could be argued that it is better to consider a wider range of relatively feasible management scenarios, including those proposed by less influential stakeholders, and these can then be compared with all stakeholder preferences. Brown *et al.* (2001) advocate a highly complex approach to scenario formulation in their management framework, with statistical weighting and averaging applied to stakeholder preferences. But despite the appearance of greater objectivity, their solution ultimately relies even more on manager perceptions as the manager shapes the options for actors to select, and they also rank and interpret the preferences. The present researcher believes that new mechanisms need to be developed to assess feasible management options that as their main input focus on stakeholder management preferences.

#### *10.5.4. The stakeholder management step in the STA framework*

The matrix to assess stakeholder interest and influence used in the third step of the STA framework produced a helpful picture of stakeholder groups in Los Roques National Park. It indicates the potential role that each stakeholder is likely to take during the formulation of park management proposals. However, the fourth step of the STA framework, that of stakeholder management, was not applied to Los Roques, so it was not possible to evaluate the practical value of this matrix or to examine how management preferences might be incorporated in the eventual resource management measures. Hence, it remains to be seen whether the fourth step of the STA framework can help decision-makers to achieve an acceptable compromise between stakeholder management preferences and the long-term sustainable management of an area's resources.

#### *10.5.5. Triangulation of findings*

The study findings suggest that assessments of views about valued resources are good predictors of stakeholder management preferences. Hence, such assessments have potential to be used as a form of triangulation to

confirm or validate stated management preferences. For example, in the case of Los Roques most stakeholders valued the way tourism used resources, and thus they were inclined to support further tourism development. This was later confirmed by a more direct evaluation of stakeholder preferences. This procedure potentially can be used as a relatively simple, stand-alone approach to indicating stakeholder management preferences. Despite being more complex to design and implement, the results obtained from the decision pathway questionnaire suggest that this procedure can also be very valuable for quickly identifying stakeholder management preferences. However, the decision pathway questionnaire also requires a sophisticated prior understanding of the needs, interests and problems related to the management of a tourist destination.

#### *10.5.6. Future directions for research*

This section briefly reviews selected new research avenues resulting from the development of the STA and STREM frameworks, and it then suggests other research that could advance understanding of tourism and resource management issues.

- *Stakeholder involvement in decision making and resource management*

Future research should look into approaches to increase the roles of stakeholders in decision-making about resource management. This could helpfully develop management frameworks where stakeholders are not consulted about their needs by managers, but rather the stakeholders themselves lead the process of deciding how the destination's conservation needs and their own interests are best addressed.

- *Representativeness and accountability of stakeholder representatives*

The representativeness and accountability of the stakeholder representatives merits further research, including work to identify ways in which researchers or decision-makers might assess those issues in practice. It is also necessary to develop explicit and relatively rapid mechanisms for resource managers to understand the interests and preferences of groups that do not have readily identifiable spokespersons, such as tourists visiting a destination.

- *Identification and assessment of non-participating stakeholders*

Further attention can be paid to identifying non-participating stakeholders and to examining their influence on management, as in some cases these stakeholder groups can have significant impacts on destination management when their interests are affected. This would involve the development of a framework to identify these stakeholders and to determine how they influence decision-making other than by direct participation.

- *Community planning models for tourism*

New research is needed to identify how stakeholders might strike a more transparent compromise between their resource needs and the conservation needs of the area. Ideally, management frameworks could be developed to enable actors to envision the potential long-term consequences of their preferred management actions. Such frameworks would allow stakeholders to agree on management proposals that would not detract greatly from the sustainability of resources they depend on or, alternatively, for them to fully understand and accept the potential negative consequences of the proposals that they want implemented.

## **10.6 Conclusion**

One aim of this study was to develop a conceptual framework linking tourism and resource management issues with stakeholder identification and assessment, and in a way that accounts for the character of public participation, conservation and development in tourist destinations in less developed countries. This first aim also involved developing a framework to identify and assess the needs and preferences of stakeholders under conditions of limited participation. Consequently, the study developed a conceptual framework for the management of tourism and natural resources (STREM) and another for the identification and assessment of stakeholders relevant to tourism and natural resource management (STA).

The importance of the STREM framework is that it proposes a new method of stakeholder involvement for the management of tourism and natural resources by objectives, where appropriate levels of tourism and resource use in a natural area are defined using the views of affected stakeholders. The STREM framework explicitly applies Stakeholder Theory to tourism management in natural areas through the use of stakeholder identification and analysis. This process results in the formulation of management strategies that attempt to take into account the resource interests of stakeholders and the area's conservation needs, as interpreted by relevant stakeholders. The STREM framework provides managers with a fuller assessment of stakeholder views of tourism and resource management issues. A key characteristic of STREM is that it accepts that economic and community sustainability may take precedence over environmental and cultural sustainability, as long as stakeholder perceptions of environmental standards are given consideration. Hence, the STREM framework is premised on a definition of sustainability focused on perceived human needs, where the value of natural resources is derived from human perceptions about their usefulness rather than their inherent value.

The STA framework is valuable as it proposes a highly structured method to identify and assess stakeholders in relation to proposals for managing tourism and resources in natural areas. Its added advantages are that it is easy to implement, and that there is reduced subjectivity or manager interference in the process of stakeholder identification. Stakeholder theory is used to reduce the problems of public representation and participation associated with tourism management in natural areas. It does so by identifying stakeholder views on who should participate in decision-making, and by examining stakeholder opinions on what to conserve. The STA framework provides managers with a better understanding of stakeholder perspectives, thus enabling them to make more informed decisions. This might be particularly useful in contexts where there is a limited tradition of participation, such as in less developed countries. By considering the non-participative, top-down planning traditions of less developed countries, the STA framework might provide an initial building block onto which other more participative forms of

governance could later be added. A key contribution of the STREM framework is that it has an iterative approach, which strengthens its reliability by inputting stakeholder views at several management stages, so that they can review previous inputs and modify their views.

The study's second aim was to assess part of the STA framework in a natural tourist destination in a less developed country. This identified stakeholders affected by tourism and resource management issues, along with their resource needs and management preferences. This aim was met by implementing the first three steps of the STA framework in a case study of Los Roques National Park in Venezuela. This partial implementation of the STA framework identified stakeholders more likely to be affected by the implementation of visitor and resource management proposals in Los Roques, assessed their resource needs and management preferences, and analysed and mapped their potential interest and influence over visitor and resource management proposals. It involved identifying the main management problems faced by the park, the management scenarios most likely to be implemented, and the conflicts that might arise due to differences between these scenarios and those preferred by affected stakeholders. These results have immediate, practical value for the park's management, and are of consequence for the management of similar natural areas both in Venezuela and in other less developed countries. The implementation of the STA framework also provided some validation for its first three steps, confirming that in the case studied, the framework had considerable value.

The third study aim was to revise and strengthen the conceptual frameworks, and notably the STA framework, based on the lessons learnt from their application. The use of the STA framework in the Los Roques case study provides valuable evidence and insights for the application of stakeholder theory in the context of tourism and resource management. The STA framework can be modified and applied by other practitioners wherever there is a need for stakeholders to be rapidly identified and assessed. The STA framework allows researchers to keep track of who is affected by policy issues and outcomes, and of how they are affected, so it could be applied to many social research

situations where it is useful to understand the needs and interests of relevant actors. The STREM framework can be used by policy-makers and practitioners to formulate management proposals that are more sensitive to the needs of affected stakeholders in conditions where limited time or participatory attitudes will limit other frameworks for tourism and resource management.

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## Appendix 5.1

Main interview used with all respondents (questions 1 to 34) and interview for the assessment of feasible management scenarios (questions 35 to 39), posed only to those stakeholders with most management authority in the park.

### INTERVIEW INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this interview is to identify the parties with an interest in the Archipelago Los Roques National Park who might be consulted about the park's management.

This is part of a research project from a British university, and the results of these interviews will be used to identify the opinions of the groups affected by park management decisions.

Any information you give me will be used for research purposes only. All of the data will be kept confidential, so that your name and the data will not be given to third parties.

This interview should only take 50 minutes. I hope that you are happy to participate in this research and contribute the views of your organisation.

### MAIN INTERVIEW

1. For what purpose was your (organisation / interest group) set up and what are its main areas of responsibility?
2. What is the nature of your organisation's relationship with the archipelago Los Roques national park?
3. Does your organisation use the park or its resources in any way? If yes, in what way or ways, and over what period of time has it used the park or its resources?
4. Does the park or its resources provide your organisation with any material, monetary or other types of benefit? If yes, which types of benefit does it provide?
5. Does your organisation have any legal obligation to the park's management and its resources, including the management of visitors? If yes, what is the nature of this legal obligation?
6. Is your organisation affected by the use of the park and its resources, or any change in its management? If yes, how is it affected?
7. Has your organisation been involved in the management of the park and its resources, or is your organisation interested in being involved in any way in the

- park's management? If it is or has been involved in the park's management, in which ways is it or was it involved?
8. Does your organisation have the right to use or regulate the park's resources? If yes, why does it have these rights, and what are those rights? If no, what rights of use or regulations related to the park and its resources do you think your organisation should have?
  9. Are there other organisations or interest groups with an interest in the park that depend on services provided by your organisation? Which are these organisations or interest groups, and what services do they depend on?
  10. Are there other organisations or interest groups with which you need or choose to work in matters related to the park? Which are these organisations or interest groups, and for what matters do you work with them?
  11. Does your organisation need any form of authorisation, such as a permit, to work in relation to the park? If yes, for which activities does it need authorisation, and to whom do you have to apply?
  12. Which other organisations or interest groups do you think might have a right or an interest in the park, or are affected by the park? Should they be involved in the management of the park and its resources? If yes, why and how should they be involved? If no, why should they not be involved?
  13. Is this park important or valuable to your organisation? If yes, why is it valuable or important?
  14. In your view, which particular physical, biological and social resources contribute to the park's value and importance? Why are these resources valuable and important?
  15. What is the value and importance of this park for tourism?
  16. Which of the park's physical, biological and social resources are being used for tourism?

17. Are any of the park's resources being affected by tourism use? If yes, which ones and in what ways?
18. Are the current types of tourism activity appropriate for the park and its resources? Could you briefly explain why?
19. Is the current level of tourism use appropriate for the park and its resources? Could you briefly explain why?
20. Are there any problems in relation to the management of tourism in the park? If yes, what are these problems?
21. Are there any problems between tourism and other activities in the park? If yes, what are these problems and with which interest groups do they occur?
22. Does your organisation derive any advantages from the way the park's resources are currently managed? If yes, what advantages?
23. Does your organisation derive any disadvantages from the way the park's resources are currently managed? If yes, what disadvantages?
24. Does your organisation need to use the park or some of its resources during specific times of the year? If yes, when and for what purpose?
25. If the park's resources that your organisation uses were not available, could you substitute them with some other resources? If no, could you use the same resources but in alternative locations within the park?
26. If the activities that your organisation is involved in were not allowed in the park, could you substitute them with some other activities? If no, could these activities be provided in alternative locations within the park?
27. Does your organisation agree with the way in which the park's resources are being managed, and the way tourists are using the park? Why do you agree / disagree?
28. Does the way in which the park is currently managed affect in any positive or negative way the objectives pursued by your organisation? If yes / if no, in what way does it affect your organisation?

29. From your organisation's perspective, how would you prefer the park's natural resources and number of visitors to be managed?
30. Are the activities of your organisation recognised as acceptable in the laws relating to the park or its management? If yes, was your organisation doing these activities before the park was declared? If your organisation's activities are considered unacceptable, which ones are considered unacceptable and by whom, when and why did this happen?
31. Is your organisation negatively affected by the way the park's resources are being used or managed? If yes, does this compromise the activities and / or viability of your organisation?
32. Does your organisation regulate the way in which other organisations use the park or its resources? If yes, how does your organisation regulate the use of the park or its resources and which organisations are affected by this regulation?
33. If your organisation disagrees with some of the park's management regulations, is there any way in which your organisation can change or avoid compliance with these regulations? If yes, how can (if no, why can't) your organisation change or avoid compliance with these management regulations?
34. Are there any organisations who ignore or get around the park's management regulations? If yes, which organisations, and in what ways do they ignore or get around the park's management regulations?

#### INTERVIEW FOR ASSESSMENT OF FEASIBLE MANAGEMENT SCENARIOS

35. From your organisation's perspective, what are the most important issues or problems related to the management of the park's resources, and what would be the desirable management responses to them?
36. From your organisation's perspective, what are the most important issues or problems related to the management of tourism in the park, and what would be the desirable management responses to them?
37. From your organisation's perspective, what do you consider to be the main changes that are likely to occur in the park over the next five years in relation to the

management of its resources and the management of tourism? Why do you consider these to be likely changes?

38. What role is your organisation likely to play in the management of tourism and the park's resources in the next five years? Are these the main issues your organisation will be addressing in this period in relation to the park? If no, which other issues will your organisation be addressing in the next five years in relation to the park?

39. What obstacles or constraints, if any, is your organisation likely to face if it sought to alter the management of the park's resources and the management of tourism in ways desired by your organisation? Would you expect opposition from some of the park's interested parties? If so, from whom and why?

## Appendix 5.2

### Decision pathways questionnaire.

This questionnaire is intended to assess how your organisation or interest group views the management of the natural resources of the Archipelago Los Roques National Park, and of the visitors to the park. The intention is for you to identify from a range of management actions which might be suitable for the park, those management actions that your organisation or interest group would prefer.

For each question you should circle the letter of the answer that is closest to the view of your organisation or interest group. After some responses, you will be directed to questions later in the questionnaire. Please follow this sequence and do not answer the other questions.

This questionnaire will take about 15 minutes to complete. I will come back in about two weeks to collect the completed questionnaire. Your co-operation with this research project is greatly appreciated.

**Please circle the letter for the option that you feel is closest to the views of the organisation or group that you represent.**

- 1) What is the view of your organisation about the effect of the current number of visitors to the park on its natural resources? (please choose one)
- A) There are no effects of the visitor numbers on the park's resources.
  - B) Current visitor numbers are having some effect on the park's resources, but these are negligible.
  - C) Current visitor numbers are having more positive than negative effects on the park's resources.
  - D) Current visitor numbers are having more negative than positive effects on the park's resources.

(Continue with question 2)

- 2) In terms of the amount of visitors that are currently using the park, your organisation's view is that the current number of visitors must be: (please choose one)
- A) Maintained
  - B) Increased
  - C) Reduced

(Continue with question 3)

3) What is the view of your organisation about the management of tourism within the park, particularly in relation to tourism's use of the park's resources? (please choose one)

- A) The current management measures are adequate enough to deal with the problems arising from the use of the park's resources for tourism (Go to question 6).
- B) An increase in management measures is necessary to deal with the problems arising from the use of the park's resources for tourism (Go to question 4).
- C) A reduction in management measures is necessary to deal with the problems arising from the use of the park's resources for tourism (Go to question 5).
- D) There are no problems associated with tourism and the current management measures are adequate enough (Go to question 6).

4) If there were to be an increase in the park's current tourism management measures, this would be preferable to your organisation because it allows for: (please choose one)

- A) The maintenance of the current number of visitors.
- B) An increase in the current number of visitors.
- C) A reduction in the current number of visitors.

(Now go to question 6)

5) If there were to be a reduction in the park's current tourism management measures, this would be preferable to your organisation because it: (please choose one)

- A) Will help to maintain the current number of visitors.
- B) Will help to increase the current number of visitors.

(Now go to question 6)

6) If your organisation was presented with evidence that the current tourist use of the park will result in the near future in damage to the park's natural resources, what is likely to be your organisation's view on the most appropriate response to this problem (select as many options as necessary):

- A) Reduce the number of visitors to the park as a whole.
- B) Maintain the number of visitors.
- C) Maintain the measures to regulate tourism.
- D) Increase the management measures to regulate tourism, including measures to reduce visitor numbers and the use of certain areas or resources.
- E) Increase the management measures to regulate tourism, but without considering any reductions in visitor numbers or in the use of certain areas or resources.

7) If it were shown that the economic benefits generated by tourism are diminishing, and also that any increase in the current use of the park by tourists will result in the near future in damage to the park's natural resources, what is likely to be your organisation's view on the most appropriate response to this problem (select as many options as necessary):

- A) Increase the number of visitors to the park as a whole.
- B) Increase the number of visitors but only in particular areas.
- C) Maintain the number of visitors.
- D) Increase the management measures to regulate tourism, but without considering any reductions in visitor numbers or in the use of certain areas or resources.
- E) Maintain the current measures to regulate tourism

8) Listed below are some of the effects that might occur if there is an increase in the number of visitors to the park. Please mark with a tick those effects that you think your organisation would consider desirable, or at least acceptable.

**(TICK IF ACCEPTABLE)**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Increased income for most tourism businesses but accompanied by increased prices and reduced availability of food and goods
<input type="checkbox"/>	Increased demand for all tourist services, including boating and accommodation, but accompanied by over-crowding of people and boats as well as more litter in the park
<input type="checkbox"/>	Increased availability of tourism related jobs for park residents, but accompanied by a higher dependency on tourism as a sole source of income and increased problems of job seasonality
<input type="checkbox"/>	Increase in the services and facilities available for the park's residents, but accompanied by increased social problems, such as drug and alcohol abuse, crime and prostitution
<input type="checkbox"/>	Increased promotion of the destination as a mass-tourism destination, attracting many visitors on package holidays, but accompanied by a long term reduction in high spending park visitors, such a fly-fishermen, divers and eco-tourists, due to its excessive popularity

9) Listed below are some of the effects that might occur if there is an increase in tourism management measures in the park resulting in a reduction of visitor numbers or a reduction in the amount of resource use in certain areas. Please mark with a tick those effects that you think your organisation would consider desirable, or at least acceptable.

**(TICK IF ACCEPTABLE)**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Some reduction in social problems, such as drug and alcohol abuse, crime and prostitution, but accompanied by reductions in income for tourism businesses due to a fall in tourist numbers coming on package holidays
<input type="checkbox"/>	Long term stability in the number of visitors coming to the park, but accompanied by a reduced availability of jobs in the tourism industry for park residents
<input type="checkbox"/>	Promotion of the destination largely as a specialised ecotourism attraction, attracting high spending visitors such as eco-tourists, divers and fly fishermen, but accompanied by a moderate reduction in the number of mass tourism businesses
<input type="checkbox"/>	Increase in the number of fish and birds in certain areas, but accompanied by an increase in the areas in which tourism is restricted or has to comply with more regulations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reduction in the crowding of people and boats, as well as the amount of litter in the park's natural areas, but accompanied by a reduction in the visitor services available in the park

## Appendix 6.1

Dependence and co-operation relationships as perceived by all interviewees.

INTERVIEWEE	WHETHER OTHERS DEPEND ON THEM	WHETHER THEY DEPEND ON OTHERS	WHETHER THEY CO-OPERATE WITH OTHERS
<b>TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS</b>			
Owner of small "posada"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinating Authority</li> <li>• CORPOTURISMO</li> <li>• Ministry of Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Recreational diving operator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INPARQUES</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INPARQUES</li> <li>• Co-ordinating Authority</li> </ul>
Former representative of Tourism Operators' Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourists</li> <li>• Local population</li> <li>• Co-ordinating Authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CORPOTURISMO</li> <li>• Ministry of Health</li> <li>• Fire Service</li> <li>• Coastguard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other operators</li> </ul>
Representative of Tourism Operators' Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local population</li> <li>• Local government institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CORPOTURISMO</li> </ul>
Representative of large tourism company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local population</li> <li>• INPARQUES</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INPARQUES</li> <li>• Co-ordinating Authority</li> <li>• Coastguard</li> <li>• National Guard</li> <li>• Tourism Operators Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INPARQUES</li> <li>• Co-ordinating Authority</li> </ul>
Representative of the Friends of Los Roques Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INPARQUES</li> <li>• Tourism operators</li> <li>• Armed forces</li> <li>• Local population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INPARQUES</li> <li>• National Guard</li> <li>• Coastguard</li> </ul>
Representative of the Madrisky Island Owners Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourists</li> <li>• Tourism operators</li> <li>• National Guard and Coastguard</li> <li>• INPARQUES</li> <li>• Health, Education and Transport Ministries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Guard</li> <li>• Coastguard</li> <li>• INPARQUES</li> </ul>
Representative of the Sailboat Captain's Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinating Authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinating Authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinating Authority</li> <li>• conservation Foundation</li> <li>• Several Ministries</li> </ul>
Local owner of small "posada"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park resources</li> <li>• Tourism activity</li> <li>• Fishing activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinating Authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinating Authority</li> <li>• CORPOTURISMO</li> <li>• conservation Foundation</li> <li>• Several Ministries</li> </ul>
Tourism service provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinating Authority</li> <li>• National Commission for Sustainable Tourism</li> </ul>
Representative of Boat Operators' Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourists</li> <li>• National Guard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinating Authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Guard</li> <li>• INPARQUES</li> </ul>
Sport-fishing "posada" representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastguard</li> <li>• INPARQUES</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinating Authority</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinating Authority</li> <li>• Civil Authority</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INPARQUES</li> </ul>
Sport-fishing guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinating Authority</li> <li>• CONATEL</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Venezuelan University</li> <li>• FEVAS</li> </ul>
Large "posada" owner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INPARQUES</li> <li>• Dept. of Fisheries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INPARQUES</li> <li>• Dept. of Fisheries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International NGOs</li> </ul>
Tourism guide for large airline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Co-ordinating Authority</li> <li>• "Posada" owners</li> <li>• Tourism operators</li> </ul>
<b>GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS</b>			
Former CCA representative 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INPARQUES</li> <li>• National Guard</li> <li>• Coastguard</li> <li>• CCA</li> <li>• Harbour Master Office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Sailing Association</li> <li>• Sport Sailors School</li> </ul>
Former CCA representative 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National tourism agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INPARQUES</li> <li>• CORPOTURISMO</li> <li>• CCA</li> <li>• Health Ministry</li> <li>• Fire Brigade</li> <li>• Harbour Master Office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighbours Association</li> <li>• Tourism Operators Association</li> </ul>
Representative of CCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism operators</li> </ul>
Representative of INPARQUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourists</li> <li>• "Posada" owners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCA</li> <li>• International Co-operation Agency</li> <li>• Harbour Master Office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCA</li> </ul>
Former representative of INPARQUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local community</li> <li>• Local institutions</li> <li>• Los Roques Holiday Houses' Owners Association</li> </ul>
Representative of CORPOTURISMO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INPARQUES</li> <li>• CCA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other fishing operators</li> </ul>
Representative of Coastguard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airlines</li> <li>• CCA</li> <li>• Fishermen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCA</li> <li>• Health Ministry</li> <li>• Fire Brigade</li> <li>• Inland Revenue Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other "posada" owners</li> <li>• CCA</li> </ul>
Representative of National Guard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local community</li> <li>• CCA</li> <li>• "Posada" owners</li> <li>• Tourism service providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCA</li> <li>• INPARQUES</li> <li>• CORPOTURISMO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other "posada" owners</li> </ul>
Local school headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National and international tourism agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCA</li> <li>• INPARQUES</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other fishing operators</li> </ul>
<b>NGO STAKEHOLDERS</b>			
Representative of international development agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Boat Association</li> <li>• Neighbours' Association</li> <li>• Tourism Operators Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Co-operation Agency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Boat Association</li> <li>• Neighbours' Association</li> <li>• Tourism Operators</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All other governmental institutions composing the CCA</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association</li> <li>• All other governmental institutions composing the CCA</li> <li>• Diving Federation</li> <li>• Cultural Patrimony Institute</li> <li>• Biodiversity Office</li> <li>• Conservation Interests NGO</li> <li>• Fishermen Association</li> </ul>
Representative of local conservation NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Education</li> <li>• CCA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INPARQUES</li> </ul>
Fishermen's Association representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Posada" owners</li> <li>• Fishermen</li> <li>• Fishing Service</li> <li>• INPARQUES</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Co-operation Agency</li> </ul>
Neighbourhood Association representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCA</li> <li>• Tourists</li> <li>• Tourism operators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishermen Association</li> <li>• CCA</li> </ul>
Representative of conservation NGO 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INPARQUES</li> <li>• CCA</li> <li>• Tourism operators</li> <li>• Local scope NGO</li> <li>• International Co-operation Agency</li> </ul>
Representative of conservation NGO 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCA</li> <li>• INPARQUES</li> <li>• Biodiversity Office</li> <li>• Tourism Boat Association</li> <li>• Tourism Operators Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment Ministry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCA</li> <li>• INPARQUES</li> <li>• Biodiversity Office</li> </ul>

Note: Ministry of Health representative was not interviewed for relationships.

## Appendix 7.1

Timing and location of resource use by those stakeholders from the tourism and NGO interest groups identified as direct resource users.

STAKEHOLDER NAME	TIMING OF RESOURCE USE	LOCATION OF RESOURCE USE
<b>TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS</b>		
Owner of small posada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scenic resources used all year round</li> <li>Fish and lobster used when available and needed</li> </ul>	Scenic resources around the posada. Fish and lobster are used in the posada's restaurant.
Recreational diving operator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scenic resources used all year round</li> <li>Coral reef used all year round</li> </ul>	Park's scenic resources and reef quality are the selling point of the operation. Several reefs are used around the park for diving, some of them out of Tourism Zone.
Former rep. of the Tourism Operators' Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scenic resources used all year round</li> </ul>	Scenic resources from Tourism Zone. They also arrange trips to Tourism Zone for park visitors.
Representative of the Tourism Operators' Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scenic resources used all year round</li> </ul>	Scenic resources from Tourism Zone. They also arrange trips to Tourism Zone for park visitors.
Representative of large tourism company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scenic resources used all year round</li> <li>Recreation and snorkelling locations used all year round</li> <li>Fish and lobster used when available and needed</li> </ul>	Scenic resources from Tourism Zone. Tourists' beach and snorkelling activities take place mainly in the Tourism Zone. Fish and lobster is served to tourists when required and available.
Former representative of Madrizky Island Owners' Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scenic resources used all year round, particularly weekends</li> </ul>	Scenic resources mostly in Madrizky island.
Representative of Sailboat Captains' Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses the park 2 to 6 times per year, mostly from 15 Dec. to 8 Jan., Easter and Bank Holidays</li> </ul>	Any areas legally allowed and with adequate depth for sailboat anchoring, preferably without crowding and yacht users.
Local owner of small posada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All year round, particularly on weekends</li> </ul>	Scenic resources inside and outside the Tourism Zone, for beach and snorkelling activities. Fish and lobster is served to tourists when required and available.
Provider of tourism services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scenic resources used all year round</li> <li>Fish and lobster used when available and needed</li> </ul>	Scenic aerial resources in the Northeast of the park for microlight tours. Fish and lobster is served to tourists when required and available.
Representative of the Boat Operators' Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All year round, particularly during tourist's peak season between December to July</li> </ul>	Scenic resources for tourists' visits, particularly the islands of the Tourism zone and Agua and Mosquises keys.
Representative of sport-fishing posada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All year round, but most operations during 1<sup>st</sup> 6 to 8 months of each year</li> </ul>	Shallows on the Primitive Marine Zone, Carenero key and Central Lagoon.
Sport-fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All year round, but mostly 8</li> </ul>	Shallows in several areas of the park.

guide	months of the year	
Owner of large posada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenic resources used all year round</li> <li>• Recreation and snorkelling locations used all year round</li> <li>• Fish and lobster used when available and needed</li> </ul>	Scenic resources from Tourism Zone. Tourists' beach and snorkelling activities take place mainly in the Tourism Zone. Fish and lobster is served to tourists when required and available.
Tourist guide for large airline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenic resources used all year round</li> <li>• Recreation and snorkelling locations used all year round</li> <li>• Fish and lobster used when available and needed</li> </ul>	Scenic resources from Tourism Zone. Tourists' beach and snorkelling activities take place mainly in the Tourism Zone. Fish and lobster is served to tourists when required and available.
<b>NGO STAKEHOLDERS</b>		
Representative of the local conservation NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operations location used all year round</li> <li>• Research on natural resources undertaken on year-round basis</li> <li>• Fish used when available and needed</li> </ul>	Their research station is located within the park. The members of this NGO also use this station in resort-like fashion. Research uses take place anywhere, but mostly on the West side of the park.
Representative of the Fishermen's Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing during all year</li> <li>• Lobster fished in season</li> </ul>	Several areas inside and outside the main reef barriers, mentioned Agua key and outside North and South barriers.

## Appendix 9.1

Preferred management situation as expressed by all stakeholders interviewed.

STAKEHOLDER NAME	PREFERRED MANAGEMENT SITUATION
<b>TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS</b>	
Owner of small "posada"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A balance between natural resource conservation and tourism management must be achieved, leading to a economically successful activity that does not damages park resources.</li> <li>• In order to protect the resources a more in situ, timely management of tourists must be done.</li> <li>• INPARQUES should have a better and faster enforcement capacity.</li> <li>• Tourism operators should work together under common goals in an Association.</li> </ul>
Recreational diving operator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A better knowledge about tourism visitor loads and tourism capacity of the park should exist.</li> <li>• Tourism operators should have a greater participation into the management of the park and the design of regulations in which they have expertise, and authorities should actively exchange information with them.</li> <li>• Funds collected from the operators and tourists should be reinvested into the park.</li> <li>• Regulations related to night navigation within the park should be modified to allow diving.</li> <li>• Private institutions such as the conservation interests Foundation should contribute much more to the management of the park.</li> <li>• Once that is proved that diving has a negligible impact, it should be allowed into the off-limits areas of the park.</li> <li>• Tourism operators should participate more actively in the management of their wastes.</li> <li>• The CCA and INPARQUES should have a better fining and enforcement capability.</li> <li>• Better education of tourists and operators is necessary to reduce their impacts.</li> </ul>
Former representative of Tourism Operators Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All tourism activities done in the park should be managed in such a way that their negative impacts are reduced to the minimum possible.</li> <li>• Tourism operators should become more involved and take a proactive role in the protection and management of the park.</li> <li>• Tourism operators and the local community should have a greater participation into the management of the park.</li> <li>• INPARQUES should have a better and faster enforcement capacity.</li> <li>• Park regulations should be changed to avoid conflict between governmental institutions.</li> <li>• The enforcement of park regulations must be clear and equal for all.</li> </ul>
Representative of Tourism Operators Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More strict regulations related to resources management should be implemented.</li> <li>• INPARQUES should have a better fining and enforcement capability.</li> <li>• Public utility services should work efficiently.</li> <li>• A sustainable, small-scale tourism development should prevail in Los Roques, and no large tourism accommodation should be allowed.</li> <li>• Visitors' density should be kept at a particular (unspecified) quantified level, which should lead to tourist satisfaction, adequate tourism operations and maintenance of optimal natural resource conditions.</li> <li>• Park regulations should be changed to avoid conflict between governmental institutions.</li> <li>• The enforcement of park regulations must be clear and equal for all.</li> <li>• Funds collected from the operators and tourists should be reinvested into the park.</li> <li>• Tourism operators should have a greater participation into the management of the park and the allocation of planning priorities.</li> </ul>
Representative of large tourism company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Tourism Area management zone must be rotated, in particular the trouble spots within this Area.</li> <li>• More education should be given to the local population about adequate disposal of solid wastes and tourism-related issues.</li> <li>• Public utility services should work efficiently.</li> </ul>
Representative of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism should be regulated but not constrained by management</li> </ul>

Friends of Los Roques Foundation	<p>regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only people with adequate standards of education and income should participate in the decision-taking processes for the management of the park.</li> <li>• Gran Roque island should be excluded of park's limits and regulations and its tourism development increased.</li> <li>• Park vigilance and the required funding to do it should be maintained and increased.</li> <li>• Any method of tourism control should be based on price management.</li> </ul>
Representative of the Madrizky Island Owners' Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CCA's Director should have more power and autonomy, and the role of the CCA should be strengthened.</li> <li>• The park's management should aim to achieve a balance between resource conservation and human use - needs.</li> <li>• Adequate and fair policies should exist for the management of the local population in Gran Roque, which should have adequate public services and utilities.</li> <li>• Park's authorities should rely on operators' auto-regulation and their own verification to achieve a more efficient management.</li> </ul>
Representative of Sailboat Captain's Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism management regulations should be simplified to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy and administrative constraints.</li> <li>• The buoy system should establish a boat capacity for each island, should make allowances for the different type of users, and a reservation system should be operated along it.</li> <li>• More regulations, control and supervision should be implemented on tourism operations to avoid resource damage.</li> <li>• A limit or cap should be set to the construction of tourism facilities in Gran Roque.</li> <li>• The park authorities should set adequate criteria for the management of tourism.</li> <li>• The authorities' administrative and control procedures should be transparent, effective and clear to all park's users.</li> </ul>
Local owner of small posada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park's authorities should be better co-ordinated and their services centralised within the park.</li> <li>• The amount of visitors coming to the park should be regulated according to the accommodation capacity of Gran Roque.</li> <li>• Tourists should be provided with more, better and timely information.</li> <li>• The amount of posadas in Gran Roque should be regulated.</li> <li>• Local boat operators should be better supervised by the authorities, but the paperwork for their operations should be eased and facilitated.</li> </ul>
Provider of tourism services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of institutions participating in the management of the park should be reduced.</li> <li>• The observation of land/underwater wildlife should be boosted, along with the possibilities of nocturnal recreation for tourists.</li> <li>• Regulations related to promotional activities in the park should be relaxed to boost park's promotion.</li> <li>• Local population's education and authorities' policies should be better oriented to increase tourism receptivity.</li> </ul>
Representative of Boat Operators' Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written information should be placed in heavily used cays to reduce tourism' environmental impact.</li> </ul>
Representative of sport-fishing posada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some areas of the Integral Protection Zone should be open to sportfishing.</li> <li>• The park's authorities should centralise their procedures and reduce their bureaucracy.</li> <li>• Camping tourism should be reduced and better controlled.</li> <li>• The use of fishing guides should be made mandatory.</li> <li>• The airport, town and public utilities should be improved.</li> </ul>
Sport-fishing guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some areas of the Integral Protection Zone should be open to sportfishing.</li> <li>• The use of fishing guides should be made mandatory.</li> <li>• The CCA should have more autonomy and management power.</li> <li>• The park's authorities should centralise their procedures and reduce their bureaucracy.</li> <li>• The observation of wildlife should be boosted.</li> <li>• The current level of visitation should be increased.</li> <li>• Local boat operators should be better supervised by the authorities.</li> <li>• Loans should be made available to those operators wishing to improve their services.</li> <li>• Public services and utilities should be improved.</li> </ul>

Owner of large "posada"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CCA should have more autonomy and management power.</li> <li>• The building of structures should not be allowed in the cays.</li> <li>• The park's visitor capacity should not be increased.</li> <li>• The town's nocturnal activities should be regulated and reduced.</li> </ul>
Tourist guide for large airline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The park's visitor capacity should not be increased nor reduced.</li> <li>• Their company should be consulted on management decisions.</li> <li>• The local population should be made more environmentally aware.</li> <li>• The tourism demand should be reduced with price increases.</li> <li>• The park's vigilance and control should be increased.</li> <li>• Tourism operators should have better training and supervision.</li> </ul>
<b>GOVERNMENTAL STAKEHOLDERS</b>	
Former CCA representative 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population growth must be reduced or stop altogether, and out-migration should be stimulated.</li> <li>• The number of "posadas" in Gran Roque island must be increased using local population houses.</li> <li>• Visitation should be spread along different areas of the park, avoiding current concentration.</li> <li>• To increase expending in control, enforcement and education over tourism activity, by increasing number and powers of well-trained rangers, implementing educational programs for offenders, implementing certification and licensing programs for tourism guides and for "posadas", implementing information campaigns for travel agencies and retailers about the national park, to involve schools in educational activities in the park and to have an information free-phone number with information about the park.</li> <li>• Public utilities should not be expanded but rather keep them well maintained at the present level of service.</li> <li>• A self-landing boat should be bought to bring in fuel and goods and take out classified wastes.</li> <li>• Increase and keep a high level of maintenance to public facilities in the park, such as landing strip, terminal, lampposts.</li> <li>• Increase the education level of the local population.</li> <li>• Obtain support and funding from international organisations to cover the financial needs of the park and implement programs directed at reducing tourism pollution and increase its sustainability.</li> <li>• Governmental management institutions must devise a guiding vision for the park, and clear management goals and objectives must be established, in order to steer the growth and development of activities within the park.</li> <li>• Visitor access to the park should be made expensive to reduce visitor pressure and tourism activity growth.</li> <li>• Governmental institutions with social care goals should have a greater participation in the management of the park's population.</li> <li>• <u>Nature-based tourism and sport should be stimulated within the park.</u></li> </ul>
Former CCA representative 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A good management image must be given to the park visitors.</li> <li>• A more strict control of visitors arriving to the park should be established.</li> <li>• The park should be promoted as an exclusive, expensive destination, which can only be visited by a particular group of tourists.</li> <li>• The CCA should keep its current associated institutions, but should make them more efficient and less bureaucratic.</li> <li>• The CCA should be freed from several organisational loads and duties that are not its responsibility.</li> </ul>
Representative of the CCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism carrying capacity of the park and impacts of human activities on the park's ecosystems should be assessed as soon as possible.</li> <li>• The park's protection, control, management and information activities should be reinforced, particularly in the Tourism Zone.</li> <li>• Park's stakeholders should participate in the decision-taking processes related to the management of the park.</li> <li>• Park's management should be less dependent of the CCA's director and more in its local organisations.</li> <li>• The management of the park should have a patrimonial and sustainable orientation, giving cultural and social resources equal value to that of the natural resources.</li> <li>• The type of tourism product to be offered in Los Roques should be clearly defined and managed by all stakeholders.</li> <li>• Correctly managed diving, snorkelling, sailing and sportfishing should be promoted in the park.</li> <li>• An information centre should be established to better manage and control tourists.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The park should become the country's showcase for environmentally friendly nature tourism.</li> <li>• The park's carrying capacity should be managed according to the management capacity of the park's authorities.</li> <li>• The authorities must stimulate environmentally friendly behaviour changes in the park's stakeholders.</li> <li>• All tourism operators should be adequately trained and certified in order to be able to operate in Los Roques.</li> </ul>
Representative of INPARQUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism management measures should be increased in a parallel fashion to the growth of the tourism demand in the park. This would require a larger number of personnel and new equipment such as boats and fixed operation bases within the park.</li> <li>• Studies must be done to establish the maximum permissible tourism load that guarantees minimum impact on the resources.</li> <li>• The conservation interests Foundation and national universities should have a greater participation in providing the required management information for the park.</li> <li>• The role overlapping that exists between INPARQUES and the CCA should be eliminated by returning decision-taking priority to INPARQUES.</li> </ul>
Former representative of INPARQUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An equilibrium must be established between tourism and fishing activities through an integral management of both activities.</li> <li>• Fishing activity must be managed in an well-regulated, sustainable and profitable way, allowing the local population to maintain a firm environmental link with the park, as well as a social and economical stability that can not be provided by tourism.</li> <li>• An adequate tourist profile for the park must be defined, in order for visitors to appreciate the natural resources of a national park rather than sun-and-beach activities.</li> <li>• Clear management goals and objectives must be defined and adopted by the park's management institutions.</li> <li>• Use capacities must be established for the different management areas and activities of the park, particularly for tourism and fishing.</li> <li>• The role overlapping that exists between INPARQUES and the CCA should be eliminated by returning decision-taking priority to INPARQUES.</li> <li>• The conservation interests Foundation and national universities should have a greater participation in providing the required management information for the park.</li> <li>• The CCA should be modified to have more efficient participating institutions.</li> </ul>
Representative of CORPOTURISMO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The park should be promoted as an unique natural, peaceful and pristine tourism destination.</li> <li>• The institutions that constitute the CCA Council should have more participation into the selection of the CCA Director.</li> <li>• CORPOTURISMO should have more participation in the management of tourism in Los Roques.</li> <li>• Better co-ordination and information exchange must exist between the park managing authorities and the operators.</li> </ul>
Representative of Coastguard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current level of visitors should not be increased.</li> <li>• Tourism operators must receive education and training for them to give a better quality of service and better comply with the management regulations of the park.</li> <li>• Current fishing management should be maintained due to its adequate results.</li> </ul>
Representative of National Guard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sustainable tourism management should be done, preserving the park's natural resources with a minimum environmental impact, while providing an adequate level of tourism service and infrastructure.</li> <li>• The growth of tourism, particularly in Gran Roque, must be better controlled.</li> <li>• Environmental impact studies must be done to assess the tourism capacity of the park.</li> </ul>
Headteacher of school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written information should be placed in heavily used cays to reduce tourism' environmental impact.</li> <li>• The vigilance and control on the cays should be increased.</li> <li>• Tourists' arrival procedures should be improved / eased.</li> </ul>
<b>NGO STAKEHOLDERS</b>	
Fishermen's Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Integral Protection Zone should be kept free of human presence and use.</li> </ul>

representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Integral Protection Zone should be modified to allow fishing in some areas of low conservation value.</li> <li>• A Queen Conch fishing season must be resource-established.</li> <li>• The vigilance and control of tourism should be strengthened.</li> </ul>
Neighbourhood Association representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vigilance on the cays should be increased.</li> <li>• The regulations should be applied equally to operators and locals.</li> </ul>
Representative of international development agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strong vigilance and control programme should be established in order to adequately preserve the natural resources of the park.</li> <li>• Governmental institutions, tourism operators and guides should give more information to park visitors.</li> <li>• The park's visitor profile must be changed toward a natural tourism type of visitor, which is able to better appreciate the park's natural resources.</li> <li>• A natural resources monitoring programme should be urgently established.</li> <li>• The waste management problems of Los Roques should be controlled to reduce the island's pollution to a minimum.</li> <li>• The conservation interests Foundation and national universities should have a greater involvement in the management of the park.</li> </ul>
Representative of local conservation NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear management goals and planning objectives must be established for the park.</li> <li>• An adequately defined tourist profile and tourism management regulations must be elaborated and promoted.</li> <li>• The main goal of the park must be to serve as natural nursery and biodiversity protection area.</li> <li>• Commercial fishing activity with production directed outside the park should be phased out, allowing fishing only for local consumption and tourism activity.</li> <li>• The main activity to be promoted within the park should be sustainable nature-based tourism.</li> <li>• A permanent, reliable monitoring programme should be established to continually assess the management of the park's natural resources and its tourism activity.</li> <li>• Management institutions should have enough funding and material resources to be able to comply with their mission and keep an adequate control over the park's resources and activities.</li> <li>• Private institutions should have more effective participation mechanisms and more influence into the management of the park.</li> </ul>
Representative of conservation NGO 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of park's institutions with managing authority should be reduced to only one.</li> <li>• The roles of the park's institutions should be clearly defined and separated.</li> <li>• Current management process should be monitored permanently in order to assess and revise it, and environmental, management and policy indicators should be established.</li> <li>• The park's management should be framed within policies, plans, programmes and projects.</li> </ul>
Representative of conservation NGO 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The revision of the park's management plan should be completed and implemented.</li> <li>• The participation of local stakeholders should be stimulated and strengthened.</li> <li>• Tourism operators should diversify their offer with more environmentally friendly options.</li> <li>• Strategies and policies should be developed to make of Los Roques the centre of development of the Venezuelan Caribbean.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 9.2

Specific questions used in the interview to assess feasible management scenarios for the Los Roques National Park.

35. From your organisation's perspective, what are the most important issues or problems related to the management of the park's resources, and what would be the desirable management responses to them?
36. From your organisation's perspective, what are the most important issues or problems related to the management of tourism in the park, and what would be the desirable management responses to them?
37. From your organisation's perspective, what do you consider to be the main changes that are likely to occur in the park over the next five years in relation to the management of its resources and the management of tourism? Why do you consider these to be likely changes?
38. What role is your organisation likely to play in the management of tourism and the park's resources in the next five years? Are these the main issues your organisation will be addressing in this period in relation to the park? If no, which other issues will your organisation be addressing in the next five years in relation to the park?
39. What obstacles or constraints, if any, is your organisation likely to face if it sought to alter the management of the park's resources and the management of tourism in ways desired by your organisation? Would you expect opposition from some of the park's interested parties? If so, from whom and why?

## Appendix 9.3

Update interview used during the second field visit with representatives of those organisations with managerial responsibilities in the park that have already been interviewed during the first field visit.

### INTERVIEW INTRODUCTION

This brief interview has the purpose of updating my research about any changes that might have had happen in the Los Roques National Park during the past year. I would appreciate if before we begin, you take a minute to think of any management, organisational or political changes that have affected either the park or your organisation during the year 2000.

1. Has the park's tourism activity, or the number of tourists, changed in any significant way during the last year? If yes, how has it changed?
2. Have there been any significant changes in the management of tourism during the last year? If yes, what are those changes?
3. Have there been any significant changes in the management of the park's natural resources during the last year? If yes, what are those changes?
4. Have the resources, duties or responsibilities of your organisation been modified in any way in relation to its role in the Los Roques National Park? if yes, how they have been modified?
5. Have any of the other park's organisations modified their resources, duties or responsibilities in regard to the park? If yes, which are these and how they have modified their resources, duties or responsibilities?
6. Is there any new organisation intervening in the management of the park? If yes, which are these and how they are intervening?