



First Asia Parks Congress

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Sendai, Japan

National System of Conservation Areas:

An overview to the Costa Rican protected areas' governance model and some of the main gathered lessons to date

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Costa Rica in the world

- **Located in the Americas:**
 - **In the Central American Isthmus**





© Nations Online Project

- ★ Capital City
- Mayor City
- National Border

Lambert Conformal Conic Projection,
standard parallels 9°N and 17°N

0 100 200 300 Kilometers
0 100 200 300 Miles

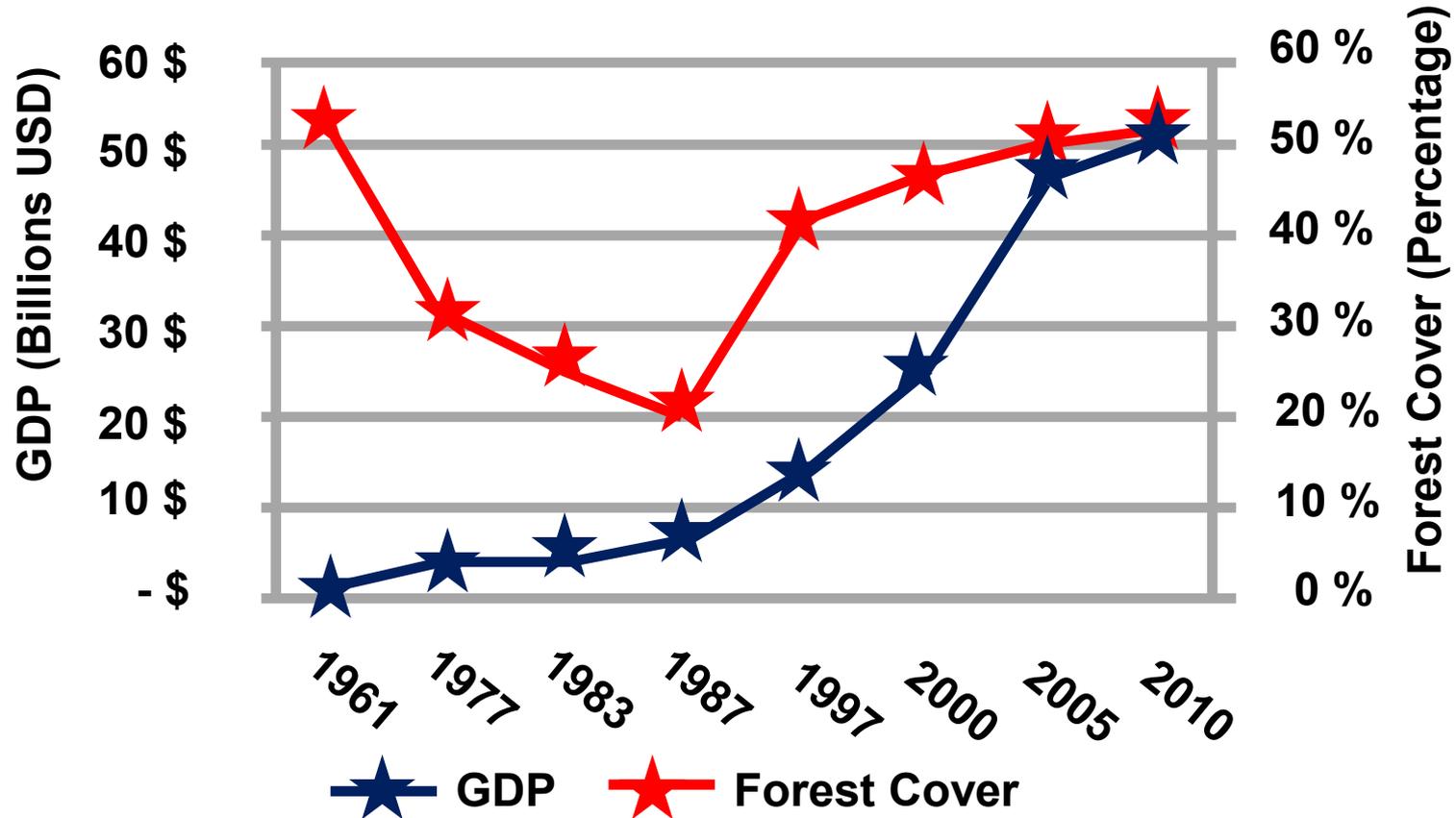
COSTA RICA

**51100 Km²
4.6 million
people**



Sustainable development: the Costa Rican model

Changes in Costa Rican Forest Cover and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (1961 – 2010)

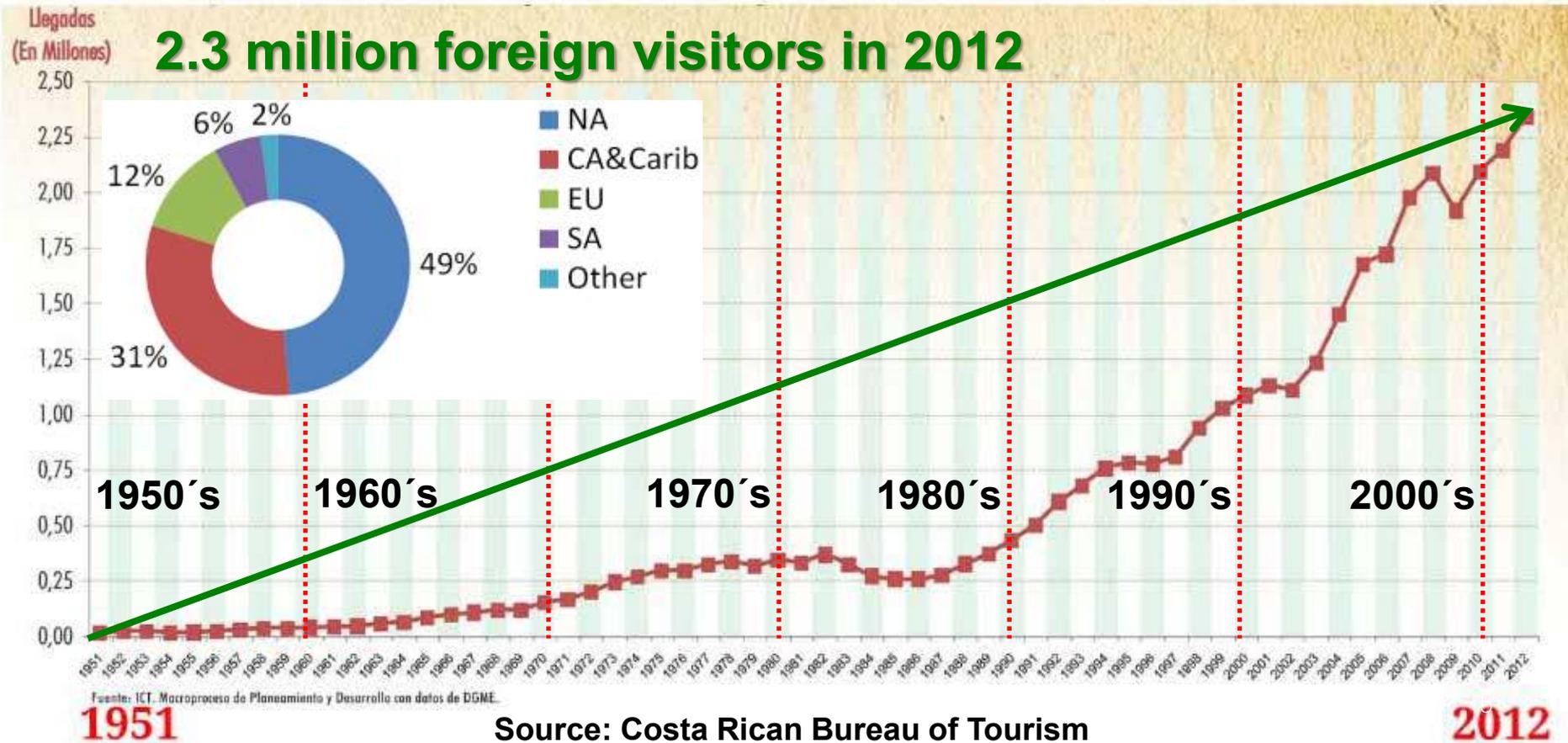


Source: Index Mundi, Nation Master; G. Aguilar, FONAFIFO-MINAE 2011

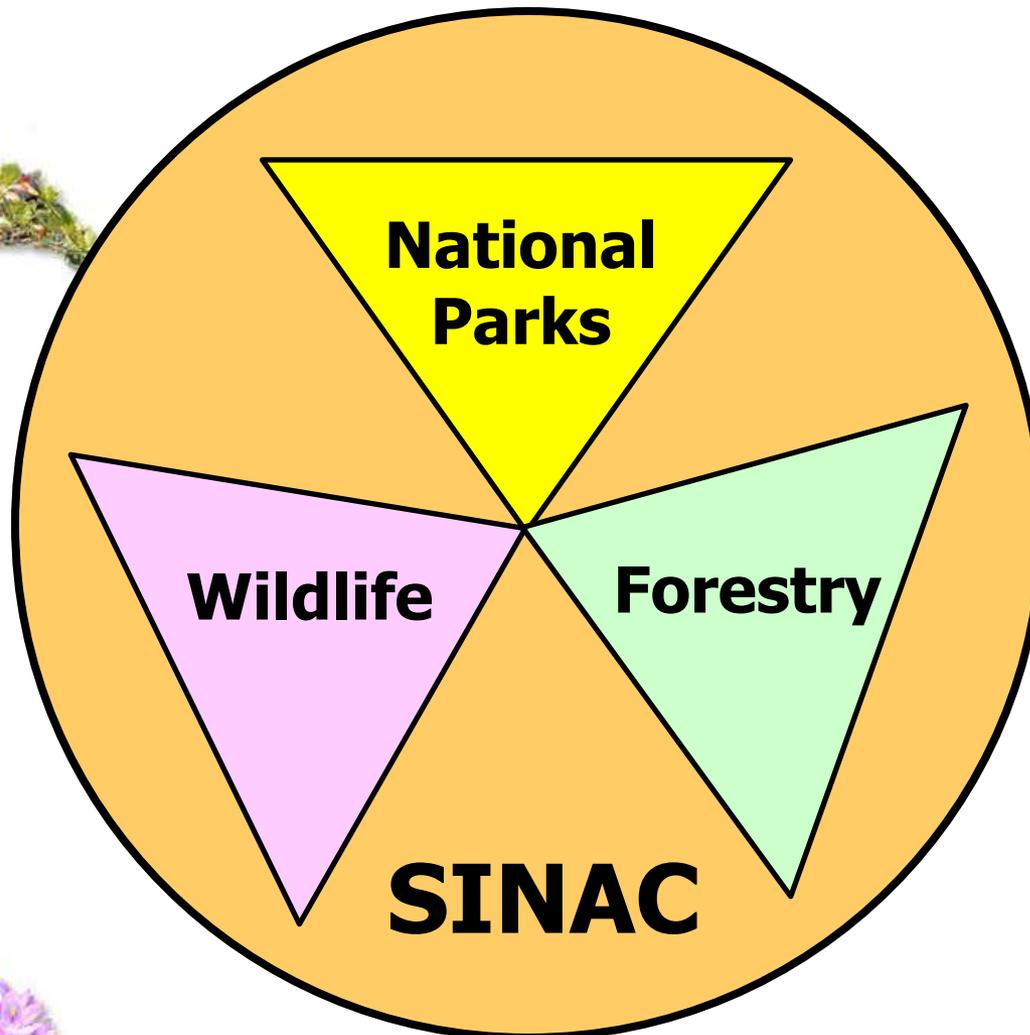


Sustainable development: the Costa Rican model

Annual Tourist arrivals to Costa Rica: 1951 – 2012 (Millions)



The origins of SINAC: unification of agendas



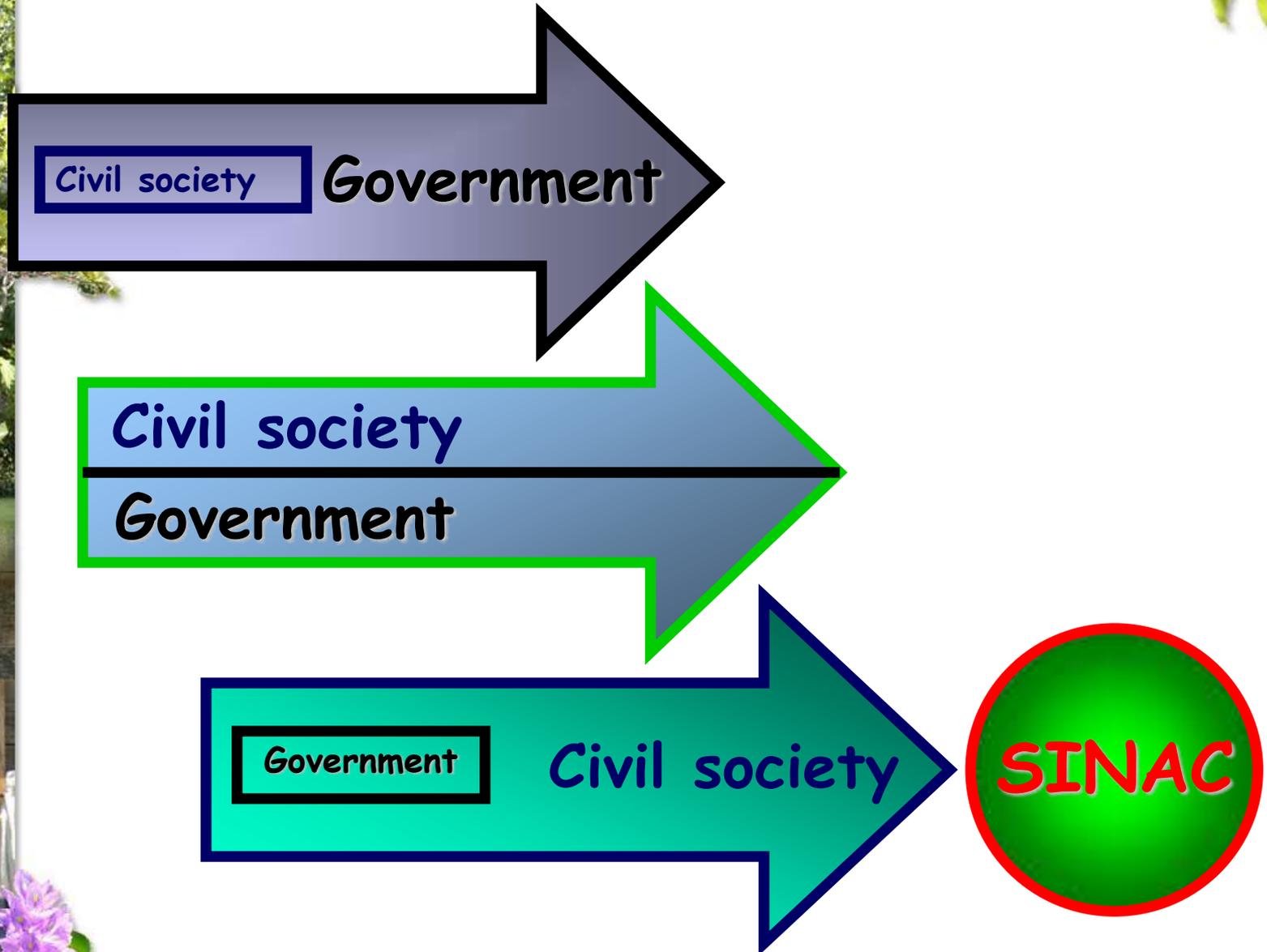
**In 1995, after
three decades
of conservation
efforts...**

**... Costa Rica
decided to
merge...**

**... the *National
Parks, Wildlife
and Forestry
Services*...**

**... into a unique
institution
(system)**

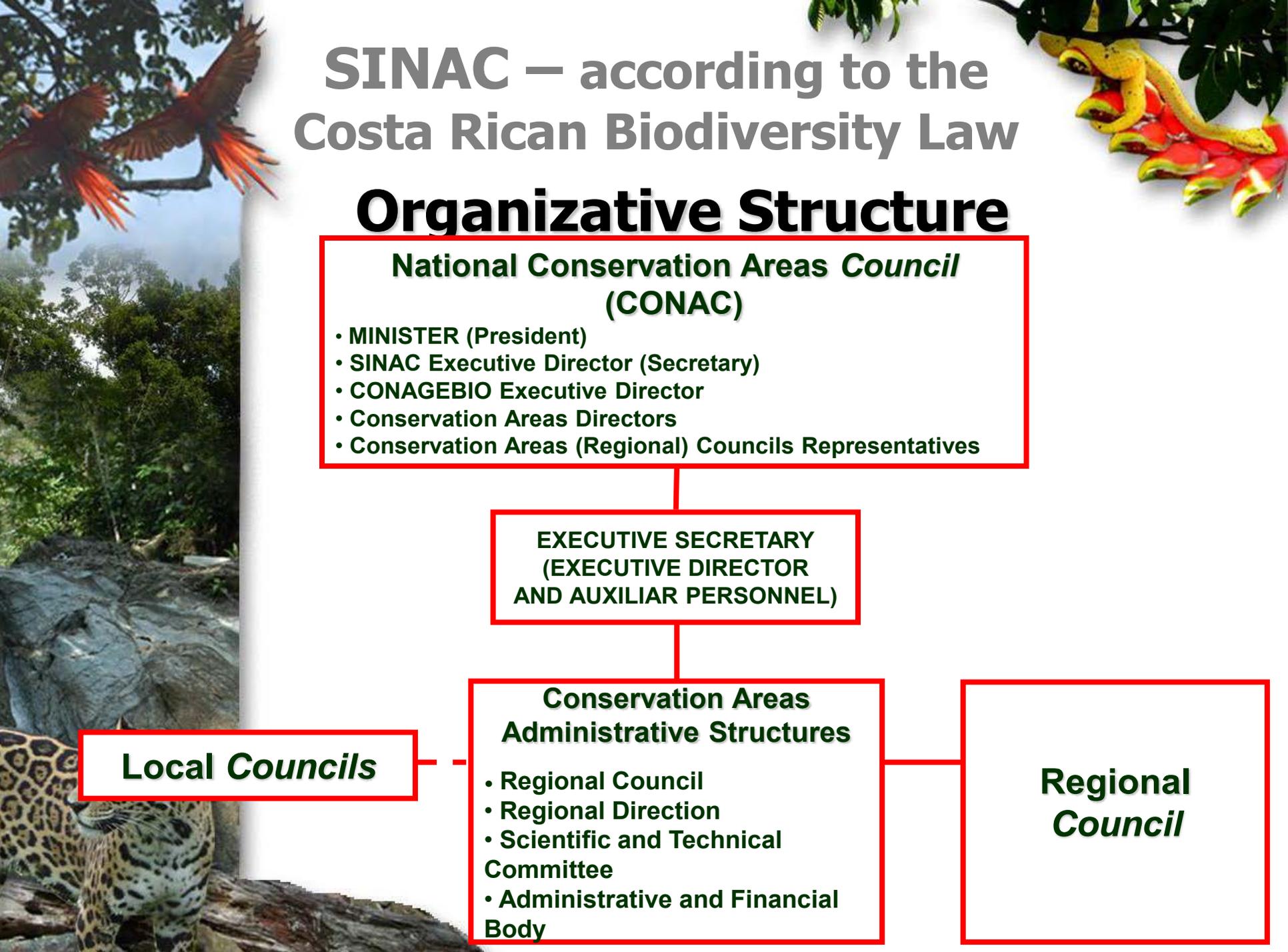
Evolutionary *process* of SINAC: deconcentration and participation



SINAC – according to the Costa Rican Biodiversity Law

- SINAC is *two different things* at the same time:
 - An **institution** (within the Ministry of Environment and Energy)
 - A **territorial array** (system) for biodiversity conservation





SINAC – according to the Costa Rican Biodiversity Law

Organizative Structure

National Conservation Areas Council (CONAC)

- MINISTER (President)
- SINAC Executive Director (Secretary)
- CONAGEBIO Executive Director
- Conservation Areas Directors
- Conservation Areas (Regional) Councils Representatives

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
(EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AND AUXILIAR PERSONNEL)

Conservation Areas Administrative Structures

- Regional Council
- Regional Direction
- Scientific and Technical Committee
- Administrative and Financial Body

Local Councils

Regional Council



What is a *conservation area*?

It is a *territorial unit* ...

- **with administrative limits,**
- **ruled by a single development strategy and management policy.**

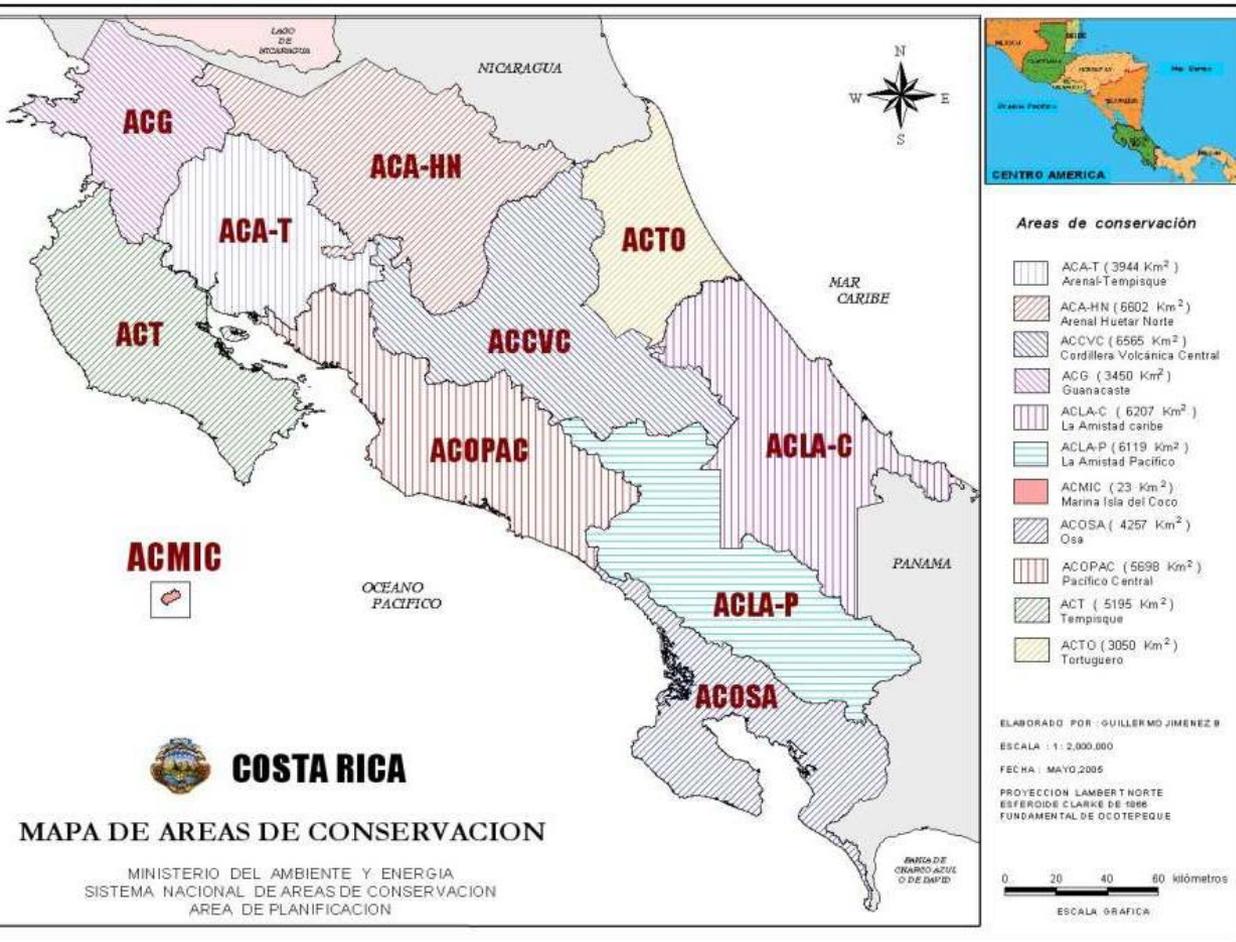
On it, both *public* and *private* conservation activities interact at the landscape level.

It includes...

- **protected areas,**
- **private farmlands and forests,**
- **villages and cities.**

SINAC – according to the Costa Rican Biodiversity Law

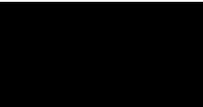
11 Conservation Areas, 169 protected areas, 37 proposed biological corridors...





Costa Rican protected areas management categories

IUCN (international) equivalent categories

Biological Reserve
National Park
 <i>Refuge</i> **
Wetland **
Marine Reserve
Protector Zone **
Forestry Reserve **
Managed Marine Area

I A
II
IV
IV
IV
VI
VI
VI

**** *People can live in there***

Protected areas management categories in Costa Rica



Governance: from vertical to horizontal decision-making

- *National and Regional Councils* have made SINAC *closer* to local stakeholders: communities, local governments, NGOs, private entrepreneurs...



- These councils are to decide on institutional budget and policies, also approving strategies, plans and so on.



Governance: from vertical to horizontal decision-making

- *Local Councils* can be created by the *Regional Councils* for...
 - ... watersheds management purposes,...
 - ... protected areas management,...
 - ... biological corridors management, etc.



Participatory management of Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge

(Tortuguero Conservation Area, ACTo)



Figura 2
Área de Conservación Tortuguero
 Plan de Manejo P. N. Tortuguero

Simbología

- Carreteras principales
- Poblados principales
- ACTo**
- P. N. TORTUGUERO
- P. N. TORTUGUERO (AREA MARINA)
- Z. P. TORTUGUERO
- Z. P. ACUIFEROS GUACIMO Y POCOCI
- HUMEDAL NACIONAL CARIARI
- R. V. S. ARCHIE CARR
- R. V. S. BARRA DEL COLORADO
- CORREDOR FRONTERIZO
- NO PROTEGIDO
- Otras ASP y Areas de Conservación

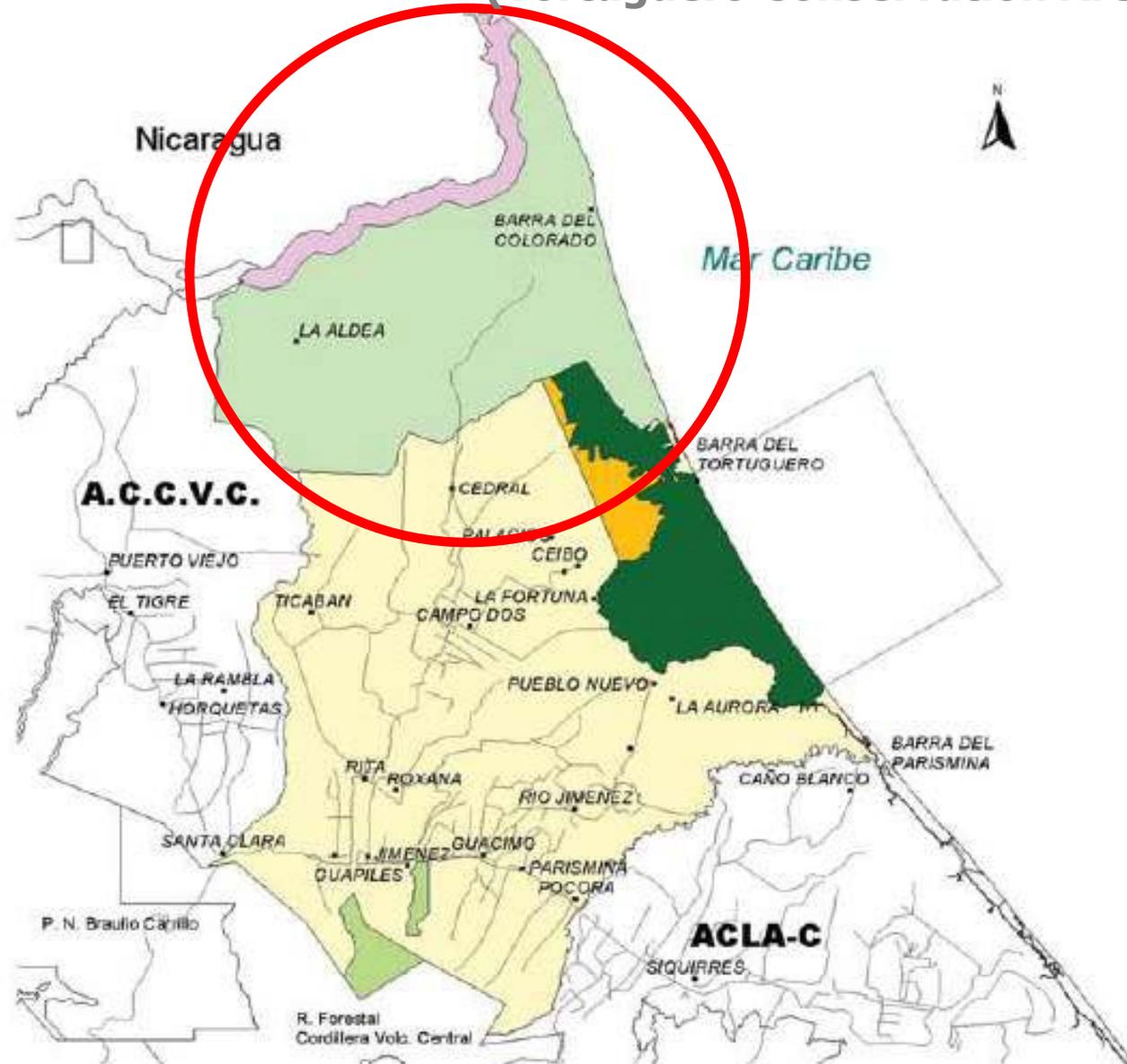


Ubicación del Parque Nacional Tortuguero en Costa Rica



Elaborado por: Miguel Ballesteros
 Fuente: Definición del límite a partir de interpretación de los decretos de creación.
 Datos digitales de Areas Silvestres Protegidas y Corredores Biológicos del

Fecha: Marzo, 2003
 Proyección: Lambert Norte para Costa Rica
 Financiado por: Proyecto COBODE



Participatory management of Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge

(Tortuguero Conservation Area, ACTo)



But! What is participatory management?

Local actors



Make some decisions



Conservation objectives



Project Results



1. The officials of ACTo are able to implement actions of environmental education in the Refuge.

Objectives verifiable



Material Manual Plan

Environmental education activities with local people.



2. The officials of ACTo have to facilitate the producers to benefits and service of the biodiversity in a sustainable form.

Objectives verifiable



Producers Manual satisfied.

**Training in integrated farms.
Supplementary training workshops.
Monitoring visits.**



Project Results

3. Improve the system of collaborative work between officials of ACTo, the inhabitants and related institutions for the participatory management.

Objectives verifiable



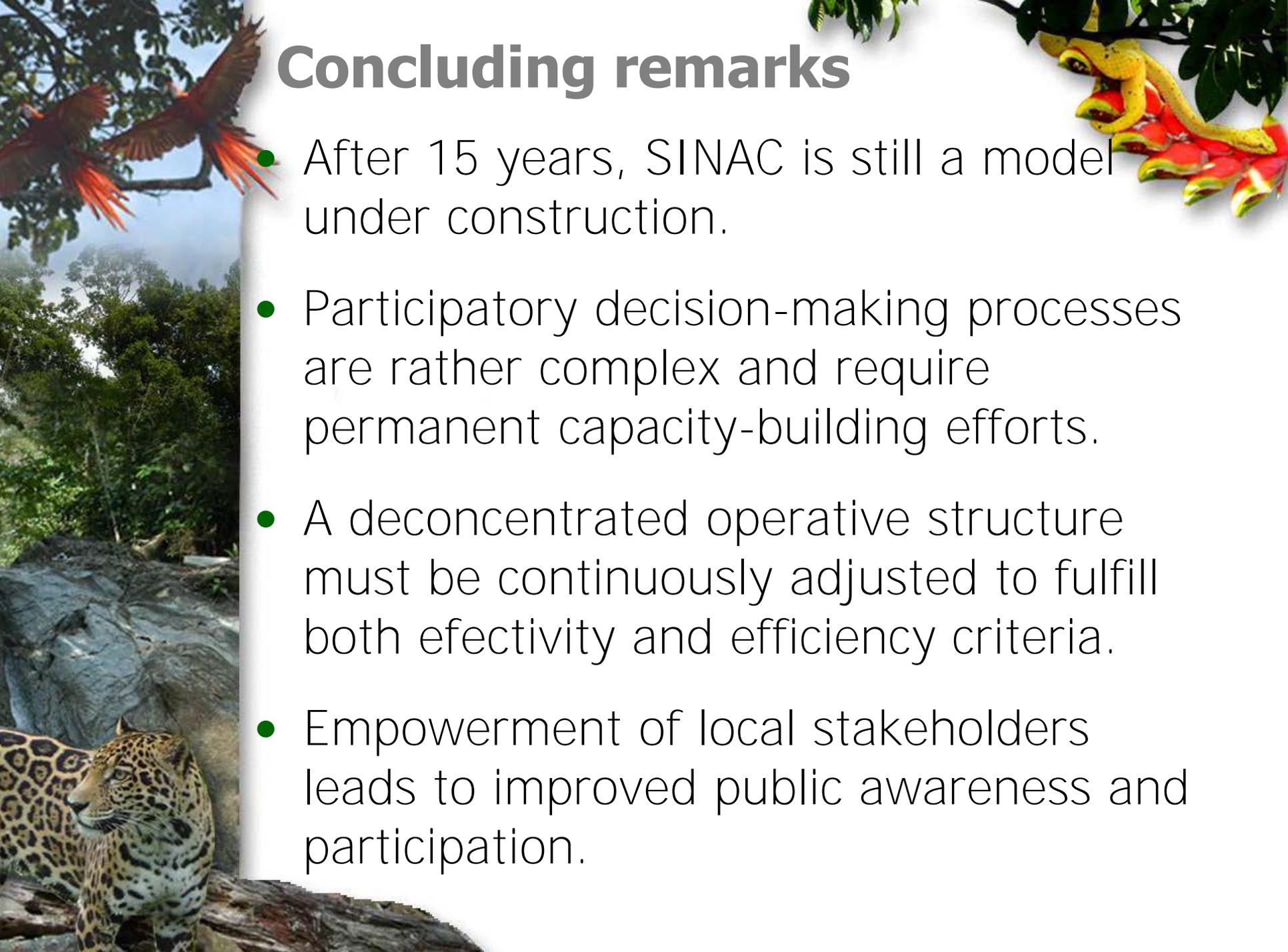
Local actor
Collaborative.



manuals

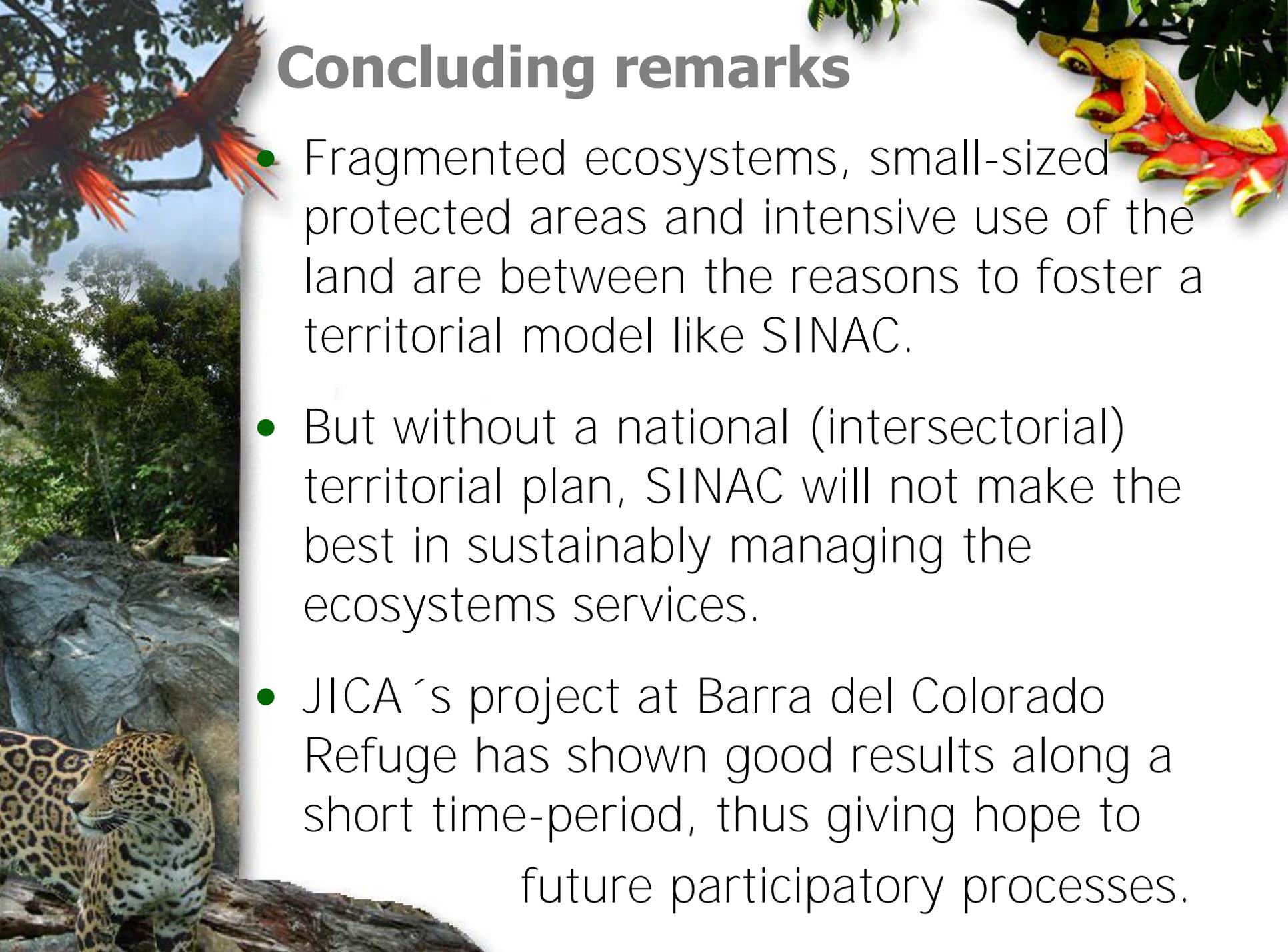
Manuals of Local council , participatory monitoring and environmental monitoring.
Work together with local stakeholders.





Concluding remarks

- After 15 years, SINAC is still a model under construction.
- Participatory decision-making processes are rather complex and require permanent capacity-building efforts.
- A deconcentrated operative structure must be continuously adjusted to fulfill both effectiveness and efficiency criteria.
- Empowerment of local stakeholders leads to improved public awareness and participation.



Concluding remarks

- Fragmented ecosystems, small-sized protected areas and intensive use of the land are between the reasons to foster a territorial model like SINAC.
- But without a national (intersectorial) territorial plan, SINAC will not make the best in sustainably managing the ecosystems services.
- JICA´s project at Barra del Colorado Refuge has shown good results along a short time-period, thus giving hope to future participatory processes.

Thank you so much...



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