

Case of the Island of COZUMEL: A World Example in Tourism Sustainability



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Sustainable Tourism
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Island of Cozumel

- The Island of Cozumel is a leading destination in the implementation of actions to advance toward sustainable tourism development.
- Hence the interest of various international organisations in working in Cozumel as a test site (WTO, UNESCO, ACS, etc.).
- At present, approximately 90% of the coast and a little more than 50% of the land area in Cozumel are Protected Natural Areas.



DESTINATION PROFILE

COUNTRY: Mexico

DESTINATION: Cozumel



LOCATION

POPULATION

Geographical placement	Inland/ Coastal	Distance from Capital/Town Km	Flight time from: (Hours)	Number of inhabitants	Inhabitants density (km ²)	Ratio of residents to visitors
<p>Mexico: 14.6°N - 32.5°N, 86.8°W - 117.0°W</p> <p>Cozumel: 20.3°N - 20.7°N, 86.7°W - 87.1°W</p>	Cozumel is a coral island and is Mexico's only Caribbean island.	<p>Cozumel: is 20km of the southern coast of the Yucatán Peninsula and is 71km south of Cancún.</p> <p>San Miguel de Cozumel is the only town on the island.</p>	<p>Cozumel:</p> <p>10 minutes from Playa del Carmen.</p> <p>20 minutes from Cancún</p> <p>2 hours from Mexico City</p> <p>2 hours 20 minutes from Houston</p> <p>4 ½ hours from Miami (flying time)</p> <p>6 hrs 10 minutes from Newark(flying time)</p> <p>12 ½ hours from London (flying time).</p>	<p>Mexico: 106.2 million</p> <p>Cozumel: ~80,000 inhabitants</p>	<p>Mexico: 53 persons per sq km.</p> <p>Cozumel: 107.8 persons per km².</p>	<p>Mexico: 1 visitor for 5 residents.</p> <p>Cozumel: 37 visitors for every resident (including cruise visitors).</p>

CLIMATE

GEOGRAPHY

Wind (Period of year/ average speed)	Precipitation (Wet Season/ average in mm)	Temperature (Daily/ Night, min/max: per season)	Area km ²	Geographic features (Rivers, Hills, Bays...)	Physical Characteristics
<p>Hurricane season for the Yucatán is from June to October.</p> <p>The average wind speed per year is 14km/hour.</p>	<p>The rainy season runs from May to October and is characterized by late afternoon tropical showers.</p> <p>September and October have ~250mm/mth. March-August and October-January 120-175mm/mth. February-April <75mm/mth.</p>	<p>Cozumel has an average temperature of 27°C. July and August 32°C, December and January 24°C.</p> <p>Cancún receives 250+ days of sunshine each year.</p>	<p>Cozumel: 53km by 14km = 742 km².</p>	<p>Almost the entire state of Quintana Roo is flat with an average altitude of no more than 10 meters.</p> <p>Cozumel is a flat island</p>	<p>Cozumel's natural environment is characterized by sub-tropical vegetation with low growth jungle with remarkable biodiversity.</p>

A C C E S S I B I L I T Y			
Distance from Int./ local airport	Air carriers	Cruisers	Public / private transport
<p>Cozumel: airport is 2.2km north of the town.</p> <p>Cancún airport is 71 km.</p> <p>There are some direct flights from the US but European flights are usually routed via the US or Mexico.</p>	<p>To Cozumel: (including Continental Airlines (Newark and Houston). Mexicana (Mexico City).</p> <p>Aeromexico fly to Cancún and Chihuahua Itzamal</p>	<p>Cozumel: the ferry port is in San Miguel de Cozumel. Passenger ferries fun from Playa del Carmen (30-45 min) and vehicle ferries from Puerto Morelos (2 ½-4 hours).</p> <p>Daily cruises arrive from Miami and Cancún.</p> <p>In 2013, Cozumel was the port that received more cruise visitors: 2,753,608.</p> <p>Cruise companies include Carnival, Celebrity Cruises, Norwegian Cruise Line, Oceania Cruises, P&O Cruises, Royal Caribbean International.</p>	<p>Cozumel: it is possible to rent a bicycle, moped or car to see the sites on the island. There are also taxis.</p> <p>There is no bus service on Cozumel.</p>

T O U R I S T				
Annual arrival	Annual arrival by type of transport	Annual arrival by Market (% total)	Annual tourist expenditure	Population employed in tourism (%)
<p>Mexico: 23.7 million visitors (2013).</p> <p>Cozumel: 368,589 (2004) but 2.8million cruise visitors.</p>	<p>Mexico: 15.7 million tourists arrived by plane (2013).</p> <p>3.8 million visitors arrived by ship. (2013)</p> <p>Cozumel: 183,920 international arrivals by air</p>	<p>Cancún/Cozumel: US 57.5%, Canada 3%, UK 5.1%, Other Europe 4.2%, Argentina 1.7%, Brazil 0.7%, Other South America 1.0%, Caribbean 0.2%, Rest of the World 26.7%.</p>	<p>Tourism is the third most important economic activity in Mexico (8.4% of GDP): US\$13.8 billion in 2013. Tourism represents ~70% of Quintana Roo's GDP.</p> <p>Cozumel Total tourism expenditure was US\$349.8 million (2000).</p>	<p>Mexico: 3.1 million people employed in tourism. (2013)</p> <p>Cozumel:</p>

A C C O M M O D A T I O N		
Numbers of Hotels and Rooms	Other types (villas guest houses, apartments...)	Number of restaurants and types
<p>Mexico: Hotels 9,184, Rooms 660,000 (2013).</p> <p>Cozumel: The big luxury resort hotels are several km south of the town.</p> <p>4555 rooms (2014)</p>	<p>The best camping spot is at Playa Bonita on the east coast of the island.</p>	

Sustainability exercises and actions carried out in Cozumel

1. Project for the Development and Implementation of Sustainability Indicators for the Greater Caribbean - COZUMEL as a pilot destination of Mexico (ACS)

2. Sustainable Tourism Development Plan of the Island of Cozumel (PETSIC) 2014 – 2034 (UNESCO)

1. AGENDA 21

2. Municipal Climate Action Plan (PACMUN)

1. Comprehensive Plan for Sustainable Urban Tourist Mobility

1. Project for the Development and Implementation of Sustainability Indicators for the Greater Caribbean - COZUMEL as a pilot destination of Mexico (ACS)

- Cooperation actions of the Mexican Tourism Secretariat in supporting the Sustainability Indicator Systems (SIS).
- Implemented via the ACS through its participation in the Group of Experts on Sustainable Tourism Indicators and the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism.
- Mexico: a reference in the activities developed by the SIS, especially in the area of Sustainable Tourism Development.
- Mexico's experience in the Sustainability Indicator System for Tourism, allowed for the transfer within the ACS, of practices in the design and application process in tourist destinations, resulting in the incorporation of a System of Indicators that is currently being used in the ACS
- The 4th Meeting of the Group of Experts on Sustainable Tourism Indicators (La Paz, Baja California Sur, September 2006) under the auspices of the Mexican Government, commenced the process for selecting the destinations to be incorporated into the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean (STZC).

- **Objective of the Project for the Development and Implementation of Sustainability Indicators for the Greater Caribbean:** create a quantification system to evaluate the level of inclusion of destinations in an STZC, which could be used throughout the zone by defining standardised criteria for inclusion applicable to a variety of tourist destinations in the region.
- **Phase I (pilot) (concluded in June 2006).** The following destinations were evaluated: the City of Roseau, Dominica; Ocho Ríos, Jamaica; Cozumel, Mexico; Portobelo, Panama; and Bayahibe, Dominican Republic.
- **Phase II (August 2007 - March 2008):** implemented in Verte Vallée and Saint-Francois, Guadeloupe; La Caravelle and Sainte Anne, Martinique; Buccoo Reef, Trinidad and Tobago; Richmond/Lashum Site, St. Vincent and the Grenadines; and Awala-Yalimapo, French Guiana.
- **Phase III:** seeks to implement the Regional Cooperation Mechanism (RCM) as a component of the STZC.

Analysis of Gaps in the Generic Indicators

	Cozumel	Action necessary to obtain information	Timeframe for obtaining information
Generic Indicators			
Natural and Cultural Patrimony Dimension			
Existence of a policy or strategy to promote sustainable tourism	S		
A social tax on tourism	N		
Existence of long-term integrated plans that establish acceptable concentrations of tourist facilities	S		
Percentage of tourist facilities that conducted the Environmental Impact Assessment prior to their development, if required as such by the rules	>90%	Conduct surveys on establishments. Gather official statistics	3 months
Percentage of tourist facilities with active environmental management plans	30-60%	Conduct surveys on establishments.	3 months
Percentage of tourist establishments that meet the energy consumption requirements (QTC 104:2001)	D	Conduct surveys on establishments.	3 months

Results of Phase I

- The quantification and parameterisation system developed for this project was successfully implemented and yielded clear results.
- The section on generic and specific indicators in the pilot study form, was well completed in general, having only two indicators for which no destination could provide the information requested:

Indicator 76. Percentage of the local population that has received training in any area of the tourism industry.

Indicator 82. Average percentage of tourist products produced in the destination.

Results of Phase I

- Evaluate a minimum of 15 destinations in different Member States.
- Active participation by more destinations in this early stage of development, which will encourage Member States to commit to the STZC, thereby accelerating the adoption of sustainable tourism practices in the region.
- The development of a Strategic Plan or Master Plan for the STZC, which would provide a structural work framework for the development, management, financing and monitoring of the STZC.

2. Sustainable Tourism Development Plan of the Island of Cozumel (PETSIC) 2014 – 2034

- Cooperation among the District Council of Cozumel, the Government of the State of Quintana Roo, the Federal Tourism Secretariat (SECTUR), the Mexican Council for Tourism Promotion (CPTM) and the UNESCO Office in Mexico.
- **Objective:** Have the network of stakeholders contribute collectively to the change in tourism activity on the Island of Cozumel, its documentation in a plan and its management model.
- **Vision:** *The Island of Cozumel will be a sustainable tourism leader in the Mexican Caribbean and in the Mayan World by 2034, with participation and shared responsibility by its population, in an equitable and inclusive manner.*
- Participating in the PETSIC 2014 - 2034 are more than 60 institutional actors and players from the organised civil society, with two collaboration agreements being signed. Has 85 projects.
- The PETSIC includes matters related to environmental, economic and social-cultural sustainability.
- Methodology: interpretative and qualitative research among the players involved in tourism management, delving deeply into the documentary and quantitative aspects, so that the reality documented could be understood objectively.
- The challenges facing the change in the “Isla Cozumel” tourism product have been identified, as well as alternatives related to the process, through a tool to identify problems, their causes and consequences, in addition to the evaluation of other solutions.

3. Agenda 21

- Programme that serves as an example of civic participation in the area of sustainable tourism.
- In 2011, it was agreed that Strategic Participatory Planning efforts would be carried out in Cozumel (Local Agenda 21) with a comprehensive vision and extensive civic participation, emphasising aspects of climate change and sustainable tourism.
- The future vision of the Island according to the citizens was revealed, the problems of the Island were identified and prioritised and solutions and several ideas for projects to resolve such problems were defined.
- The Municipal Government of Cozumel used the results of this civic consultation as the foundation for its Government Plan.
- The joint and concerted commitment to these management efforts involves as a priority, two areas of global interest: sustainable tourism and climate change. In that regard, the PETSIC 2014 – 2034 was prepared, as well as the Municipal Climate Action Plan (PACMUN).

4. Municipal Climate Action Plan (PACMUN)

- Pilot climate action programme implemented with support from the Embassy of Great Britain in Mexico.
- First exercise in Quintana Roo related to climate action at the municipal level.
- PACMUN is among the actions implemented by the District Council of Cozumel between 2011 and 2013, geared toward transforming the Municipality into a model of sustainable tourism development.
- **Overall Objective:** Incorporate, coordinate and promote public policies in the Municipality of Cozumel to reduce the environmental, social and economic risks brought about by climate change, promoting the well being of the population through adaptation, reduction of emissions and greenhouse gas capture (GGC).
- Creation of the environmental policy on climate change of the Island of Cozumel, with future development aimed at sustainability.



5. Comprehensive Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan for Cozumel

- The project covers the periods 2011-2013, 2013-2016 and 2016-2019.
- It arose out of the need to address the problems generated by the uncontrolled growth of the urban area.
- The Comprehensive Sustainable Mobility strategy is offered as a means for resolving some of the negative aspects that affect the tourism dynamic in Cozumel.
- ✓ Facilitate access to the natural assets of the island and its cultural attractions
- ✓ Provide conditions for easy mobility in the city for tourists and residents
- ✓ Improve the image and quality of urban life in Cozumel
- ✓ Restructure the public transport services in the city
- ✓ Improve vehicular traffic in the city of San Miguel de Cozumel
- ✓ Modernise the regulatory and institutional framework, making it consistent with the island reality, based on its operating systems

Actions included in Phase I of Implementation

Based on these guidelines, the following actions have been defined (Phase I of the Implementation of the Plan):

1. Creation of a Tourist Bus service around the Island.- efficient group transport services.

1. Implementation of a network of bicycle lanes.- easy mobility in the city for tourists and residents.

1. Restructuring of public group transport routes.- cover areas that remain untouched; modernisation of urban transport services.

1. Change in traffic priority.- make the movement of flows more dynamic through the road infrastructure on the Island.

2. Extension of the Pedro Joaquín Coldwell Ave.

3. Creation of the Traffic and Transport Department.

Actions included in Phase I of Implementation

Participation by the resident population

- ✓ Create awareness of the importance of tourism as the primary economic base of the Island.
- ✓ Promote cultural changes among the resident population so as to generate a genuine social environment that would attract the tourist.
- ✓ Facilitate closer relations between residents and tourists.



COZUMEL
HONORABLE AYUNTAMIENTO 2008 - 2011
Un Municipio para todos



THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

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