

Innovative tools for encouraging tourism sustainable development in Mexico. Case study: Litibu, State of Nayarit

Tools for fostering tourism sustainable development have evolved during a lifespan of 35 years in Mexico. There have been noted two strategic tendencies that planning agency FONATUR has implemented. New components of the planning process such as public participation and local initiatives as well as public environmental concern have modified the previous vision. The new vision is intended to be more sustainable.

Since the 1970's tourism sustainable development on the coasts of Mexico has been supported by FONATUR (National Trust Fund for Tourist Development), which collaborates closely with the Ministry of Tourism. During the 1970's and 1980's FONATUR focused solely on one type of strategy: tourism promotion on regions that lacked important settlements, showed characteristics of severe poverty, abandonment and were in great need of major economic activities.

Thereafter FONATUR has developed five CIP's (Integral Planned Resorts) namely Cancun, Los Cabos, Ixtapa, Huatulco and Loreto. In these regions, FONATUR has become main facilitator of the development process. FONATUR has participated in a variety of actions that comprise fund raising, acquisition of land, site development design and construction of infrastructure, promotion of urbanised plots of land and recovery of funds to settle the debt. Whilst it has supported local government, it has also supervised and subsidised private investment.

Nevertheless in the beginning of the XXI century, FONATUR has bet on a new strategy for tourism promotion. This time the attention has turned to the state of Nayarit, west coast of Mexico, and north of Puerto Vallarta. In this project, FONATUR intends to take a cautious, secondary -perhaps conservative- role in the development process.

The goals have not changed nonetheless investment and risks have been diminished. FONATUR still supports local authorities, though it focuses on punctual sites and actions. FONATUR invests on urban works; however main infrastructural premises already serve on the site. FONATUR has developed a tourism golf cluster called Litibu which integrates itself with a marketing image as a new competitor in an existing market. More rigid environmental limitations and the voice of local groups, reduce the spacious room FONATUR once had for tourism development on Mexican coasts.

Key words

CIP (Integral Planned Resort)

Questions

To what extent the tourism development process on the coast of the State of Nayarit can be called sustainable development? What has been the typical manner to encourage tourism sustainable development on the coasts of Mexico for the past 30 years? What is new in the approach of Nayarit case study? Does the Nayarit case study implements innovative tools to encounter sustainable development? To what extent does the case study encounters sustainable development? Why?

Objective

The objective of this paper is to find answers to the questions arisen above. This paper will give an introduction of sustainable development and its meaning in the site. It will talk about the way the vision implemented in the State of Nayarit, follows a strategic sustainable tourism development process. This study will explain the approach, planning agency FONATUR, has had towards encouraging this process and the tools it has developed under a new scenario with active public participation and local initiatives. It will cover how the vision for the promotion of sustainable development in the State of Nayarit, works towards strategic focused actions. It will discuss the manner to integrate several actors and the reasons the strategy follows this direction.

Introduction

Nowadays the introduction of tourism in any region has been widely recognised for its contribution to the activation of economy, the expansion of employment and the reduction of poverty (Esteve and Fuentes, 2000). Tourism, especially in decaying regions, has been used as a strategic tool for fostering development. Generally speaking, local economic processes become activated by the arrival of tourists in any place. The extent to which a development process can be said to be sustainable stems from a range of social, economic, environmental and administrative factors. However this paper will draw on two approaches that are most relevant to the discussion in the kind of development this paper will talk about.

The definition given by the Brundtland Report 1987 (UN Commission on Environment and Development, 1987) states that sustainable development is "*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*". This definition may be interpreted in two levels.

On one hand, environmentally speaking, if the development process uses non-renewable resources, careful attention must be paid in order not to deplete them and preserve them in the long term. Massive sun and beach tourism development in Mexico uses as a complementary attraction non-renewable resources such as natural diversity and landscape beauty of sites. If this kind of massive tourism development imposes a negative impact on the environment, careful attention to natural resources and the environment must be paid to keep non-renewable resources as assets in the long term.

In order to free from compromise non-renewable resources for future generations needs, there is only one possibility. Non-renewable natural resources must be left untouched as a reserve. In terms of natural renewable resources utilised in the development process, it can be acceptable to use them whenever their usage generates a positive outcome or leaves a positive balance between usage and renovation of resources.

On the other hand, this paper will talk about sustainability in the administrative process of the tourism sites. The strategy to develop ex-novo massive sun and beach tourism resorts implies high economic and human investment as well as large extensions of land. In the beginning the resorts may rely heavily on the agency that has created them. However, as the development process progress, the degree of dependency on the agency should be decreased as well as the resources invested in launching the site.

In order to meet the administrative sustainability criteria, it would be desirable that these costly massive tourism resorts developed on uninhabited coasts, could become self-managed and self-controlled as early as possible. The process and the outcomes in a 30-year lifespan experience show to what extent some of these tourism resorts, have become self-sustainable in terms of finding their independence and autonomy from the planning agency that has created them.

Tourism sustainable development in Mexico

In a non-planned manner, massive tourism on Mexican beaches evolved from being a secondary activity in the most important national ports. Acapulco, Veracruz, Manzanillo, Puerto Vallarta and Mazatlan started to receive visitors not only for business purposes but also for relaxation and well-being (FONATUR, 2006a). Deterioration of the natural resources and the landscape came when the arrival of a massive influx of tourists, exceeded the capacity of the scarce infrastructure for tourism purposes. As a reaction to this kind of un-controlled tourism growth, the Ministry of Tourism has elaborated a strategy to encourage massive tourism sustainable development on Mexican beaches. The intention has been to guarantee a balance between demand and resources, premises and natural environment.

Since the 1970's, planned tourism development on Mexican coasts has been encouraged by planning agency, FONATUR (National Trust Fund for Tourist Development). FONATUR collaborates closely with the Ministry of Tourism. During the 1970's and 1980's FONATUR focused solely on one type of strategy: tourism promotion on regions that lacked important settlements, showed characteristics of severe poverty, abandonment and were in great need of major economic activities.

In this order of ideas, FONATUR has developed five resorts. FONATUR used a strategy for encouraging economic development in regions that lacked major economic activities, large human settlements and infrastructure though their natural beauty, size and location promised to allocate a large influx of national and international tourists.

In the beginning, FONATUR had received economic support from development organisations such as the World Bank Group and the Inter-American Development Bank. Lately, the role has turned to national development banks to support FONATUR programmes. Also other international organisations such as the Trust for Sustainable Development in Canada have become interested in participating in development programmes in Mexico.

FONATUR had focused on the promotion of tourism on five regions along the coastlines. A wide range of considerations in the physical, social, heritage and economic fields were taken into account for site-selection all over the country. For instance, physical considerations that have been evaluated have been the habitability of the place comprising the provision of drinking water and the longest period of good weather conditions throughout the year (FONATUR, 1982).

In terms of social considerations, FONATUR found that Mexican beaches have traditionally been the most popular places for recreational purposes for foreigners as well as locals.

In terms of heritage, FONATUR encountered a choice of natural and cultural sites. Natural assets in the form of reservoirs and places of outstanding natural beauty

were catalogued as tourist attractions. Archaeological sites and Vice royal buildings or squares were catalogued as cultural heritage. Both natural and cultural attractions could complement sun and water activities and consequently might support the tourism activity by extending the duration of the stay in the resort and the region.

FONATUR focused on five sites namely Cancun, Los Cabos, Ixtapa, Huatulco and Loreto which had been chosen for meeting the above considerations. These sites called CIPs - Integral Planned Resorts - have been developed to a considerable extent, as a laboratory exercise based on probability and statistics. The next figure shows location of the five spots that have been developed by FONATUR.



**Location of CIP's in Mexico
(FONATUR, 2005a)**

The methodology FONATUR has used for encouraging tourism development relies on previous physical, geographical, economic and social in-site studies. Though there were no records or parameters to interpret these entire variables to measure success.

For the development of CIPs, FONATUR chose places that lacked of important settlements, or in other words it focused on greenfield land. Thereafter CIP's have been designed by FONATUR from their very beginning tracing on a blank sheet according to a master plan, previous studies and certain expectations.

The CIP's master plans work in accordance to the National Development Plan and the corresponding regional and local plans. FONATUR planning methodology is based to a greater extent on a master zoning plan which determines landuses and densities; also other documents such as design guidelines have become statutory on the site. In other words, FONATUR has been able to set its own design parameters

and standards in master plans. It has elaborated design guidelines to complement the zoning system.

FONATUR has developed codes and regulations implementing concepts from international planning experience. Innovative trends as well as the latest technology in the construction field have been used to develop the CIP's. Thereafter infrastructure and services that have been introduced in these regions have been highly efficient and cost-effective.

FONATUR need not to deal with issues in consolidated cities, such as ancient rights of property and rights of way. Moreover, FONATUR had left aside matters linked to previous development, such as old buildings and infrastructure to restore and maintain, or a definite urban grain and context to preserve.

Despite variations, overall it is apparent that from the economic viewpoint, FONATUR has made remarkable progress in kick-starting development in these regions. It seems that tourism has provoked a virtuous circle of benefits for local population and economy. Some may say that even CIP's have reversed the migration pattern. Nowadays more people tend to move to some of these places, than out of them.

Two CIP's, Cancun and Los Cabos have had steady and successful economic and social growth; the others, Ixtapa, Loreto and Huatulco have not had the same fate. In the latter CIP's, this could have been the result from not taking into consideration the existing population with its organisation and dynamics. The following chart shows general features of five CIP's.

Concept	Cancun	Ixtapa	Los Cabos	Loreto	Huatulco
Area (Ha)	12,700	2,016	990	9,970	20,975
Urbanised area (Ha)	3,643	799	328	345	1,915
Rooms (April 2005)	27,193	3,8272	5,835	720	2,063
Inhabitants (2000)	419,815	95,548	105,469	11,812	28,327
Direct employment opportunities (2000)	32,178	9,231	7,793	771	1,390
Indirect employment opportunities (2000)	88,810	10,893	15,430	1,790	3,780

**General features of CIP's
(FONATUR, 2005b)**

In CIP's, FONATUR has worked as a catalyst of actions that may comprise fund raising, acquisition of land, design and construction of infrastructure, promotion of urbanised plots of land and finally recovery of funds to pay off the debt. FONATUR has become a facilitator of the development process, supporting on one hand, local government, and on the other, subsidising private investment. For instance, FONATUR has had powers to create or change the political limits of municipalities

and to relocate and compensate local population. FONATUR also assesses investment projects to be built in CIP's.

Consequently FONATUR has become an important figure for local government as well as for private sector. It has acquired both, great liabilities and power. In CIP's, FONATUR has taken a prime role not only in matters of city and regional planning but also in landownership and real-state market implications that raise questions about principles of subsidiarity and proportionality of authority.

A new situation – a new vision

During the last three decades in Mexico, there have emerged new relations amongst actors and institutions that work in the development process. National and international circumstances have impinged on the Mexican tourism context.

The change of FONATUR model for encouraging a more horizontal scheme responds to the decentralization of governmental powers in a four-tier manner. First, there has been a reduction of the budgetary resources. Nowadays FONATUR is not sponsored by the international development banks anymore. It works with national financial resources and more rigid credits (FONATUR, 2006a). Actually FONATUR raises funds applying for economic resources to national development banks for each project. FONATUR fund raising applications for tourism development projects are based on feasibility, economic, environmental and urban studies. FONATUR contracts a debt and commits itself to comply with mortgage repayments in time schedules.

Secondly, there has been an increasing political and economic decentralization movement raised by local governments and local groups. There have been various organisations and groups of citizens and businessmen that are participating actively in the development process in the country. Local participation has changed the top-down scheme for a bottom-up one.

Thirdly, there has been an evolution in the legal framework involving the environment. Nowadays it is compulsory the elaboration of environmental studies and EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) to encourage the balance between inputs and outputs in any development action. The authority in charge of the environment and natural resources gives an approval and conditions the way in which development can be carried out. Specifically development on the Mexican coastline has to pay careful attention to the mangroves which are the transition zone between water and solid land. These ecosystems are federal property that can not be sold out. Any kind of development is allowed to modify this ecosystem.

Lastly there has been a change of view on private property and the legal framework for human settlements. Topics such as human rights have impinged on Mexican law and regulations. Furthermore, nowadays the public is increasingly aware of their rights and assets and the methods to appeal or sue for them.

A new CIP in Nayarit

In the beginning of the XXI century, FONATUR has launched a new CIP. However, this time, FONATUR seems to take a more cautious, secondary -perhaps conservative- role in the development process.

The State of Nayarit is located on the coast of the Pacific Ocean, north of the State of Jalisco. Both States share the largest bay in Mexico called Bahía de Banderas. This bay has been recognised as one of the most dynamic tourist destinations nowadays (FONATUR, 2002). It is where the world-wide tourist resort of Puerto Vallarta lies.

Originally tourism development in Bahía de Banderas had remained in the State of Jalisco. Nevertheless lately tourism success has overburdened northwards Jalisco political limits. Social and economic characteristics of both States differ considerably. The size and the total population as well as the importance of economic activities of the State of Jalisco, far exceed those of Nayarit (INEGI, 2007). Thereafter special attention has been paid to this fragile region of the State of Nayarit that may be engulfed in a hazardous tourism development growth process that has not been prepared for.

The CIP in Nayarit comprises a tourist corridor in the Bahía de Banderas area. The Bahía de Banderas area, recognised by its enormous potential and large investment in the country, has been included in a new programme to impulse traditional tourist development zones that face sustainability issues. This programme which has been launched by FONATUR, intends to increase site competitiveness by involving local authorities and local groups.

In Bahía de Banderas, tourism development on the coast of Nayarit has encountered a traditional tourism well-established market in Puerto Vallarta. A new strategic vision of tourism development in Nayarit would be linked with the existing development creating a tourism corridor from Puerto Vallarta to San Blas. The new scheme seeks to allocate a new sector of the sun and beach market based on higher income as opposed to larger number of visitors. The new formula introduces high quality products that may extend the time period of the tourist stay with cultural, adventure, congress and exposition activities.



**Location of the Bahía de Banderas region between the States of Jalisco and Nayarit.
(FONATUR, 2005a)**

The CIP Nayarit extends from in Puerto Vallarta in the State of Jalisco to San Blas Port in the State of Nayarit. The master plan of the CIP in Nayarit proposes a low-density tourist development along the coastline. The spatial arrangement of existing cities and small villages will be integrated as a variety of attractions. The market

segment that the tourism development in the CIP Nayarit is oriented to alternates the sun and beach choice with activities such as golf, nature, marine and rural tourism.

The concept of the CIP in Nayarit is a tourist corridor along the coast of Bahia de Banderas. It will consist of three development stages that correspond to three polygons linked by the existing freeway and a new highway which is actually under construction. The highway will also link existing towns and natural attractions on the coast and along the route. The three stages will be developed under a definite conceptual image of exclusivity to attract the higher income market. The picture shows the location of the first and second development stages of the CIP in Nayarit, along the Bahia de Banderas.

The objective at full completion of the CIP Nayarit by the year 2025 will represent the development over 880 ha. enlarging the existing tourist accommodation offer by 14,500 accommodation units more, three golf courses, commercial and recreational centres, a regional thematic park, a marina and public beach clubs and related services (FONATUR, 2005c). The accommodation choice ranges from 5-star hotels, time sharing accommodation to single family houses.

The benefits to the region will be an annual tourist affluence of 1 million; the creation of 56,000 jobs, being 21,500 direct jobs and 34,500 indirect ones; and 35,500 family dwelling units. The first stage of development has been launched through a marketing strategy promoting an enclosed development called Litibu. Litibu is situated 50 km. north of Puerto Vallarta. It has been launched under the concept of a cluster comprising a golf course designed by Greg Norman.

The sustainable approach in Litibu

Sustainability in the CIP Nayarit will be encountered by analysing Litibu case study in a four-tier division, including the environment, the society, the commercial activities and the local administration.

Environmentally speaking, in order to avoid massive tourism depletion of non-renewable resources, the authorities of the environment have restricted development on mangroves. In the case of Litibu, the mangrove has been carefully integrated to landscape design. The following image presents Litibu master plan where the mangrove takes an important part along the coastline.



**Conceptual image of Litibu
(FONATUR, 2006b)**

FONATUR in order to assure that development on Litibu will be in accordance with the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) and the actual regulations on mangroves; it has conditioned future development through the master plan, the codes and the design guidelines. Other considerations, such as to conduct rainfall drainage through the original river bed that flows into the mangrove to preserve the humidity characteristics, have been included as conditions on the design and construction of the golf course. Design guidelines also suggest special consideration of the mangrove as a landscape motive.

In terms of optimisation of natural resources and generation of a positive outcome between usage and renovation, FONATUR is taking careful consideration to water resources used in Litibu. For instance, to obtain potable water FONATUR has installed a desalination plant and an elevated tank inside Litibu. It has also built a sewage treatment plant on site with capacity not only for the sewage discharge of Litibu, but also of the neighbouring town called Higuera Blanca. The treated waters will be used in the irrigation system of the golf course. In this way, water resources will be used efficiently and the cycle of water will start and end in the same place without having to be brought from other sites leaving other towns without their water resources.

In the social field, FONATUR has intended to create more sustainable communities in the way of respecting existing human settlements and integrating them into a sustainable development process. The planning agency intends to have the least influence on long-distance migration patterns. The role of FONATUR in the CIP Nayarit intends to be the least liable for creating long-distance migration patterns and a new social structure.

Local people will have the opportunity to be the first-incorporated to the new labour market derived from the development process. The already established retail will find that the incoming groups will make their commercial activity more robust. Moreover the community will provide a larger variety of cultural, recreational and retail opportunities.

The local communities will also be the first to benefit from the improvements in local infrastructure and services. For instance in Higuera Blanca, the neighbouring village to Litibu, FONATUR has enhanced sports facilities, the local health facility, the main plaza, the access to the beach and it has built a public beach club.

Commercially, given that FONATUR has not been involved in the creation and support of a real state market, FONATUR does not subsidise private investment and has no direct input to raise the real state market. Therefore Litibu integrates itself as a competitor in an autonomous and independent real-state market that manages and controls itself. Consequently both FONATUR and the real-state market perform in a healthier and swifter manner as they have got a non-compromised attitude amongst each other.

Administratively, public participation in various stages and various fields has made the development process in Litibu more sustainable. In the Bahia de Banderas region, local power groups have got a voice to be heard and a vote to count on. The scheme under tourism development in Nayarit has taken place in a wider and more horizontal structure, with more actors and groups involved. For FONATUR, tourism development may be diminished in territorial extension, yet it has not been in terms of political action and local compromise.

It could be thought that less control and involvement of FONATUR as an authority in the development process could leave aside the social governmental statutory principles. Nonetheless local private sector participation has been shown to be positive of the new CIP in Nayarit. For FONATUR, local participation has meant a least involved role in ancillary matters in the development process. This circumstance has given the agency the opportunity to focus on decision-making, co-ordination and management. For example, local participation that has brought new positive inputs in crucial matters to the development process will be presented as follows.

In first place, the process of site selection and acquisition of land has been highly dependent on local groups. FONATUR encountered that property along the coastline was highly fragmented. This circumstance constrained to a greater extent the possibility of acquiring by purchase order or compensation a large extension of land as in previous times FONATUR used to do. Therefore FONATUR consulted with local authorities and meet businessmen. In this way, FONATUR got a deep insight of the suitability and property status in the whole State for acquisition of territorial reserves.

FONATUR was contacted by a local tourism trust that had properties for tourism development and was interested in joining the process of the CIP in Nayarit by ceding two of its properties. The two pieces of land were ceded to FONATUR for the first stage of development of the CIP in Nayarit, were separated by other two small properties that FONATUR had to purchase to develop the golf course cluster in Litibu.

FONATUR conducted negotiations with both landowners of the smaller properties; they were not interested in selling, though they wanted to become part of the development process. Separate negotiations with both ended in subdivision of property and compensation for the land ceded to the reserve. In this way, optimisation of FONATUR time and economic resources resulted in a swifter process of territorial reserve acquisition without spending time and effort in market research on highly fragmented property and without being seized with speculative trends in the region.

Administrative sustainability in the CIP Nayarit can also be shown in the desirable possibility of developing tourist resorts that can become self-managed and self-controlled as early as possible. By working with the local trust, FONATUR has also been able to decrease its staff involved in the development of the resort. Nowadays FONATUR contracts out experts in certain fields that work with representatives of FONATUR and the local trust.

In terms of FONATUR liabilities on infrastructural premises, the role of FONATUR has changed from being the designer and the builder of main infrastructural premises in previous CIP's, to the coordinator of negotiations and building process amongst different organisations that provide and manage public services such as energy and water. This is due to the fact that, to a greater extent, the region has counted on existing infrastructural premises such as the international airport and the cruise port in Puerto Vallarta and the existing freeway that connects Puerto Vallarta with the city of Tepic, capital city of the State of Nayarit, before FONATUR had arrived.

Therefore FONATUR has only focused on supervising the site development project, the construction of infrastructure as well as the supply of infrastructural premises and installation of equipment for its own use. The circumstance that makes FONATUR

responsible only for local infrastructural premises in Litibu and their management process, which means that FONATUR presence on site can be minimised in the short term. In other words, as long as the construction of infrastructure in Litibu comes to an end, FONATUR will be able to transfer the post of co-ordination and supervision to the local administration.

As a consequence of all these aspects that have to do with the sustainability of Litibu in natural, social, commercial and administrative issues, economically speaking, a more sustainable process has also been encountered. Economic sustainability principles can also be found in the intentions of FONATUR to reinforce economic dynamics in existing towns. FONATUR has chosen to develop tourist resorts near existing communities, where it will only invest in the betterment of community facilities instead of building a new one. In the case of Litibu, FONATUR has focused on the improvement of the existing neighbouring community of Higuera Blanca. This town is expected to grow and become a transport node and exchange point of services and facilities for the zone.

Groups of migrating workers will have the possibility to settle in the existing town and in this way the catchment population will reinforce services and transport in the locality. The connectivity and commuting patterns amongst communities and Puerto Vallarta will be highly improved by a large influx of people brought by tourism development.

FONATUR action on site could be said to be restricted by resources, however FONATUR can perform in a swifter and more efficient way through cross cutting topics, which means time and money savings.

In terms of the planning system as a whole, the intervention of FONATUR in Nayarit has been focused and could take a shorter period of time and lesser effort for FONATUR to leave the site. Given that FONATUR has just got a small office representation on site in the local trust offices, it would be easier to make the transfer of authority from FONATUR to the local trust.

FONATUR has concentrated on a co-ordination role more than on an executive role which has brought several advantages and more definition to its competence and its objectives. FONATUR role paper has been that of bringing about consensus on strategies rather than to actually getting involved in the executive tasks. In the commercial activities as well as in the real state market, FONATUR has not acquired any liability.

Conclusions

This paper has talked about the extent to which tourism development on the coast of the State of Nayarit has reached sustainability. The paper analysed the way in which the tourism development process on the coasts of Mexico has been during a lifespan of 30 years. This paper touched on the innovations in the strategic development vision of the CIP Nayarit and the way in which tools have been implemented to encounter sustainable development in Litibu, the first stage of development of the Master Plan.

It started focusing on two main aspects that impinge on the definition of massive tourism sustainable development on Mexican coasts and that started the discussion on the topic, which are the environment and the administrative system.

The paper introduced the brief history of tourism development on the Mexican coastlines. It went from the development of beaches around the most important ports, to the creation of a new concept of ex-novo massive sun and beach tourism resorts by planning agency FONATUR under the commission of the Ministry of Tourism. It went further explaining the intentions of creating these new tourist resorts. It talked about the intentions of the Ministry to tackle poverty and abandonment, introduce major economic activities by providing the required infrastructure and premises, and to allocate a large influx of national and international tourists.

The paper touched on the general considerations of site selection and the advantages as well as the disadvantages that FONATUR has encountered and brought about in this complex process. It analysed the great social and economic liabilities that FONATUR has acquired by being the main facilitator and catalyst of the tourism development process in CIP's.

It went on introducing the new situation and the new vision for the Bahia de Banderas tourism development. It explained the reasons why the planning scheme changed from a vertical to a horizontal one, where top-down decisions were confronted with bottom-up opinions.

It described the way in which FONATUR has integrated itself to the tourism development process in the region and the way FONATUR has made the process sustainable. It described the programme and the vision to impulse traditional tourism development. Narrowing the focus down to the region, it has explained the master plan and the concept for a diversified tourism corridor in Bahia de Banderas. It argued the way it would seek a higher income sun and beach tourism market providing high quality products based on cultural, adventure, congress and exposition activities.

Specifically the article talked about the first stage of development of the tourism corridor master plan called Litibu and the wise move of FONATUR becoming less involved in ancillary matters looking forward to focusing on management, co-ordination and decision-making of the development process.

It presented as an example of positive output of local participation in the development process, the acquisition of land for the development of Litibu. It also explained the change of role of FONATUR from being designer and builder of main infrastructural premises to co-ordinator of commissions, experts and local people.

The article gave the approach the CIP in Nayarit is using to encourage sustainability. The topic was analyzed by the following four-tier division: environmentally, socially, commercially and administratively.

Environmentally speaking, it gave examples about how the depletion of non-renewable resources such as mangroves has been prohibited nationwide. Under the same order of ideas, it also touched on the optimized usage of natural resources giving the example of the water cycle that has been implemented in Litibu.

In social terms, this paper talked about the benefits for local people as in getting a closer to home labour market, reinforcing retail and commercial activities, improving services and facilities and enlarging the variety of cultural, recreational and retail choice in town.

Commercially the article described the way by which FONATUR had not created a real-state market and therefore the real-state market became autonomous and self-managed.

In terms of sustainability of the planning process, the article talked about the desirability to develop tourist resorts that can become self-managed and self-controlled as early as possible. This situation was possible in Litibu given the fact of the existence of main regional infrastructure and a local trust. In this way, FONATUR on one side, had become the coordinator of the provision and management of infrastructure, and on the other, it had acquired territorial reserve without spending time and effort on market research in a highly fragmented area.

The development process in Litibu has become more sustainable in terms of economic support of local dynamics, turning Higuera Blanca a transport node and exchange point of services and facilities.

Finally in terms of the planning system, FONATUR has started a new age of low budget expenditure and high coordination between parties involved in tourism development process. For FONATUR tourism development may have been diminished in territorial extension, nevertheless the process has become more committed to political action and local compromise.

In conclusion the Litibu case study has enlightened the extent to which an innovative strategic vision for tourism development in the CIP Nayarit has approached sustainability. In environmental terms, FONATUR procures a highly sustainable vision in respect of non-renewable resources so as to preserve them in any case and allows the rational utilization of renewal resources.

In social terms, the new vision has turned to a more sustainable approach of protecting and enhancing existing local communities rather than creating new settlements.

Commercially speaking FONATUR has left aside the great responsibility of creating and procuring a real-state market, which has become much healthier in sustainable financial respect of the own agency. Furthermore, economically, local economic dynamics have been reinforced yet not at FONATUR costs.

In terms of sustainability of the planning system FONATUR intervention has taken a shorter period of time than in previous cases which is a desirable feature for both the agency and the development that imply economic sustainability.

It is important to notice that the strategic vision implemented in the CIP Nayarit has been the result of two circumstances. On one side, the evolution of a planning exercise during 30 years by an agency searching for more sustainable forms of developing the coasts of Mexico and the existence of society organized in groups who wanted to develop their region in a participative manner.

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