



AYUNTAMIENTO 2016 - 2018  
**COZUMEL**



**ISLACOZUMEL**  
"IDENTIDAD, HONESTIDAD Y FUERZA"

# International cooperation and resilience in islands and coastlines

Secretary General of the Town Council of Cozumel



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**COZUMEL**

# What is Cozumel?



- With 539 km<sup>2</sup>, is the second largest and most populated island in Mexico.
- Is the biosphere reserve in UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program.
- Is the largest cruise ship market in the world, with 5 million visitors per year.

# What is Cozumel?

- Its extensive biodiversity of indigenous species - some of which are markedly threatened - makes it environmentally important.
- It is part of the Mesoamerican Reef System, the largest in the western hemisphere.
- It generates 546 million dollars per year.
- 100% of the Island is under a land-use management instrument by ANP or land-use zoning.
- Has 2 wetlands sites under the RAMSAR Convention.



# As a local government, what challenge do we face in a globalized world?

- After all we generate and bring forward, our economy is not fairly compensated to cope with the effect brought about by tourism.
- Our State and Federal budgets are based upon inhabitants (90 thousand), and do not consider the 5 million tourists we receive as well as the highly demanded services.
- A hefty concentration of resources are in hands of the State and the Federation. For instance: through cruise ship passenger levies Cozumel generates 80% of the resources in the State of Q. Roo and only 5% is repaid.





# What are we doing?



- Reviewing the national regulatory framework.
- Urban resilience outline.
- Blue carbon strategy in Cozumel through analysis of potential carbon capture, carbon offset scheme and inclusion of environmental services into instruments of land-use planning.
- And, naturally, the community of the Island of Cozumel.

# What are we doing?

- Local alliances: State Planning Island Council, the National Commission on Natural Protected Areas (CONANP), fisheries cooperatives, NGOs, universities.
- National partnerships: municipal island and coastal committees, the Mexican Fund for Nature Conservation.
- International partnerships: GLISPA; in a key platform for learning, sharing experiences, creating alliances and finding solutions, thus is how IR-50 of the Island of Cozumel was created, seeking, among its objectives, climate justice, intergenerational equity and through resilience to turn our vulnerabilities as islands into resilience.
- GIZ, we highlight our environmental partnership with Hamburg that stems from urban environmental management and port management; and, RIO PLUS: which will derive in an assessment and analysis of the cruise ship tourism footprint on destinations.



# Policy-makers and local environmental innovations



- Support the creation of local policies that would be reflected and reinforced by regional, national and international frameworks.
- Facilitate the exchange of local environmental innovations and land-use planning where each local government could develop its own innovations based on their own experiences and those learned from others. This must consider funding, governance structure, and participative decision-making processes

# Opportunities to enhance resilience of coastal communities through innovations

- All areas related with responsible consumption. The promotion of the creation of local brands, the diversification of economic activities, especially for islands and coastal tourist destinations where tourism tends to be the only or the most important economic activity.
- Capacity building: Support local communities in advancing their own innovations on land-use planning; reduce, mitigate and adapt disaster risks as per their particular conditions.



# Challenges faced when replicating innovative solutions that promote or enhance environmental safety

- When innovative solutions are not developed taking into consideration local levels, challenges are sometimes impassable. These are not applicable or replicable because they do not answer the needs of local community issues.
- Funding is another challenge. Regrettably when funds are provided on a domestic level, due internal and bureaucratic formalities the implementation timeframe exceeds the funding or local government term hence resulting in deficient implementation or loss of funds.

# Challenges faced when replicating innovative solutions that promote or enhance environmental safety

- Participative decision-making and implementation processes, involvement of the organized civil society and academia should be considered.
- As for the islands, it must be taken into account that planning is required in these delicate areas addressing vulnerability and secluded characteristics. Islands are more fragile and vulnerable, not just because their location, but to their limited resources and worthiness of their ecosystems.



# CEC's role in supporting these endeavors

- Support local governments in developing innovative solutions that can resonate and concur with national and international frameworks.
- Consider specific and particular solutions for the islands. Islands are deemed areas of highly important biodiversity which not only provide environmental benefits, but also quality of life benefits for the planet.
- An ongoing solution is required in order to achieve successful outcomes. A partial view will lead to a partial solution.



# CEC's role in supporting these endeavors

- Raise awareness on how important the vulnerability of islands and coastal areas is. As well, to consider the importance of an appropriate framework, planned growth and policies for the islands.
- Create funding addressing local governments and communities in order to appease local cooperation between government and organized civil society (the community.)
- Develop a structure where local governments can participate in decision-making processes and in the attainment of national and international goals.

- We, the local island governments, need to be seen and taken into account; we need the state, the nation and world policies to take action from the specific to the general, thus we are confident we will be able to attain the worldwide objectives we yearn for.

- An informed community builds stronger regions and nations prepared to withstand and recover from any environmental or economic downturn. An informed community demands solid policies and governments ready to answer, support and serve the community. The challenge is no longer just about the environment, but about people and society.





# Thank you!



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