

## TOURIST DEVELOPMENT OF ISLA ISABEL NATIONAL PARK MEXICO

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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#### 1 – BACKGROUND OF ISLA ISABEL NATIONAL PARK

Isabel island has been declared National Park in 1981 following the visit of Captain Cousteau. It is located 28km off the Pacific Coast of Mexico. It's an 194-ha bird sanctuary where you can find frigatebirds, blue-footed boobies, brown pelicans, tropicbirds ...

The island is crowded with tourists who come on camping trips or sail nearby to explore all resources, the wildlife and paradise-like landscapes. You can also watch dolphins, manta skates, tortoises, and whales swim around the National Park. Snorkeling and diving clubs come from all around Mexico to watch the amazing sea floor.

Groups of scientists, (10 to 20 people) stay on the island up to 6 months to study ecosystems that are probably unique throughout the Pacific coast of North America. The island is also a base for fishermen; they camp several months in a year, bringing their building materials for their shelters (wood, asphaltic cardboard, plastic covers). The camp holds an average of 50 to 70 fishermen, but during the high fishing season population can reach 250 occupants. The raining season is very strong, and this is why the island is deserted from July to September.

*Fishermen, scientist and tourist camps are basic facilities; despite the many visitors who spend time on the island, no infrastructure is available to host them. The island lacks water resources, the water available is poor in quality and quantity. Lavatories are lacking in number, and are poorly maintained. Defecation outdoors is common and quickly becomes an issue as population increases. Wastes build up on the beach, right on the ground and open to the wind. Rat population is very high, given the existing hygiene conditions. During the raining season, the camp is destroyed, and therefore needs to be rebuilt every year.*

In 1998/99, an environment awareness program has been conducted with fishermen, and many efforts were noted.

Managers consisting of the Environment Institute from Mexico University and the SEMARNAT – Office of Environment and Natural Resources – are attempting to set up different camps (tourists, fishermen and scientists), but because they lack resources, the outcome does not even compare to the efforts undertaken.

## 2 – DEVELOPMENT PROJECT FOR ISLA ISABEL NATIONAL PARK

### Program

It focuses on developing the required hosting infrastructures using appropriate techniques in order to resolve pollution and management issues related to tourism business and visitors presence. The development should seek to improve working and hygiene conditions for locals. Areas should be arranged so that activities are combined but don't overlap each other.

The development project includes:

- Developing an area to host tourists, including lodging facilities and lavatories with any other facilities needed during their stay. Visitor paths will be marked around the island.
- The renovation of existing buildings, with one portion being intended for researchers, including research laboratories, as well as a living area (rooms, kitchen, entertainment room, restroom), and another portion serving as a small exhibit room for presenting the island and its recreational activities to tourists.
- Constructing a building for the administration of the Park, consisting of an office, a storeroom, a kitchen, rooms and lavatories. Through its location and architecture, it will make the monitoring of the recreational area easier.
- Redeveloping the temporary fishermen camp while making sure their workflow is not affected.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

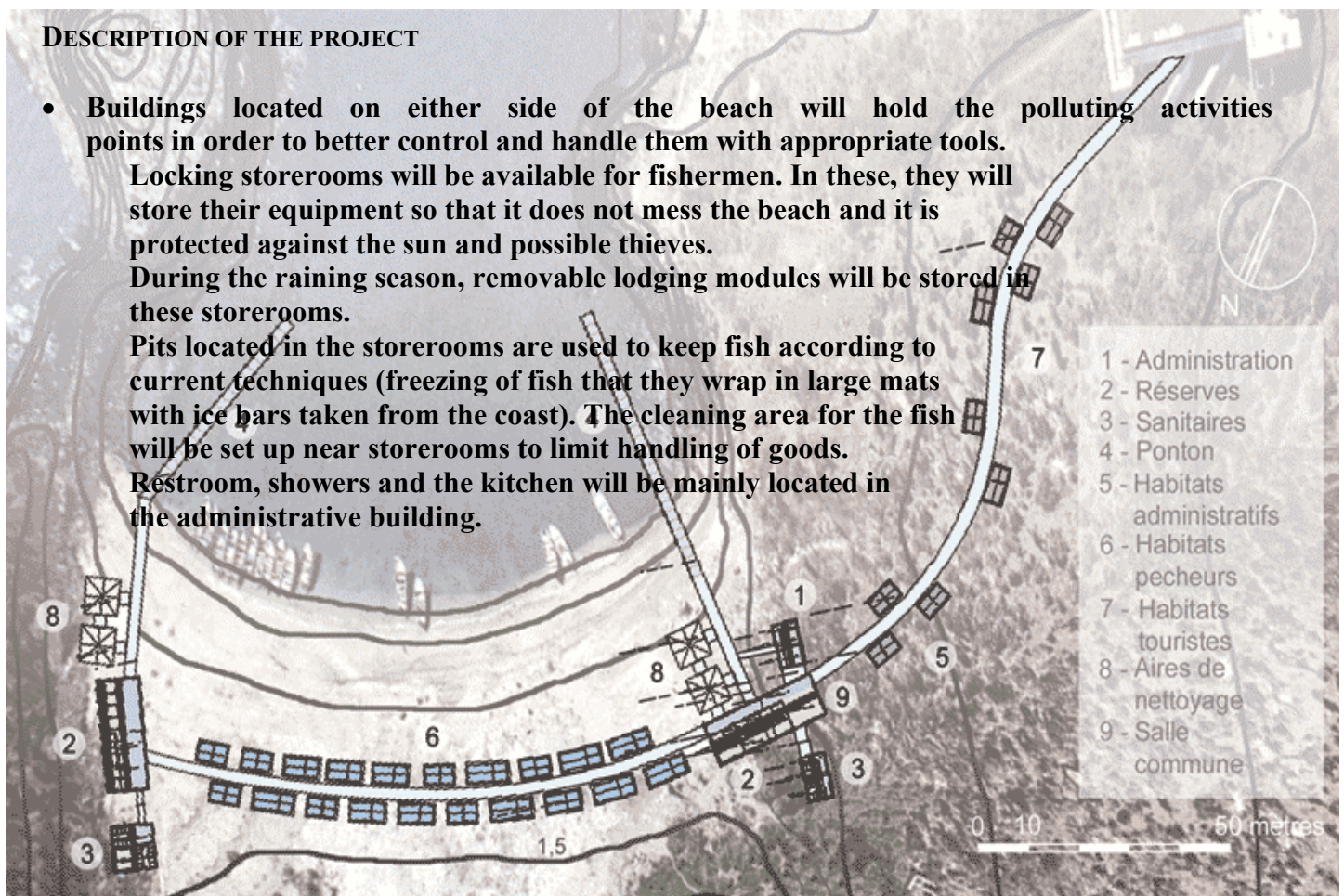
- **Buildings located on either side of the beach will hold the polluting activities points in order to better control and handle them with appropriate tools.**

**Locking storerooms will be available for fishermen. In these, they will store their equipment so that it does not mess the beach and it is protected against the sun and possible thieves.**

**During the raining season, removable lodging modules will be stored in these storerooms.**

**Pits located in the storerooms are used to keep fish according to current techniques (freezing of fish that they wrap in large mats with ice bars taken from the coast). The cleaning area for the fish will be set up near storerooms to limit handling of goods.**

**Restroom, showers and the kitchen will be mainly located in the administrative building.**



- Tourist, fishermen and administration staff housing will be removable and stored in storeroom during the raining season. Modules will be made of wood and roof will be made of palm. Assembly will be straightforward and quickly done. Components will be easy to handle and maintain.
- Because the island lacks water resources, the project should use informal resources: seawater. It should plan for the development of a water cycle: water catchments, storing, treatment, distribution, recovery, treatment and disposal.
- A dock will be used to ease landing on the island and taking on board. Pathways will be added to the dock to make handling easier and to guide tourists and fishermen upon their arrival by boat.
- During the raining season, buildings could be protected by the removable housing panes.