



EARTHCHECK

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Huatulco is the first sustainable community in the Americas, and the third worldwide to be recognised by EarthCheck.

The Huatulco community expects the tourism industry to provide leadership to achieve sustainable environmental and social outcomes for the benefit of the future generations.

This commitment to leadership is clearly articulated in Huatulco's Sustainability Policy and practically demonstrated by the establishment of their Green Team.

Key achievements in 2011 include:

Energy Consumption was **62.8% better than the Best Practice** and **renewable sources produced 100% of energy** used by the region.

Potable Water Consumption was only 115.9 kL per person; **17.3% better than the Best Practice level**.

The solid waste per person was only **0.16 tonnes; 27.3% better than Best Practice**

Habitat Conservation (biodiversity) was **52% better than the Best Practice level**.

100% of the water used was recycled or captured from rainfall.

Modern water/ sewage treatment to ensure no waste enters the ocean.

Total CO₂-e Produced (t CO₂-e / Person Year) was 2.4 t CO₂-e / Person Year, which was **31.8% better than the Best Practice level**.

BAHÍAS DE HUATULCO, MEXICO

The area of Bahías de Huatulco - or Huatulco Bays - has 9 bays, 36 beaches and is strung out along 35 kilometres of coastline. The population is just 19,000, but is increased by an average of 3,400 tourists daily.

The South Sierra Madre Mountains and the Coyula and Copalita Rivers border the 21,000 hectare area. Seventy-eight percent of Huatulco is undergoing regeneration to restore the region's ecological balance, as in past, damage was done by clearing, development and hunting.

In 1998, the Mexican Government declared 6,375 of lowland jungle and 5,516 hectares of marine area protected as the National Park of Huatulco. Then, in 2003, Huatulco was included in the Ramsar Wetlands for the Future Initiative as site 1321, a watershed and coral coast zone. This was followed by designation of the National Park as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2006.

The Government of Mexico - through the National Found for Tourism Development (FONATUR) - developed an Integrally Planned Center (CIP) to serve as a guide and masterplan for the development of the town over a 20 year period. This was done in order to ensure development and economic growth did not adversely impact marine or terrestrial environments.

All levels of the community recognise the value of improving environmental, economic and social performance outcomes, with particular reference to addressing local community sustainability issues. As such, the public is actively involved in ensuring ecological health is maintained.



THE GREEN TEAM

A Green Team was formed in 2005 to take responsibility for sustainability issues. This comprised 30 representatives from government and community, who lead the Agenda 21 Committee.

The Green Team is divided into seven groups; each focusing on a key performance criteria aligned with the EarthCheck Program. They are:

1. Sustainability Policy
2. Energy efficiency, conservation and proper management
3. Water use efficiency and wastewater treatment
4. Ecosystems, biodiversity, air quality and noise control
5. Waste reduction, reuse and recycle, use and storage of hazardous substances
6. Diffusion and Culture
7. Training

Each year, new action plans are drawn up and implemented by the Green Team.

BENEFITS TO COMMUNITY

The EarthCheck Communities Program has helped Huatulco raise awareness about the need to care for the environment and conserve natural resources. This helps guide growth and tourism development, reducing negative impacts on the biodiversity of the area.

Full participation and commitment of private and government organisations is encouraged across municipal, state and federal government. Private sector are actively encouraged to measure, manage and monitor their operational impacts and school help educate the next generation in

Huatulco has been positioned as a sustainable community and destination, with both domestic and inbound markets.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The community believe that tourism is a national priority for the economy, but that this goes hand-in-hand with environmental conservation and improving the quality of life for the host community.

To achieve this goal, training programs for children and adults are held on the first Saturday of each month. Attendees learn about the principles of reducing, recycling and reusing unwanted items and materials.

More than 1600 staff from the tourism industry - including major hotels and businesses - have attended environmental training. Furthermore, in excess of 4700 students from primary school through to university levels, have attended sustainable tourism education.

SOLID WASTE REDUCTION

Some of the key initiatives designed to improve Huatulco's sustainability include the development of a new landfill site, which complies with international standards and facilitates the separation of general waste from recyclables.

A recycling centre has been built for the collection of recyclable items, such as newspapers, paper, cardboard, steel and aluminium cans, glass and plastics, which are then transferred to recycling companies.

Each school has its own waste collection point, where waste is segregated into general waste, recyclables and organics (green waste and food scraps) for compost.

Students learn about better waste management and the importance of considering natural resource conservation and environmental protection, through environmental training programs.

To reduce the use of plastic bags in Huatulco, promotions at self-service shops educate people about the importance of reusable shopping bags, to achieve waste reduction and to reduce potential damage to the area's vulnerable marine life.

