

"CORAIL VIVANT" APPROVED GITES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE UNESCO INSCRIPTION PROJECT

PILOT STUDY

SUMMARY

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Aims

1.1 Pilot phase

To be seen as part of biodiversity competitiveness, the "Corail Vivant" seal of approval needs to be developed for accommodation structures (gîtes, camping grounds). This label would become the guarantee of respect for the environment, in particular concerning the barrier reef and associated ecosystems, as an integral part of the structure in question.

1.2 Operational phase

"Corail Vivant's" charter will be drawn up on the basis of principles, of which the accommodation structure must respect at least 2, including the first, to be eligible, e.g.:

- * Be situated in an accessible natural setting: near the lagoon and/or a site of ecological interest (humid tropical forest, dry forest, river/pool, mineral massif) and/or a site of heritage or economic interest (petroglyphs, former Kanak or mining villages, such as Tiébaghi, vanilla plantations, fishing)
- * Guarantee an optimal water supply (collecting rainwater, recycling of waste water, installation of mixer taps, night time watering)
- * Adopt energy saving measures (solar water heaters, low energy globes, back up wind power on appropriate sites, solar ovens, etc.)
- * Promote waste management: sorting and composting of organic matter, sorting and sending to Noumea of special waste (e.g., batteries), compacting wrapping material.
- * Develop the promotion of local produce (fruit and vegetables) and the good management of local natural resources (i.e. no overfishing, nor taking of protected or threatened species, such as fruit bats, turtles, dugongs), development of crafts (carvings, training).
- * Create accommodation structures of High Environmental Quality (using local materials, energy saving, limiting waste in construction materials), such as huts or bungalows.

Preamble to Charter

Resources of all kinds, considered as exploitable by industrial and/or commercial firms, remain the property of the local structures existing in the geographical areas where their exploitation is envisaged.

Any industrial and/or commercial development may not, and must not, lead to any resultant disorganisation of socio-cultural structures and/or the loss of expertise.

It is essential that the Customary Senate and recognised clan organisations be consulted before the start of this project.

At stake

2.1 Pilot study phase

The environmental situation in New Caledonia is critical: the coral reefs and associated ecosystems have been damaged by urban and mining discharge. The land biodiversity (80% endemic) is threatened by repeated and devastating forest fires, ill-controlled shooting, presence of invasive parasites and degradation of water quality (urban discharge, uncontrolled tipping).

The protection of the environment is a necessity, as are many other urgent collective matters, which do not always form part of a territory's ambitions or economic priorities. But development can also promote long term ambition, integrating protection of the heritage, be it of nature or human.

New Caledonia's social and economic situations lend themselves well to local green development. Those who run accommodation structures are major local actors: ambassadors to visitors to their region or their province, guarantors for the protection of sites and spaces, employers. Acknowledgment of their expertise, of their eco-tourist sensitivities must be accompanied by technical, financial and educational support.

Furthermore, developing tourist sites means that the locals, thanks to the creation of resources, do not feel the need to move away and so can maintain their traditional culture.

The "Corail Vivant" seal of approval aims to provide solutions

2.2 Operational phase

The aim will be to show how the "Corail Vivant" seal of approval will provide a link between promotion as favoured by UNESCO, the demarcation of the economic market (in consideration of other structures, even other Pacific region territories), listening to the indigenous

people and awareness of the need to protect our rich heritage.

Methodology

3.1 Pilot stage phase

A classification could be set up, in the style of the "Gîtes de France". A logo would be chosen to illustrate classification from "1 to 3 huts" depending on the services offered by the gîte.

Gîtes would be granted accreditation after being checked out by a "label" committee recognised by the relevant authority. The government youth service could grant approval for children's groups.

Each approved structure will have to join the Corail Vivant Association, in order to be recommended.

3.2 Operational phase

Technical, financial and educational support could cover:

- * Loan/leasing of bicycles, canoes, masks /flippers
- * "Discovery" development: botanic tracks, bird watching posts, underwater paths
- * Loan of games sets, such as those of WWF or Lyonnaise des Eaux
- * Support of an eco-trainer (games, manual activities linked to the environment) and volunteers from the tribes (local flora, medicinal or culinary plants, cultural heritage, food gardens, etc.)
- * Support, help in extending the network: agreements with fishermen, diving clubs, associations for the protection of nature, etc.

It will also be necessary to facilitate:

- * Advertising (websites, written press, etc.)
- * Contacts and canvassing
- * Training

Participants

4.1 Pilot stage phase

A certain number of participants will be sought for the implementation of this project to:

- * Make an inventory of gîtes and potential sites
- * Solicit institutions which are potential technical or financial partners (AFD, Provinces, Local governments, Congress, Customary Senate, ADEME, Youth and Sports,

Education Authority, FFEM, BCI, WWF, International Conservation, etc.).

* Solicit patrons wishing to promote an eco-economic image: GBNC, Calédonienne des Eaux, Onyx, ACI, SMSP, OTTNC, SLN, etc.

* Solicit world icons of the sea or the Pacific, for their image and aura: Luc Besson, Laurent Gané, Jean Louis Etienne, Fondation Cousteau, Fondation Nicolas Hulot, Yann Arthus-Bertrand, Hilary Clinton, Professor Wangari Mataï, etc.

* Organise the financial set-up

* Manage purchases, loan of equipment (central buying office)

4.2 Operational phase

Potential clients of this accommodation will be:

- * Underwater divers
- * Whale and bird watchers
- * Hikers, eco-tourists
- * Students
- * Families
- * International scientific groups

Areas covered

5.1 Pilot study phase

Initially, this will be developed in New Caledonia with the 3 Provinces. It is envisaged that this local sustainably development will be promoted in neighbouring countries, such as Vanuatu, Fiji and the Solomon Islands.

5.2 Operational phase

The accommodation structures at the "project" stage will be situated in the 3 Provinces. They will consist of existing and still to be created gîtes, camping grounds, ports and infrastructure for cruise passengers.

Schedule

6.1 Pilot study phase

This should be ratified by the end of 2007 depending on institutional and financial partners.

6.2 Operational phase

The first structure could be approved during the first half of 2008.

A website will be set up to publicise the lists of "Corail Vivant" gîtes.

Firstly, already operational structures will be approached.

Annexes

7.1 Pilot study phase

Financial set-up:

1. Market research - viability study
2. Inventory of sites, in consultation with local authorities (administrative and customary)
3. Impact study concerning the servicing of sites.
4. Definition and preparation of specifications concerning quality control and requirements in respect of the environment.
5. Investigation of service providers concerning criteria as defined in the quality charter for the protection of the environment.
6. Concept structuring (planning and related tourist and environmental activities).
7. Seeking of finance.
8. Organisation of distribution/marketing/promotion/reservation and central buying.
9. Creation of an ad hoc structure (economic interest group).

Estimated total cost of project validation.....xpf25,000,000 i.e... €210,000

7.2 Operational phase

Construction and operating costs

"Corail Vivant" Gîtes budget - pilot study summary

Number of gîtes 10

Number of rooms per gîte 5

Total number of rooms 50

Number of available room nights per annum 18,250

Average occupancy rate (%) 50

Number of bed nights sold 9,125

Average number of guests per room 1.5

Total number of guests per annum 13,688

Average accommodation rate per guest XPF3,700 € 29

Total income from accommodation XPF50,643,750

Ancillary services

Food and drink

Average breakfast XPF600 € 5

Average meals per day XPF2,500 €20

Average spent on meals per day XPF3,100 €25

Total income from meals XPF42,431,250 €336,756

Annual turnover net of ancillary services XPF 93,075,000 €738,690

Ancillary tourist services per guest XPF300 €2

Total income from ancillary services XPF4,106,250 €32,589

Total turnover from all gîtes XPF 97,181,250 €771,280

Construction cost per room XPF3,000,000 €23,810

Fittings and furniture XPF 400,000 €3,175

Total construction cost of rooms XPF3,400,000 €26,984

Total construction cost of rooms per gîte XPF17,000,000 €134,921

Total construction cost of restaurant area XPF5,000,000 €39,683

Total construction costs per gîte XPF22,000,000 €174,603

Total construction cost for all gîtes XPF220,000,000 €1,746,032

Annual running costs (excluding wages and meals) per gîte XPF600,000 €4,762

Annual running costs (excluding wages and meals) all gîtes XPF6,000,000 €47,619

Cost of food per guest per day XPF1,000 €8

Total annual cost of food for all gîtes XPF13,687,500 €108,631

Total costs for all gîtes excluding reimbursement, depreciation,
maintenance and wages XPF19,687,500 €156,250

Net receipts all gîtes excluding reimbursement, depreciation,
maintenance & wages XPF77,493,750 €615,030
Annual construction reimbursement all gîtes XPF22,550,000 €178,968
Net receipts before depreciation, maintenance & wages all gîtes XPF54,943,750 €436,062

Net annual receipts before depreciation, maintenance & wages
per gîte XPF5,494,375 €43,606

Net monthly receipts before depreciation, maintenance & wages
pergîte XPF457,865 €3,634

Simplified depreciation plan

Total cost of construction of all gîtes XPF220,000,000
Repayment period 10 years
Per year XPF22,000,000
Interest rate 2.5%
Annual interest on investment XPF5,500
Total cost of construction reimbursement on all gîtes XPF22,005,500
i.e. per gîte per year XPF2,200,550
or monthly XPF183,379

Our NGO, which came into being in 2000, aims to promote ecotourism in New Caledonia.

In January 2007 the archipelago's coral reefs and associated ecosystems has been submitted by the French Government for inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage Listing.

We have already prepared a pilot study and need to find out what kind of support we could expect from the EU. Could you provide us with some information as to whom to contact in relation to our project ?

We wish to highlight the fact that our project, apart from environmental issues, also aims to preserve the local Kanak culture, therefore also taking social issues into consideration.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Bruno Van Peteghem
2001 Goldman Environmental Prize.