



## 2022 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title of the Story: AMANDO BACALAR. LOVING BACALAR

Destination Name: *Bacalar, Quintana Roo,*

Country: *Mexico*

Submitter name: Riviera Maya Sostenible

Email address: [Beatriz@rivieramayasostenible.org](mailto:Beatriz@rivieramayasostenible.org)

Position: CEO | Founder | President

Submission category: *(Please check one of the boxes that indicates the focus of your story)*

*Please find detailed information for the categories below in the Top 100 training module 'Good Practice Story'.*

- Governance, Reset & Recovery
- Nature & Scenery
- Environment & Climate
- Culture & Tradition
- Thriving Communities
- Business & Marketing

*Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices in the Top 100 training module "Good Practice Story".*

*Should you have any questions on your submission please refer to our FAQ page or contact [top100@greendestinations.org](mailto:top100@greendestinations.org)*





## DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

*Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.*

### Issues faced

*What was the problem/issue solved with the good practice?*

Quintana Roo – Mexican Caribbean has been the right example of over tourism, overexploiting natural and social resources, especially in the north of the state – i.e. Cancún-. And this trend to OVER DEVELOP, is “going south” and threats to reach Bacalar soon.

When we think of Bacalar, such a natural beauty, and see the current state of “growing development”, we, as NGO – in coordination with Tourism ministry in the State, suggested being part of TOP100 Competition AS A TRIGGER TO FOSTER A NEW VISION – showcasing the good practices currently developed by civil society and local entrepreneurs, in order to INSPIRE others, bring together authorities and society to BE AWARE of the AMAZING NATURAL CAPITAL Bacalar is by itself. But also, highlighting the RISK that it has right now if NOT REGULATED under the standards of sustainability, and the opportunity that could be lost to reach HIGH-END market, if Bacalar is not preserved with its natural beauty.

So trying to set up a MILESTONE in the process, we decided to put together the pieces to take Bacalar to TOP100 opportunity, as we strongly believe that the smart strategy of TOP100 (for 2 years) and then ACP journey is capable to raise genuine interest in the key stakeholders to understand the high benefits that sustainability (with Green Destinations) can add to the destination and its businesses, stressing out the importance of visibility and market access towards the right conscious travelers, avoiding traditional marketing and promotion from a traditional “sun & beach” destination, but choosing one based on UNIQUENESSES, natural, cultural and social placing the PURPOSE of the destination in the center, valuating local community and unique identity.

The good practices of CASA LAMAT – case study showcased – are a clear example on HOW THE BACALAR LAGOON can be preserved in a systemic vision of the destination as a whole: 1. Controlled carrying capacity. 2. Re-use of wastewater. 3. Collecting rainwater. 4. Reducing the use of gas in cooking. 5. Educating visitors on the fragility of the Lagoon and its unique biodiversity (stromatolites, chivita snail, among others). 6. Installing renewable energies. 7. Reducing, reusing and recycling waste, with circular economy. 8. Avoiding single use plastics. 9. Prioritizing the local community in employment... among others.





## Methods, steps and tools applied

*How was the good practice implemented?*

Faced with these vital challenges for the health of the lagoon, the initiative "Casa Amat" arose 10 years ago as a dream, and was inaugurated on 12 October 2014, as the aim to be a SCHOOL OF ECOLOGY, and in practice, recognizes the need to provide accommodation and food to their "students", and so it has become an eco-hotel, in the middle of the jungle, built to provide comfort with two types of travelers: Those looking for a subtle Mayan-style room, with comfort and privacy, or other spaces built in modern rooms that take advantage of the upper space to make room for solar panels.

Casa Amat has been raised as a “good example” of good practices:

1. Reusing wastewater
2. Recycling/reusing solid waste
3. Reducing gas consumption in cooking
4. Led bulbs installed
5. Conservation of native plants and trees (as when the land was acquired)
6. Vegetable and fruit garden irrigated with reclaimed treated wastewater
7. Educational center for visitors on native jungle and lagoon health
8. Transformational working center for collaborators, raising pride of belonging to mayan communities
9. Fair wages, above local average
10. Awareness center for both, collaborators, and visitors
11. Healthy nutrition center for both, collaborators, and visitors
12. Installing a Healing center for both, collaborators, and visitors
13. Fostering community building in town through the MANIFESTO: YO AMO BACALAR, boosting awareness of the urgent need to protect the water quality in the lagoon and the conservation of natural environment in the jungle
14. Preserving local identity with “palapas” – traditional mayan building system
15. Fostering only non-motorised vessels
16. No sun-screen usage allowed
17. Silence promoter for contemplation of the lagoon
18. In research process for certification seals, to adhere to international standards





#### Key success factors

*What helped you tackle the issues?*

*The vision of the founder, buying a piece of land in the shore of the lagoon, aiming to become a SCHOOL dedicated to ENVIRONMENTAL / SOCIAL Sustainability Education.*

The visitor to Bacalar is, in general, a person who is seeking to heal and reconnect with themselves and with a world that requires everyone to heal the home we inhabit... our Planet Earth. The natural and cultural capital of Bacalar offers visitors a magical space of peace and reconnection, of reflection, of witnessing good practices as happens at Casa Lamat: pride in the identity of Mayan collaborators, integrated solid waste management, integrated on-site management of grey and black water for re-use and production of organic gardens, reduction of fuel use for cooking, organic and vegetarian food, use of renewable energies with solar panels, no use of sunscreen when entering the water in the lagoon, no use of motorized boats...





#### Lessons learned

*While implementing the Good Practice what challenges were faced, and how were they overcome?*

Casa Lamat, the shining star, in the quest to spread good practices, makes alliances and collaborative networks with local people, and is promoting the creation of a NETWORK "We Can Save Bacalar" (YO AMO BACALAR) creating a MANIFESTO.

However, the Bacalar Lagoon has great challenges, as these good practices are NOT GENERALISED, and the natural capacity of water quality recovery has been abused. So, a big challenge is to monitor, improve and maintain a better water quality, which implies involving the general population (authorities and local population) in integrated wastewater treatment, controlled carrying capacity and vision in development.

Another challenge is the endemic species of this beautiful lagoon: 1. "CHIVITA" SNAIL and 2. The oxygen producing rocks: STROMATOLITES...

Casa Lamat founder says: "I dream of a world united, awake, in peace, in harmony, that cares for and conserves nature with ethical and fair trade for all. Every great project begins with a small step. \* Lamat means star in Mayan. A place that shines by itself and illuminates others. And through the MANIFESTO, he is inspiring others to share good practices:

*"The Ecological Heritage of Humanity that Bacalar and surroundings represent, its Biodiversity, Watershed, Lagoon, Jungle and Mangrove has been devastated in the last 3 years (2017-2019) more than in its entire history, including the era of overexploitation of timber and chicle. [.]*

*In Bacalar there is no plan for 10, 20, even 50 years or more to protect the place and avoid its destruction, under the pretext of "its development". As has happened, and is well known, in the north of Quintana Roo.*

*Bacalar is the heritage of its own Biodiversity that has been there for thousands and millions of years, and it is up to us to conserve and protect it and thus set an example for our children. For it is their heritage and the heritage of Humanity.*

*We know about the bad system that has operated in Mexico and in Quintana Roo. So rather than judging and wasting time in useless power struggles. We call ALL of you to change, to the new possibility that already corresponds to the times and is good for Bacalar, Mexico and the world [.]*





*It is urgent to regulate and set limits for the providers and users of tourist services, with firm limits that allow the lagoon itself to regenerate itself. Private initiative is welcome with projects that generate Conscious Tourism, that seek to reconnect with their own nature and the ecosystem in harmony, therefore respecting it, enjoying its sounds and landscapes, so they do not require places of recreation that alter the environment.*

*We can still "Save Bacalar" and create a Sustainable Tourism development model for the South of Quintana Roo. To be Heroes in the history of Mexico, of the World and of our CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING".*





## Results, achievements and recognitions

*What were the qualitative and quantitative results of the good practice?*

Casa Lamat has been raised as a “good example” of good practices, and they have achieved:

1. 100% of wastewater reused
2. 100% of solid waste recycled/reused
3. 50% of gas consumption in cooking
4. 100% led bulbs installed
5. 100% of conservation of native plants and trees (as when the land was acquired)
6. 100% new vegetable and fruit garden irrigated with reclaimed treated wastewater
7. 100% oriented as educational center for visitors on native jungle and lagoon health
8. 100% of the collaborators adhere to the principles of pride of belonging to mayan communities and local identity
9. 100% fair wages, above local average
10. Survey applied for both, collaborators, and visitors, regarding the personal shift CASA LAMAT MEANS as experience
11. 100% Healthy nutrition center for both, collaborators, and visitors
12. Installing a healing center for both, collaborators, and visitors
13. Fostering community building in town through the MANIFESTO: YO AMO BACALAR, boosting awareness of the urgent need to protect the water quality in the lagoon and the conservation of natural environment in the jungle
14. Preserving local identity with “palapas” – traditional mayan building system
15. Fostering only non-motorised vessels (100% of the ones available in Casa Lamat)
16. 100% of guests in Casa Lamat are “No sun-screen” usage allowed
17. Everyday Casa Lamat, offers to visitors, at least, ONE ACTIVITY as a: Silence promoter for contemplation of the lagoon
18. In research process for certification seals, to adhere to international standards

## Additional references

*Provide links to further information. Pictures and videos should be available for download either from YouTube, Vimeo or other Cloud-based (Google/ One Drive) download URL (not WeTransfer).*

VIDEO FOR STORY: <https://youtu.be/fYuli2cLwDY>

Additional images: <https://1drv.ms/u/s!AubHfny8ayKT8QH3BnL65jF2bNxxg?e=x2DOif>

(Methodology for finding success stories) [AMANDO BACALAR - Google Forms](#)

