



## La Venta: Potential Picturesque Towns Of Tabasco, Mexico

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### ARTICLE INFO

### ABSTRACT

This article presents a diagnosis of the situation of La Venta, a town located in the municipality of Huimanguillo, Tabasco; in order to determine its potential evaluation for entry into the Picturesque Towns Program. This program is intended to be implemented by the Tabasco Tourism Secretariat (SECTUR Tabasco), with the objective of initially recognizing twenty towns with a tourist vocation that demonstrate promoting and managing sustainable and intelligent tourism products. The theoretical perspective of the study is framed in the paradigm of sustainable tourism in rural spaces, in a conceptual framework on tourism policy, planning and governance in tourist destinations. The approach developed is mixed, since it integrated quantitative and qualitative data through a sequential exploratory design. In a first stage, a description of the sociodemographic and tourist environment of La Venta was generated; based on documentary research. In the second stage, a descriptive transectional study was carried out by applying an opinion survey regarding the impacts of tourism on the community. Finally, the data were contrasted with twenty indicators resulting from the content analysis of three documents that support the operation of the program.

The results show that La Venta meets 35% of the criteria established by the program. In contrast, 30% of them need to be covered, and only partially, 35%. Therefore, it is concluded that, in the short term, the community is not in a position to begin the evaluation process of the Picturesque Towns Program. It is suggested to prioritize the needs expressed by the population and subsequently design strategies to develop complementary and integrated tourism products with greater hierarchies of attractiveness. As well as promoting a systemic, sustainable and participatory vision in the planning of tourism development in the town.

**Keywords:** Olmec Culture, public policy, sustainability, planning, rural tourism.

### 1. Introduction

In 2021, SECTUR Tabasco convened a group of academics, who are part of the Tourism Node of the Linkage and Innovation Network of the State of Tabasco (REDVITAB) of the Council of Science and Technology of the State of Tabasco (CCYTET), with the aim of designing a protocol for the implementation of the Picturesque Towns Program. The target population of the program is localities that, at a different level of development, require a new orientation to make tourism an activity of real contribution that raises the levels of well-being through employment, investment, rational use of resources and natural and cultural attractions; around the principle of participation of the host communities (Planning Committee for the Development of the State of Tabasco [COPLADET], 2019). Picturesque Villages proposes to award badges to towns with a tourist vocation that promote and manage sustainable and intelligent tourism products. The program establishes as inclusion criteria, aspects related to resource management, urban image, availability and quality in infrastructure and services; as well as the implementation of marketing strategies.

Among the priority actions to start with the project, SECTUR Tabasco made a selection of twenty localities that, according to the established criteria, could join the evaluation process to achieve the designation, including: La Venta, a village located in the municipality of Huimanguillo.

Derived from the initial analysis, the academy observed some elements related to incorporation, follow-up and permanence that could contradict the fundamental purpose of the proposal. Therefore, it was suggested to carry out studies of some communities that, according to the group's experience, would have a greater chance of meeting the requirements evaluated. In this sense, this article aims to present the diagnosis of the situation of La Venta, in order to analyze the feasibility of complying, in the short term, with the evaluation indicators of the Picturesque Towns Program; and thus establish a frame of reference for the other nineteen aspiring localities.

## 2. Literature review

The theoretical perspective of the research is framed in the paradigm of sustainable tourism in rural areas, in a conceptual framework about tourism policy, planning and governance in tourist destinations. Tourism policy comprises the set of actions, decisions and processes with objectives related to tourism; driven fundamentally by government actors (Velasco, 2011, cited in Velasco, 2016). In general, tourism policy can establish many and diverse objectives, which are a function of the geographical context, the type of tourism product, as well as the interests and precepts of the actors responsible for its institutionalization. However, it is essentially assumed that any tourism policy must pursue economic growth, job creation, increased foreign exchange and regional development in order to have a positive impact on the quality of life and well-being of the host community (Monfort, 2000).

The decision to implement a tourism policy must consider a responsible body that will assume the tasks of design and execution. In this regard, Mill and Morison (1992, cited in Monfort, 2000) point out that the process of formulating a tourism policy is made up of three stages: identification of needs, establishment of goals in response to those needs and in correspondence with the priority objectives, in the social, economic, cultural and environmental spheres; and finally the implementation of strategies and programs that lead to achieving the goals set.

Among the instruments of tourism policy are those of the programmatic type, which includes plans and programs designed for a territory or destination. The plans are a set of actions and programs that express the political project that a government has for a tourist area. The plan outlines the commitment that the public sector has with the private sector and with citizens. The relationship between a plan and a program is one of scale (Velasco, 2011).

One of the approaches to tourism planning is the strategic approach, which is characterized by its creativity and prospecting, based on new forms of planning, more participatory, democratic and normative. Characteristics that allow enriching the methodological approach, the definition of a philosophy and future scenarios, for which a normative articulation is required; with objectives and goals, selection of priorities and diagnosis of the different environments (Osorio, 2006). In this perspective, the Acerenza model (1998, cited in Osorio, 2006) stands out, since it begins with a plan proposed by the public administration, based on a tourism policy that derives in the formulation of development strategies or action programs; similar to the case study.

The evolution of tourism planning has implied a transition from the purely economic paradigm to one with economic-environmental rationality, such as sustainability (Osorio, 2006). Sustainable tourism is one that: "takes full account of current and future economic, social and environmental impacts to meet the needs of visitors, industry, the environment and host communities" (World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2021). The precepts of sustainable tourism development must be applied to all its forms and in all destinations. Sustainable tourism must therefore make optimal use of environmental resources, respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, and ensure viable economic activities in the long term (UNWTO, 2021).

In this sense, it is important to highlight governance as a determining factor for the application of a tourism policy and in the management of the destination. Governance goes beyond governance, this concept implies a polycentric and multidisciplinary process that integrates the state, civil society and the private sector, each of which plays a role of active and equitable participation in decision-making and the execution of plans. According to Whittingham (2010), governance is about "the realization of political relations between various actors involved in the process of deciding, executing and evaluating decisions on matters of public interest... which includes institutions, both formal and informal" (p. 222).

Governance represents a challenge for local administrations in Mexico, mainly in aspects related to economic efficiency, in the decentralization of decision-making and in the development of public policies (Cruz et al., 2015). On the other hand, "there is a tendency to relate governance to sustainability processes in tourism" (Cruz et al., 2015, p. 1480). In fact, "tourism must be understood in a governance framework in which public action, private action and collective action are articulated" (Bustos, 2007, cited in Cruz et al., 2015). Although the principles of governance are applicable to any policy, in the practice of tourism policy and management they have not been consolidated, however, some points can be taken as references for evaluation, such as: "planning instruments that define the strategy, public participation, participation of tourism agents and society in general, public-private collaboration, inter-administrative cooperation, programming of actions with sufficient technical and financial capacity, monitoring and control of the evolution of management and transparency (Madrid, 2014; Pulido y Pulido, 2014; Velasco, 2008, cited in Ivars, et al., 2017, pp.16-17).

Finally, the application of a policy based on rural tourist destinations implies a double challenge, since these are spaces with unique characteristics, in which the tourism system tends to be closed, so work must be done to harmonize the relationships between social actors or *stakeholders*. Rural tourism is "a type of tourism activity in which the visitor experience is related to a wide spectrum of products generally linked to nature activities, agriculture, ways of life and rural cultures" (UNWTO, 2021). From the point of view of Sanagustín, Lafita and Moseñe (2018), "rural tourism is characterized by the development of small territories with their own identity that have an extensive offer of diffuse, non-concentrated and small-scale accommodation and leisure activities" (p.2). Thus, tourism in rural communities has boomed because today tourists are looking for new alternatives to carry out leisure activities different from traditional tourism, providing these places with

an economic spillover that can contribute to improving the quality of life of rural areas that offer their activities as a tourist product.

### 3. Methodology

The approach developed in the research is mixed, since quantitative and qualitative data were integrated through a sequential exploratory design that allowed a complete analysis of the case. In a first stage, based on a documentary review, a description of the sociodemographic and tourist environment of La Venta was generated. The first included the systematization of five indicators: location, characteristics of the population, social organization, infrastructure and accessibility. Meanwhile, in the category of tourism issues, four aspects were analyzed: attractions, services, background of the activity and tourism planning.

In the second stage, a descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out on the opinion of residents regarding the impacts of tourism, in the economic, social, cultural and environmental fields; by applying a survey to a non-probabilistic sample of 63 people. The instrument used was the questionnaire to measure the well-being of the host community, proposed in the UNWTO Practical Guide to Sustainable Development Indicators for Tourism Destinations (2005).

These data were contrasted with twenty indicators resulting from the content analysis of the three documents that underpin the operation of the Picturesque Towns Program: Guide, Frame of Reference and Guidelines. The possible evaluation of each of the requirements was dichotomous, i.e., whether or not it is met (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Requirements to enter the Picturesque Towns Program.

Requirements	Description	Evaluation	Remarks
1. Tourist opening of the town	Existence of statistical or documentary evidence that the locality has had experience with tourist activity. Community interest in developing tourism activity.		
2. Preponderant productive activity of the locality	Description of the position of tourism in relation to the economic activities of the locality.		
3. Tourist resources	Architecture		
	Festivals and traditions		
	Artisanal production		
	Traditional cuisine		
	Other		
4. Tourist product that generates overnight stays	Existence of activities that justify the overnight stay of visitors.		
5. Unique and symbolic appeal	Description of characteristics that make the main tourist attraction of the place unique.		
6. Number of inhabitants of 3,000 inhabitants or less	Review of updated statistical data.		
7. Basic tourist services	List of the basic tourist services that the town has (accommodation, food and beverages, ATMs, medical services, internet signal, gas stations, transportation, etc.)		
8. Tourist service	Existence of a space to provide information to visitors.		
9. Tourism service providers have a current registration in the RNT	Presence of tourism service providers in the RNT.		
10. Municipal development plan with actions to promote tourism, urban development, territorial planning, environmental conservation actions and resource preservation actions	Existence of the past or current municipal development plan in which this type of action is contemplated.		
11. Urban image regulations articulated with strategies for public services and attention to tourism	Existence of the regulation with required strategies.		
12. Municipal sustainable tourism program aligned with the SDGs	Existence of the program and analysis of its scope.		
13. Municipal program for the reorganization of informal commerce	Existence of the program.		

<b>14.</b> Favorable social situation	Description of updated data on population, housing, education, health, among others, that allow identifying conditions of vulnerability and priority factors for public intervention, prior to tourism development.		
<b>15.</b> Government body responsible for tourism promotion in the municipal council	Existence and analysis of the operation of the dependency.		
<b>16.</b> Google Earth map community UTM coordinates	Existence of a map of the locality that refers to what tourist attractions and services are found.		
<b>17.</b> Proposals that deal with the rescue or preservation of cultural heritage, tangible and intangible	Description of proposals along these lines.		
<b>18.</b> Description or proposal of an integrated tourism product	Description of proposals.		
<b>19.</b> Inventory of tourist attractions within a radius of 30km	Classification and description of tourist attractions in towns surrounding the community.		
<b>20.</b> Certified tour guides	List of guides of the municipality and/or locality.		

*Note.* This table shows a compilation of the requirements and characteristics that must be met by the localities aspiring to enter the Picturesque Towns program.

#### 4. Results

By way of summary, the following data are presented:

##### 4.1 Sociodemographic overview

Villa La Venta is located in the municipality of Huimanguillo, Tabasco. Its geographical location is 18°05'55.612" N, 94°02'52.722" W; and it is at an altitude of 10 meters, with respect to sea level (National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics [INEGI], 2020a). La Venta has a total population of 8539 people, made up of 52% women and 48% men. Regarding the population composition by age groups, 1132 people aged 60 and over live in the community, that is, 13% of the total population. Meanwhile, the young population, aged 18 to 24, represents 11% (INEGI, 2020a).

Education-related indicators show that 374 people aged 15 and over are illiterate, which means that 4.3% of the total population cannot read or write a message. In contrast, in general terms, 31% of the population aged 18 and over has post-basic education, that is, they have as their maximum schooling some degree passed in high school or technical studies with secondary or high school completed, bachelor's degree, specialty, master's or doctorate. Finally, it is observed that the average level of schooling is 9.34 (INEGI, 2020a).

The economically active population in the locality is 4172, considering people aged 12 years and older, of whom 97% indicated that they had a job (INEGI, 2020a). According to the Huimanguillo Municipal Development Plan 2019-2021, the main economic activities of La Venta are agriculture, livestock; in addition to operating a high oil dynamism. This last activity has a strong interference in the population, specifically, due to the presence of the La Venta Gas Processing Complex of Petróleos Mexicanos (PEMEX).

With reference to the issue of health, it is observed that 76% of the total population of La Venta is affiliated with some medical service in a public or private health institution.

On the other hand, 54% of the people of La Venta have the Catholic religion as their belief or spiritual preference. Meanwhile, 32% of the population belongs to a Protestant and evangelical Christian religious group (INEGI, 2020a).

In La Venta there are 2576 homes in inhabited private homes. The average number of occupants in these homes is 3.31. To date, 1.7% of all homes have dirt floors, 99% have electricity, 63% have piped water and are supplied by the public water service, 98% have drainage connected to the public network; a septic tank or septic tank or biodigester; or a pipe that leads to a ravine or crack, river, lake or sea. In addition, 21% of the homes have a fixed telephone line and 27% confirmed having Internet (INEGI, 2020a).

Due to the size of the town, in Villa La Venta there is a Municipal Delegation that includes the nearest towns or population centers. The delegation generally fulfills the functions of managing the actions for the development of the municipality by supporting the activities carried out by the City of Huimanguillo as well as motivating the population to participate in these activities. In addition to supervising the provision of public services and proposing the necessary measures to the municipal president for the improvement or expansion of said services, taking care of the order, security and tranquility of the residents of the place, monitoring compliance with the regulatory provisions issued by the City Council; among others (Official State Newspaper [P.O.], 2021).



The town is connected to the cities of Huimanguillo, Cárdenas, and Villahermosa, as well as to the rest of the country through federal highway No. 180, also known as the Gulf and Caribbean Circuit (H. Ayuntamiento Constitucional de Huimanguillo Tabasco, 2019).

#### 4.2 Tourist panorama

The municipality of Huimanguillo has a group of attractions with a vocation towards cultural tourism and alternative or nature tourism that contribute significantly to the tourism development of the state of Tabasco. The most significant tourist sites are: the archaeological zone of La Venta with its site museum, of the Olmec culture, the ecological reserve of Agua Selva, and the archaeological zone of Malpasito, with characteristics of the Zoque culture (H. Ayuntamiento Constitucional de Huimanguillo Tabasco, 2019).

As of 2019, the Ministry of Tourism of the state of Tabasco resumed the model of grouping attractions through tourist routes. Villa La Venta was subscribed to the Olmeca Zoque Route, along with Agua Selva, Costa Olmeca, citrus and pineapple forest ranches, Pajalar, Laguna del Rosario; and Malpasito (Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** Aspirational peoples. Villa La Venta.



Source: SECTUR Tabasco, 2019.

In relation to the proximity of Villa La Venta to tourist attractions in other localities, it is observed that, within a radius of about 30 km by land, is Villa Benito Juárez, also known as Campo Magallanes, belonging to the municipality of Cárdenas. This town is 18 km from La Venta and its main tourist resource is the typical gastronomy based on fish and seafood. On the other hand, 39 km from Villa La Venta is located Villa Sánchez Magallanes, also in the municipality of Cárdenas. This village is the Antigua Barra de Santa Ana, a port on the Gulf of Mexico, which is characterized by fishing, oyster farming, the oil industry, plantation agriculture and cattle raising. Like La Venta, Villa Sánchez Magallanes is part of the list of aspirational towns to the Picturesque Towns Program. Both destinations belong to the Olmeca Zoque Route and the area of potential tourist development, called Olmec Coast.

The Olmec Coast has several tourist attractions, ranging from gastronomy related to fishing and traditional aquaculture of sea bass, shellfish and oysters, mainly. But it also has natural resources such as beaches, Laguna del Carmen and El Pajalar Island. In addition, from July 22 to 26, the Oyster Fair is held, in honor of the Virgin of Santa Ana, in the port of Sánchez Magallanes.

In contrast, the tourist attractions located in the municipality of Huimanguillo, where Villa La Venta is located, are outside the 30km radius of influence. For reference, it is noted that Agua Selva is 142 km away and Laguna del Rosario is 58 km away (Google Maps, 2022).

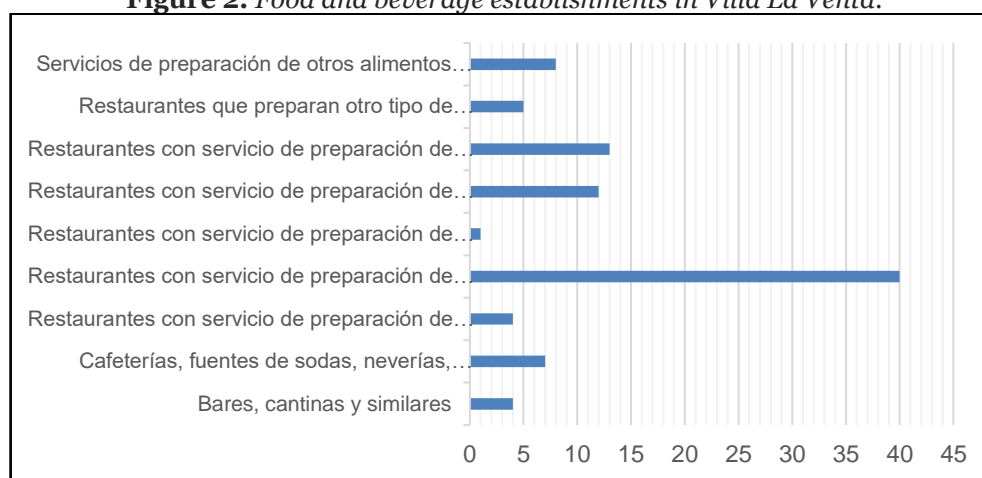
The main attraction of Villa La Venta is the archaeological site and the site museum, with the same name. This archaeological zone is linked to the Olmec culture, considered the Mesoamerican mother culture; The importance of the site lies in its antiquity, as its main pyramidal base is probably the oldest in the region. Currently, numerous mounds can be seen that in their time formed architectural complexes (H. Ayuntamiento Constitucional de Huimanguillo Tabasco, 2019). The tourist inventory carried out indicated that the current state of the archaeological zone is vulnerable due to lack of maintenance, and that vegetation covers several areas of it, which makes access difficult. In addition, the place does not have the corresponding signage within the archaeological space. The site is open all year round, except holidays, and offers parking services, information module and ticket office; Occasionally guided tours are also available. The site is managed by the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH).

In the archaeological zone there is a site museum that permanently exhibits objects that offer a general overview of what the Olmec culture was like in La Venta. The environment of the museum corresponds to an urban one, there are tourist services available, as well as basic necessities within reach. The museum has minor damage caused by the passage of time to the roof, some historical figurines and corridors.

Additionally, in La Venta there is a cultural tourist vocation originated by the existence of other resources, examples of them are: the parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the religious festival and fair in Villa La Venta in the month of June. Regarding gastronomy, it has not been possible to observe a distinction or particularity. On the other hand, handicraft production is limited and is generally related to the elaboration of small replicas of the colossal heads located in the archaeological site; as well as with boxes and baskets that are made with palms and vines, comales, clay pots and piñatas.

According to the National Statistical Directory of Economic Units (DENUE) and with reference to tourist equipment in Villa La Venta, a total of 94 food and beverage establishments are observed, 43% correspond to restaurants with snack preparation service. These establishments are located in the public market, on the street, on the road, or in private homes (INEGI, 2020b) (Figure 2).

**Figure 2.** Food and beverage establishments in Villa La Venta.

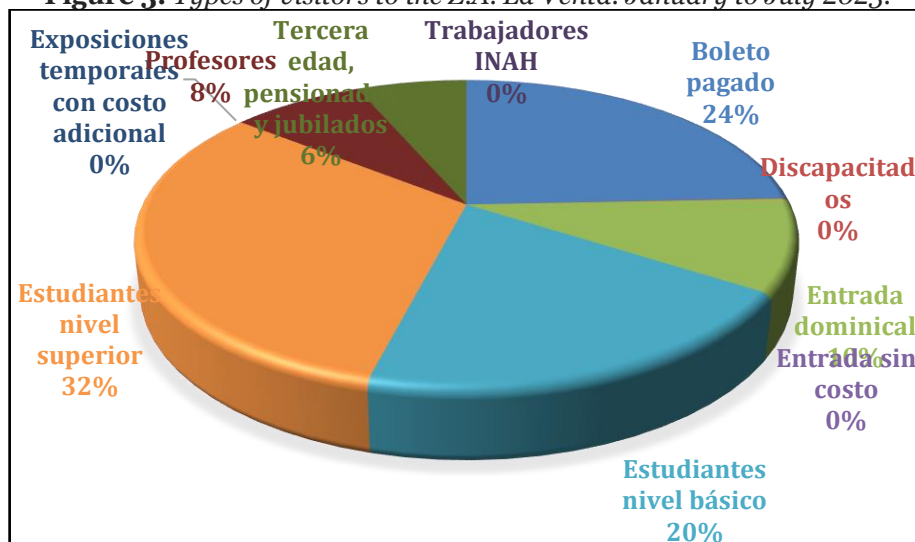


*Note.* Prepared by the authors, based on data from DENUE (INEGI, 2020b).

Regarding the lodging service and according to the DENUE, in Villa La Venta there are a total of eight establishments, 4 hotels without other integrated services, 3 guesthouses and guest houses and 1 motel (INEGI, 2020). On the other hand, it is important to note that in the locality there were no tourism service providers registered in the National Tourism Registry (RNT). However, in an expanded review of the catalog, two providers were observed in the municipality of Huimanguillo, the first offers lodging service and the second is a tourist guide (SECTUR, 2022)

In relation to the basic infrastructure for visitor access, Villa La Venta is home to a Autobuses de Oriente (ADO) terminal, four public health service providers (INEGI, 2020) and at least three pharmacies, a PEMEX gas station and an ATM of the Banorte Financial Group. In addition, the Villa La Venta Higher Technological Institute operates in the town, for higher education.

As a reference of the importance of Villa La Venta for the tourist development of Tabasco, an approximation of the number of visitors to the archaeological zone and the site museum can be generated. In this sense, it is observed that in the first seven months of 2023, this archaeological site is the third most visited in the state with a total of 3,801 tourists, that is, 6.50% of the total visitors to archaeological zones in the State. Of which, about 95% are national. The months with the most influx are April, March and July. Most of the visitors are higher level students (INAH, 2023) (Figure 3).

**Figure 3.** *Types of visitors to the Z.A. La Venta. January to July 2023.*

Source. Prepared by the authors, based on data from the Institutional Visitor Statistics System. INAH, 2023.

According to the review of the current Tourism Development Sector Program of the State of Tabasco, no priority is observed to develop tourism activity in Villa La Venta. However, this document highlights the creation of the Agua Selva Integrally Planned Center [CIP] located in Huimanguillo, as one of the fifteen priority tourist areas of Tabasco, with potential for nature tourism within the Great Olmec-Zoque Route. However, the same program mentions a list of thirty-three priority programs and projects with the aim of attracting a greater number of visitors and consolidating existing destinations and infrastructures, from which the Picturesque Towns Program (Planning Committee for the Development of the State of Tabasco [COPLADET], 2019).

At the local level, the latest Municipal Development Plan of Huimanguillo, 2019-2021, the Archaeological Zone of La Venta is considered one of the main attractions. In general, this plan indicates as one of its strategies: the generation of conditions for the tourist development of the municipality. Some of the lines of action it indicates are: the holding of fairs and festivals, the modernization of the markets of the capital and the villas, the management of resources for the promotion of alternative or nature tourism, as well as for accessible financing for the modernization of the hotel and restaurant sector. In addition to the implementation of campaigns to disseminate the attractions, the promotion of archaeological sites as a destination for cultural tourism, the management of support for the training of local tourism service providers; among others (H. Ayuntamiento Constitucional de Huimanguillo Tabasco, 2019).

Within the administrative structure of the City of Huimanguillo there is a Tourism Coordination attached to the Subdirectoriate of Economic Development and Tourism. In addition to designing a work plan, this coordination is responsible for some actions such as the promotion of tourist spaces and gastronomy, as well as the operation of the tourist centers: Laguna del Rosario, Agua Selva and La Venta (H. Ayuntamiento Constitucional de Huimanguillo Tabasco, 2016).

#### 4.3 Effects of tourism on the population

In the first approach with the host community, it was found that about 86% of those surveyed consider tourism to be a profit-generating activity, mainly associated with the creation of jobs and its contribution to the community obtaining various services. In addition, there is a perception of more than 87% that tourism stimulates the production and sale of handicrafts, thus promoting the development of local culture.

In contrast, for about 51% of La Venta residents, the economic benefits related to tourism practice do not stay in the community. On the other hand, possibly due to its incipient development, more than 57% of people denied that tourism is linked to the damage to the environment of the place.

In general, interest in developing tourism in La Venta is high, which leads to the assumption that the Picturesque Villages Program could be positively accepted by the community (Figure 4).

**Figure 4.** *Interest in tourism development in La Venta.*

Source: Authors.

However, there are concerns that residents consider necessary to address prior to the development of the activity, some of these are:

- Low influx of visitors.
- Lack of diversity of tourist attractions, especially those related to historical and cultural aspects.
- Tourist sites with neglected facilities.
- Lack of tourism promotion.
- Minimal tourist culture among residents.
- Concern about potential exploitation of resources.
- Dirty or contaminated green areas and public spaces, or without maintenance.
- Deficient supply of drinking water and electricity services.
- Lack of allocation of public resources for tourism development.
- Disinterest of some sectors of the population, mainly those linked to government and politics.
- An environment of insecurity related to crimes on public roads.
- Perception of political corruption among rulers.

Among the actions suggested by the respondents, in order to improve the current dynamics of tourism in La Venta, are:

- Improvement of infrastructure and services associated with tourism.
- Promotion and innovative dissemination of tourist attractions.
- Development of new tourism products and services.
- Development of alternative activities in tourist sites.
- Promotion of community integration and participation in tourism planning and development.
- Raising awareness and training citizens on issues related to tourism culture.
- Promotion of community-based tourism in order to generate direct income for residents.
- Attraction of private investment in the creation of tourist services that guarantee the stay of visitors.
- Linking the authorities with the agencies responsible for the operation of programs related to tourism activity.
- Ensuring the safety of visitors and tourist sites.
- Entrepreneurship of shops specializing in artisanal products.
- Maintenance of lighting in public spaces.

## 5. Discussion

The main results suggest that there is evidence about the tourist experience of La Venta, essentially in the cultural tourism segment. The most significant tourist attraction is the archaeological zone with its site museum, positioned as the third most visited area in Tabasco, mostly by national tourists. However, this attraction induces a short visit, no more than two hours, which limits its consolidation as a tourist product capable of generating overnight stays. On the other hand, Villa La Venta is part of the tourist route: Olmeca Zoque. This integration enhances the influx of visitors, since the destination is complemented by the diversity of attractions located in other communities, within a radius of no more than 30km.

The tourist opening of the town is exposed with the high percentage of residents interested in developing the activity, since it is perceived as generating various benefits, despite the fact that this does not represent its preponderant productive activity; since the economic vocation is linked to commerce and the oil industry.



Regarding the provision of infrastructure and tourist equipment, La Venta has functional elements to meet the current tourist displacement. However, these could be insufficient for a potential lawsuit. In addition, no RNT registered tourist service providers or certified tourist guides were found in the town.

There are plans, programs and regulations that refer to actions aimed at the urban improvement of the municipality in general, but no evidence was found on tourism activities in the locality. Nor is there a specific program for tourism development, although this does appear as a priority in municipal planning and in accordance with the principles of sustainability. In this sense, it was observed that the work of planning and development of the activity depends on the Tourism Coordination attached to the Subdirectorate of Economic Development and Tourism of the City Council of the municipality of Huimanguillo. It is important to note that both the archaeological zone and the site museum are administered by the INAH and the latter manages its own income for the improvement and maintenance of the site.

In relation to the analysis of sociodemographic data, it is striking that the town has more than eight thousand inhabitants. This contravenes the conditions established by the Picturesque Towns Program: to have 3,000 inhabitants or less. With reference to the Program's requirement to have a Google Earth Map with UTM coordinates of the community, one was located although it is not updated with data from DENUE of INEGI (2020).

The initial literature review did not yield specific information on proposals for the rescue or preservation of the tourist heritage of the locality, nor on projects for the creation of integrated tourism products.

## 6. Conclusions

In a first approximation, Villa La Venta meets 35% of the criteria established by the Picturesque Towns Program. These are: tourist opening of the town, tourist resources, unique and symbolic attractions, basic tourist services, favorable social conditions, dependence responsible for tourism promotion and presence of nearby tourist attractions.

In contrast, 30% of the requirements of the Program need to be met, these are: greater economic participation of tourism, existence of a tourist product that generates overnight stays, presence of tourism service providers with current registration in the RNT, design of proposals that deal with the rescue or preservation of cultural, tangible and intangible heritage and proposal of a tourism product integrated into nearby tourist attractions. It should be noted that one of the unfulfilled indications refers to the maximum number of inhabitants established in the delimitation of the town indicated in the guidelines of the program. Its achievement is notoriously beyond the reach of the community. The attention and modification of this point corresponds, then, to those responsible for the planning and implementation of the program.

Partially, the community has 35% of the requirements. Therefore, it is suggested to intervene to establish spaces for tourist attention, as well as the priority inclusion of La Venta as a tourist destination in the planning of municipal development or urban development, territorial planning, environmental conservation and the preservation of resources. As well as in policies and programs related to urban image, reorganization of informal commerce and sustainable tourism.

It is concluded that, in the short term, La Venta is not in a position to initiate the evaluation process of the Picturesque Towns Program. In principle, it is necessary to correct the deficiencies in public management, infrastructure and services, which were pointed out by the community, since they form the basis of any economic activity.

From the analysis of the literature, it is possible to distinguish some aspects that must be strengthened in the process of formulating the Picturesque Towns Program. The first refers to the need to identify the identity characteristics that the aspiring communities possess, in the social, historical, economic, cultural and environmental contexts; in order to generate conditions or criteria of inclusion that are equitable. Similarly, it is important to carry out diagnoses that can be approximated to the tourist situation of the destinations, addressing categories of analysis on the type of real and potential tourism product, the hierarchy of attractiveness of resources, the integration of tourist equipment and tourist culture.

In addition, it is necessary to reflect on the interests and principles of the actors responsible for its institutionalization, since the Picturesque Towns Program is extensive in requirements and obligations raised from verticality towards the executors or community operators. However, it does not observe substantial commitments, nor does it assume responsibilities to guide communities in the process of consolidating tourism activity, mainly in priority areas such as: direct public investment for tourism, financing for the private sector, integration and establishment of productive and sustainable projects. Therefore, it is suggested to develop a comprehensive, systemic, sustainable and participatory vision in the planning of tourism development in the localities, which leads to a state of governance.

Finally, it is suggested that the proposing Secretariat should reason the scope of the Program, taking into consideration the observations made by the academy, with the aim of redefining its principles and requirements since, in its current presentation, they would be exclusive of some peoples; such as the case studied.

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