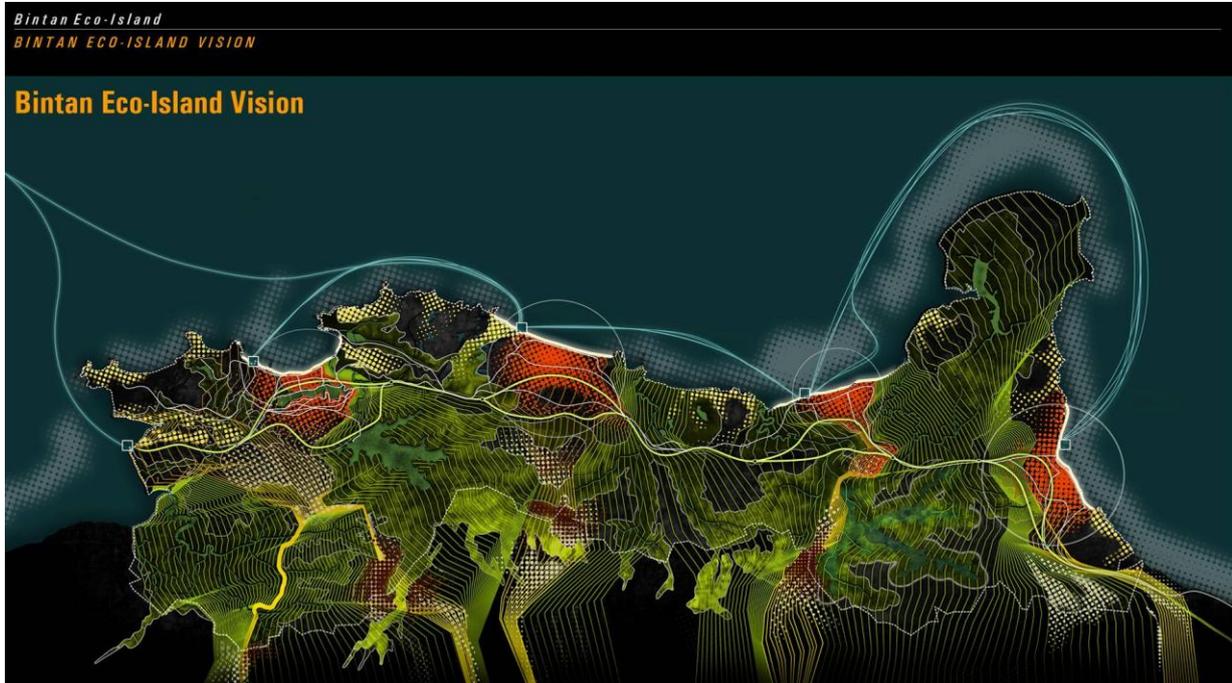


A New Vision for Bintan

Written by: Luke Mitchell, Fundación Metr poli's Coordinator of Asian Projects



On 17 April 2012, Dr Alfonso Vegara, president of Fundaci n Metr poli, presided over the launch of the Bintan Eco Island publication – a development strategy for the Indonesian island of Bintan based on a sustainable balance between ecological preservation and vibrant economic growth. Launched with the support of the Centre for Liveable Cities (CLC), this publication is the culmination of one year of research by Fundaci n Metr poli with support from the University of Pennsylvania.

Understanding how cities work in the 21st century requires thinking that transcends political boundaries. Through the alignment and coordination of development strategies, transnational city-regions can compete more effectively on a global scale by building upon their complementary strengths and becoming leaders in urban innovation.

For Singapore, there is considerable potential to strengthen and expand the regional economic ecosystem through coordinated development with neighbouring Johor Bahru in Malaysia and the Indonesian islands of Batam and Bintan.

Towards a sustainable future

Encompassing 200 square kilometres of pristine shorefront land just 45 minutes from Singapore, the property of Bintan Resorts presents an excellent opportunity for strategic collaboration between Singapore and Indonesia in the area of sustainable development. To encourage this outcome, Fundaci n Metr poli conducted an in-depth spatial analysis of the site, examining ecological systems – in particular, mangroves

and coral reefs – and urban settlement patterns. The researchers also studied various international precedents for resort islands and second-home destinations.

From this analysis emerged the Bintan Eco Island Vision, a development strategy for Bintan that preserves the island's complex ecosystem while promoting the growth of vibrant, mixed-use urban clusters at four locations along the coast. These clusters will be similar in spirit to the Mediterranean model of *pueblos turísticos* (tourist villages) – exciting centres of urban activity that appeal to both visitors and residents.

The new vision represents a dramatic departure from an outmoded model of resort-based development. Going forward, emphasis will be placed on the development of second homes, economic clusters, and even institutional tenants such as schools. As part of this vision, Fundación Metr poli will work with leaders in eco-technology to bring innovation to Bintan in areas such as alternative energy, clean water management, and sustainable mobility systems.

A partnership for progressive thinking

Fundaci n Metr poli is a foundation based in Madrid, Spain, that belongs to the emerging generation of "intellectual capital institutions" around the world. Both CLC and Fundaci n Metr poli are dedicated to the challenges of building a sustainable future for cities and regions in the 21st century. In November 2010, CLC and Fundaci n Metr poli signed a memorandum of understanding for the formation of a strategic partnership, which has subsequently resulted in mutual knowledge exchange.

To date, Dr Vegara has delivered two lectures organised by CLC and participated in events such as the WORLD CITIES SUMMIT (WCS) 2010 and the WCS MAYORS FORUM 2011. Furthermore, as part of a staff exchange under the MoU signed, I am currently based in CLC's office and participate in collaborative research efforts with CLC and the Urban Land Institute.

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