

# The Tourist Project Of The Setap Group For The International Bid Of Ideas For Maspalomas Costa Canaria

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## Abstract

■ The city of Maspalomas began building in 1961, year of the celebration of the International Bid of ideas for Maspalomas Costa Canaria. This event was sponsored by the owner of the lands Mr. Alejandro de Castillo y Bravo de Laguna, the Count of Vega Grande.

The group of French architects and city planners ATEA and SETAP were awarded first place in the bid. The project stood out due to its high quality details, the respectful distribution with the landscape and the majesty of its urban forms in the different enclaves that comprised the project.

The analysis of the professional work of ATEA and SETAP, the city models that were developed in the atelier, the academic experience of working with the ateliers of the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts in France by some of the members of SETAP, and the bid, are some of the ideas developed in this investigation.

*Key words:*

Tourist urbanism, Maspalomas Costa Canaria, urbanism in France, ATEA-SETAP, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts

## Introduction

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■ At the beginning of the seventies, in the south of the Gran Canary Island, the lands commonly known as the Maspalomas estate became the place where the new tourist city of Maspalomas Costa Canaria was to be built. This city was going to be the object of the greatest number of direct and indirect tourist activities of the island. This would transform it and convert it into the main economic engine.

The Maspalomas estate, with an extension of 2,000 hectares and a length of 17 km of coast, was the property of Mr. Alejandro del Castillo y del Castillo. The owner, advised by the architect, Mr. Pedro Massiu, and constantly accompanied by the architect from Madrid, Mr. Manuel de la Peña Suárez, was the person who had the intuition of creating and giving shape to a new international tourist center by the name of Maspalomas Costa Canaria.

To that end, it was necessary to elaborate a bid for ideas from architects and city planners of around the world. The preparation of the official announcement of the International Bid of ideas for Maspalomas Costa Canaria was done under the auspices of the International Union of Architects (UIA) in Paris and the Higher Council of Architects of Spain (CSAE) in Madrid.

*The result of the bid was announced in January 1962; however, 1961 was the year in which the material presentations, participant inscription and projects that were presented to the bid took place.  
(Taped) Interview given to the author of Mr. Alejandro del Castillo (son of the developer) on the January 4, 2008, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.  
Duration: 132 min.*

The 9th of January of 1962 the international jury announced the eagerly awaited project. The first prize went to the French atelier SETAP (Société pour l'Étude Technique d'Aménagements Planifiés) with a plan that exceeded all of the prospects of every single member of the jury, who decided, unanimously, that the project was very much superior to the ones submitted by the rest of the participants .

The ATEA and SETAP atelier, managed by the architects Guy Lagneau, Michel Weill and Jean Dimitrijevic, until this time was in charge of important projects in the field of architecture, such as the Museum of La Havre (1959), and city planning, such as the study of the outskirts of Paris or the city of Cansado, (1958), in Mauritania.

The SETAP, installed in Paris, is structured in study groups known as ATEA+SETAP or ATEA+AART, where each one of the departments can develop activities simultaneously, jointly or independently .

The relationship of some of the integrants of the atelier with teaching in the École National Supérieure des Beaux-Arts (ENSBA) and the École des Ponts et Chaussées in Paris was essential in distinguishing some of the peculiarities of the project presented by the SETAP for the Maspalomas bid.

## The ATEA + SETAP in Paris

■ In 1949, in a building in Paris built around 1920, the first architectural works were developed by the architects Daniel Badani, Guy Lagneau, Michel Weill and Jean Dimitrijevic.

The Atelier, divided into eight spaces, was composed of a reception, offices, model rooms, etc. It was equipped with distinguished furniture designed by Marcel Gascoïn and Finnish chairs model Alvar Aalto that could be dismounted. This Atelier served to start an activity that later in 1953 resulted in the founding of the society ATEA and SETAP.



Left. Figure 1. Atelier D. Badani, Guy Lagneau, Michel Weill and Jean Dimitrijevic. View of the mobile partition. Right. Figure 2. View of the design work room.

The offices for the development of architecture and planning would take the name of ATEA (Ateliers d'Études Architecturales) and SETAP (Société Technique d'Aménagements Planifiés). The atelier was managed by Guy Lagneau (architect-city planner), Michel Weill (architect-city planner), Jean Dimitrijevic (architect-city planner), Renzo Moro (architect), Henri Coulomb (architect-city planner), Paul Cordoliani (architect), Pierre Ropion (office manager), Philippe Gennet (lawyer-city planner) and Ivan Seifert (city planner). They created a structured and multidisciplinary atelier for projects that went from an architectonic scale to a wider territorial distribution.

## Structure of the Atelier ATEA+SETAP

The studies and assignments elaborated by the ATEA+SETAP group had to follow an internal methodology of work adapted to the atelier's model and to the type of jobs that they received. In this manner, ATEA+SETAP depending on the type of project began with a "Conseil d'administration" for jobs relating to: technical services; regional, urban, operational or decentralization developments; and administration; or from the "Architectes Conseillers Techniques de la SETAP" for jobs relating to: architecture; tourist development; habitat; community equipment; industrial architecture; investigation and bids.

Depending on the type of job, the "Conseil de coordination equipe ATEA + SETAP" would be the first to prepare the prospecting guidelines for the development of the project. Once the guidelines were established and after deciding which of the four big areas of work would follow: Architecture, technical services; development; and ad-

ministration; they continued with the project process until the elaboration of the final documentation, before the "Exterior Experts Council", where it was reviewed by external engineers.

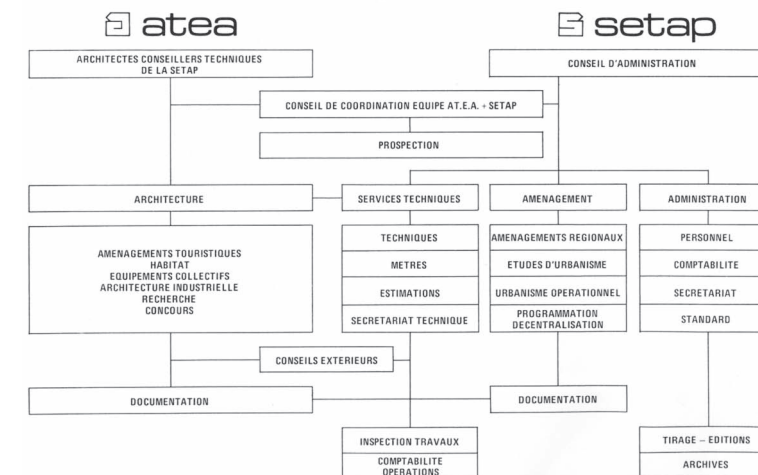


Figure 1. Structure of the work stages depending on the type of project.

## Organization of the Atelier ATEA+SETAP

ATEA and SETAP had complementary activities; they had a common organization and a permanent team whose activities belonged to the following areas:

- 1.-Analysis, coordination, synthesis, study proposals in the areas of geography, demography, economy, finance, city planning, regional and rural development, planning and industrial decentralization.
- 2.-Conception, coordination and executive management of the architecture works.
- 3.-Conception, coordination and executive management of the technical studies related to architecture and engineering.

Both departments of the Atelier ATEA and SETAP could intervene together, simultaneously or separately, each having their own permanent personnel available .

ATEA and SETAP complete this organization with the common and permanent cooperation of different engineers and consultants, as occurred on several occasions with the cooperation of Jean Prouve, among others.

The main references of the atelier ATEA and SETAP are grouped in the following areas of expertise:

- A.-Development.....Regional development, city planning studies and operational city planning.
- B.-Economy..... Programming and industrial decentralization.
- C.-Tourism.....Tourism developments.
- D.-Habitat.....Community and individual habitats.
- E.- Equipment.....Administration, commercial, schools and universities, hospitals, socio-cultural, hotels and restaurants, technical-industrial and infrastructures.
- F.-Agreed operations
- G.-Bids and acknowledgments

AS; ATEA+SETAP op. cit., page 3

The number and division of permanent personnel is: URBANISM 12 Sections-6 ETAM; ARCHITECTURE 12 Sections-24 ETAM; TECHNICAL STUDIES 12 Sections-4 ETAM; MANAGEMENT SERVICES 3 Sections-8 ETAM; COMMON SERVICES 1 Section-7 ETAM. (The meaning of the acronym ETAM is unknown). AS; ATEA+SETAP op. cit., page 4

### Tourist developments: 1961-1972

Of the 17 tourist plans elaborated by the atelier between 1961 and 1972, the Maspalomas project in 1961 became the first tourist development done by SETAP. The plan estimated a capacity of 40,000 beds and a population density of 60 habitants per hectare. In the same manner, in 1972 the city of Maspalomas became the last tourist project designed by the atelier. In this occasion, it was a consultation by the Maspalomas Costa Canaria company as to how to achieve a 200,000 bed capacity.

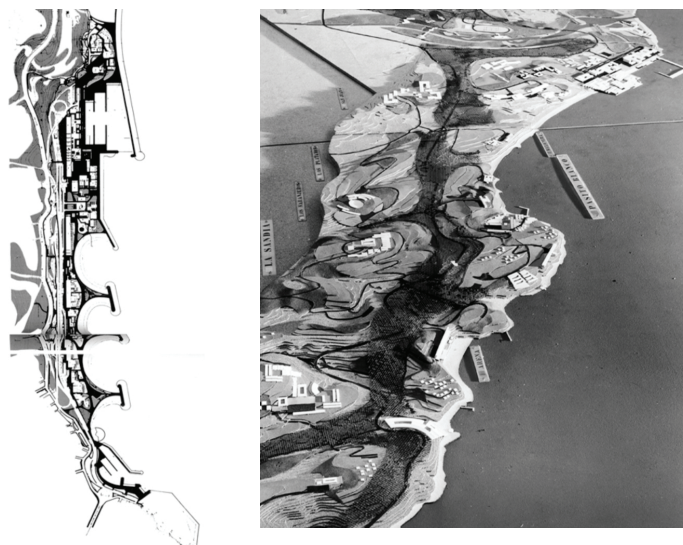
The participation of the atelier in numerous tourist planning projects meant working in countries like Spain, Portugal and France. Among the tourist projects and studies elaborated, it is worth mentioning the ones done for Maspalomas (1961), the plan for Mourillon a Tulún in France (1963), the proposal for Vilamoura in Portugal (1965), and the residential assembly of the Marinas de Cogilón in Portugal (1965).

The Maspalomas plan in 1961 stands out due to its fantastic geometry of undulating silhouettes and for its high landscape value, besides having respected the dune system. The project estimated a total capacity of 40,000 beds and an average population density of 60 habitants per hectare in a 2,000 ha extension. The green spaces and the urban settlement units were active elements for the organization and structuring of the coast territory.

On the Mediterranean coast, the strategy employed for the development of the coast of Mourillon en Tulún in 1963 was located at the foot of Mourillon cornice and possessed a 2 km length of coast shore. The project defended the creation of a series of artificial beaches; the creation of spa and recreation equipment; the implementation of luxury residential areas; the building of secondary and tertiary activities that suited the reconversion of the jobs; and the enhancement of the links and exchanges with the region .

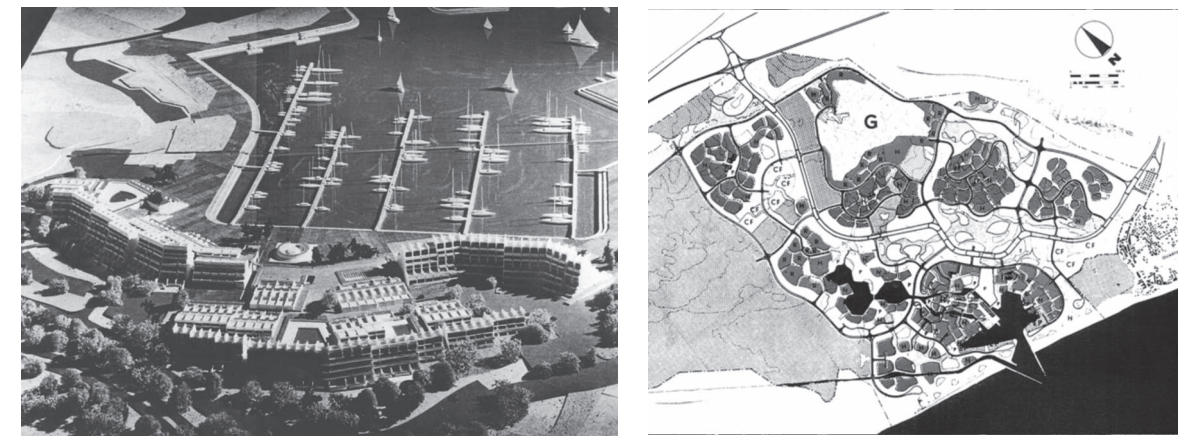
In 1965, the tourist project for the town of Vilamoura in Algarve, at the hands of the company LUSOTUR, elaborated a plan with a multidisciplinary team composed of MM. Carver, L. Baker, J. Caetano and Jean Dimitrijevic. The plans and studies were elaborated by C. L. Baker, SETAP, GEFEL and Hidrotecnica Portuguesa Lda. The project stood out for its organic setup and proposed a collection of residential and tourist units that were interconnected, interpreted and managed as a single unit . The proposed structure has meant that the dimension of the planned program has been divided into eight great development areas, connected and intertwined by the road network and green spaces.

The example of Las Marinas de Cogilón will serve as a model of a plan meticulously elaborated and built in the same manner. In 1965, the atelier ATEA and SETAP in cooperation with the engineers Vernet and Paul, and the technical assistants of the "Financial Society for the tourist industry", planned a port complex with an area of 40 ha, of which the recreational port was to take up more than half of the space and with a capacity for 1,500 mooring spots. The rest of the program was defined by 600 houses, and commercial, technical and recreational equipment . As with the other plans elaborated by the atelier, the structure is organized by three groups of changeable settlements, where each one is strategically placed with regard to the port, understood as the real "amusement" and from which all intervention gravitated.



Left. Figure 4. Development plan of the coast of Mourillon en Tulún, 1963.

Right. Figure 5. Model of the tourist project in the International Bid of Maspalomas Costa-Canaria, 1961.



Left. Figure 6. Model of the tourist project Las Marinas de Cogilón. 1965

Right. Figure 7. Tourist development plan of Vilamoura. 1965

### Training in the École d'architecture of Paris, ENSBA 1956-1959

The École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts (ENSBA) in Paris was the center of education where the directors of the ATEA and SETAP: Guy Lagneau, Michel Weill y Jean Dimitrijevic, received their training, as well as other contributors that were part of the atelier. Its directors in the decade of the 50's became part of the group of professors at the ENSBA, creating the Lagneau-Laffaille atelier. The training as urban planner of Guy Lagneau and Michel Weill continued at the Institut d'Urbanisme of the Université de Paris, and Jean Dimitrijevic, architect and technology specialist, went on to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.).

The ENSBA during the year in which the atelier SETAP won the Maspalomas bid (1961) was an active participant in the creation of a reform to university education in Paris.

Some of the most important concepts of the reform proclaimed by the architect and professor Marcel Lods are collected in his first writings, by means of the 1956-1959 education program of the ENSBA, such as: "... l'Ecole tentera de former des esprits ouverts à l'universel..." and "...chaque élément de la création fait partie d'un tout indissociable." .

Some of those ethical objectives helped establish the educational guidelines in the ENSBA and adapted to the demands of the Artistic Education General Management of France.

The new reform in education, as stated in the texts of architect Marcel Lods, should guarantee a solid artistic and technical education for students. With the new teaching system, the ENSBA became a center for art and architecture. Marcel Lods described this new spirit of education as: "L'Association pour la création d'une École d'Architecture et d'un Centre expérimental d'Architecture et d'Art" .

These words captured the attention of the Secretary of Education in Paris and the Secretary of State of Fine Arts. Only in this manner could the new study plan of the ENSBA reflect architectural studies in three cycles: Propaedeutics (two years); architectural studies (four years); and "stages" (one year).

Students that started the propaedeutics course had to prove their abilities, values for spatial imagination and sensibility to colors and shapes, with activities such as: conferences, practical exercises of application in groups through photos ; and seminars on design and construction of models.

The second cycle of education corresponded to the architecture courses with a duration of four years. The work of territorial planning and organization were taught the second year with Guy Lagneau as a teacher.

*Term used by the architect Jean Dimitrijevic to explain the project. Interview (taped) given to the author to architect Jean Dimitrijevic, October, 2008, Paris. Duration: 56 min.*

*"L'aménagement du Litoral du Mourillon, par l'Atelier d'Architecture Lagneau, Weill, Dimitrijevic", 1967, Urbanisme, vol. 100, page 50-51*

*Biaugeaud, J. s.a. Personal document of the author, provided by Pedro José Franco López, photo of the model, Maspalomas Costa Canaria project, S.E.T.A.P. group (3) b/n; 23x17cm. edn, s.ed, s.l*

*Personal archive of architect Jean Dimitrijevic. Personal documents of the author, by Jean Dimitrijevic, b/n, 21x29 cm.*

*"L'aménagement touristique de Vilamoura, Algarve-Portugal, par C.L. Baker, J.Caetano et J.Dimitrijevic", 1967, Urbanisme, vol. 101, page 52*

*"L'aménagement du Litoral du Mourillon, par l'Atelier d'Architecture Lagneau, Weill, Dimitrijevic", 1967, Urbanisme, vol. 100, page 50-51*

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*"Les Marinas de Cogilón: Dans le Golfe de St-Stropez; architect Dimitrijevic, Jean", October 1971, Techniques et Architectures., vol. 34, no. 1, page 87-91*

In addition to the theoretical lessons, practical projects were carried out in the ateliers. The workshops were composed of a maximum of thirty students, teachers and assistants. The objective of the projects was to develop in the students a knowledge of culture and in the methods of artistic expression.

Some of the organization charts of the ateliers of that period show the methodology that was applied to student education. In the education program of 1952-53, they analyzed how the atelier "Lafaille-Lagneau", in collaboration with Jean Dimitrijevic, realized constant reviews of the students' projects. The last stage of the project was assessed by the Managing Committee that awarded them the education diploma.

During the time they had for the elaboration of the project, training was complemented with theoretical classes and conferences taught by external teachers of the ENSBA.

## **Events, projects for the international tender of Maspalomas Costa Canaria**

■ The southern area of the Grand Canary Island, after several attempts of exploitation at the beginning of the 50's with the exploitation of small tourist interventions, among which we can emphasize the proposal of landscape gardener, Nicolás María Rubió, the proposal for the Maspalomas Hotel by the architect Manuel Martín Fernández de la Torre in the Oasis area, and the design of a Parador type by architect Eduardo Laforet served as first intuitions for the development that later transformed the Maspalomas estate in an international center.

After the first International Bid of Ideas in Spain with tourist purposes, nominated as "Elviria residential area" (1960), the second experience corresponded to the International bid of Maspalomas Costa Canaria (1961). Its developers, Mr. Salvador Guerrero in the case of the "Elviria residential area", and Mr. Alejandro del Castillo y del Castillo for "Maspalomas Costa Canaria" were motivated at the time by the New Plan for the Development of the State by the creation of tourist centers and by the recent creation of the Ministry of Tourism in Spain.

Some of the architectural magazines of global recognition announced the "Maspalomas Costa Canaria" bid during 1961. Accompanied by the national press, they revealed the extraordinary qualities of the place for the implementation of a tourist center, with headlines such as "Maspalomas, global attraction point" or "Maspalomas, the best beach in Europe". The wide coverage of international disclosure that the bid manifest produced among architects of all over the world brought to the event the construction of a tourist imaginary for the city of Maspalomas that was yet to be built.

The development of the bid follows the guidelines established in the "Project regulations for International architecture tenders" as reflected in the attachment of "Project regulations for International architecture and urban planning tenders" published by the U.I.A. in 1955. The regulations were composed of a total of 53 articles, divided in 9 chapters, of which emphasis can be placed on some of the mandatory areas, such as: inscription and admission of participants; awarding of bonuses, compensation and indemnities; copyright; UIA cooperation, and organization and publicity of the bid.

In order to know the steps that were to be followed during each of the phases of the bid, the developer visited the organizers of the "Elviria" tender in Malaga. In the elaboration of the document that set forth the basis for the tender, people as important in the local and national sphere as Mr. Simón Benítez Padilla in geological studies, Mr. Felipe Gracia (meteorologist of the Spanish Air Force in the Canary Islands) for the study of the climate in the area, and Grabados Topográficos S.A. in Madrid for the topographical study. The degree of detail that was included in the basis was such, that the judges praised the work done by the company Maspalomas Costa Canaria.

During the admission period between the 1st of June and the 1st of August of 1961, the registration enrolled 148 participants from all over the world. The day of the reception of the projects was the 1st of December and the result of the jury was announced the 9th of January, 1962.

*Marcel Lods was an architect and urban planner, founder of the Association Beaudouin et Lods and teacher responsible for the atelier Lods-Hernant-Trezzini at the ENSBA. "... the École tries to develop a spirit open to what is universal..." École d'architecture de Paris, Archives (IFA) Dossier Lods. 323 AA 14/2. Nouvelle École; Construction-premiers documents 1956-1959, page 18.*

*"... each element of the creation is part of an indivisible all". Ibidem.*

*Marcel Lods was an architect and urban planner, founder of the Association Beaudouin et Lods and teacher responsible for the atelier Lods-Hernant-Trezzini at the ENSBA. "The association for the creation of an Architecture School and an experimental Center of Architecture and Art". Archives (IFA) Dossier Lods. 323 AA 14/2. Nouvelle École; Construction-premiers documents 1956-1959, w/o num. (introduction document).*

*This technique was used by the SETAP Group to develop the Maspalomas project. Interview (taped) given to the author to architect Alain Naman (contributing city planner in charge of the Maspalomas Costa Canaria project in the SETAP group), the 7th of July, 2009, Paris. Duration: 38 min.*

The jury, as described by the international tender regulations of the UIA, had to be formed by members of different nationalities, with the recommendation that one of them be named by the UIA so that the regulations were abided. In this case, the jury was composed of Van der Broek (president) Holland; Pierre Vago (UIA member) France; Luis Blanco Soler and Antonio Perpiñá Sebría, Spain, Franco Albini, Italy and Manuel de la Peña Suárez (secretary), Spain.

The jury's decision unanimously established that the winning project was the atelier SETAP. The deliberation took place in the Guanarteme warehouse which housed during the days of 4-9 of January, 1962, the 80 proposals presented. According to the UIA's periodical publication in 1962, of the 80 projects received, two were disqualified for not fulfilling article 11, regarding the date of delivery and the anonymity of the projects.

The remaining 78 projects were evaluated according to the criteria established by the jury for the following parameters:

1. Respect the dunes, the oasis, the landscape and the beaches, avoiding excessive use of the delta.
2. Creation of a tourist center, not a city.
3. General composition of quality, not quantity.
4. Creation of a tourist center of attraction and entertainment, situated to the west of the oasis and in its surroundings
5. Distribution and classification of the tourist groups with a good disposition of the road network and accesses to the beaches.
6. Provision and organization of the systems of open spaces.
7. Development of the stages and their execution possibilities.
8. Analysis of the different services.

After deciding the evaluation parameters for each project, 3 elimination rounds were done. In the first one, 46 projects were discarded; in the second one, 12; and 8 in the third one. Finally, 12 projects remained, for which only 7 received an award or some recognition, as follows:

1st price: Project #969696, SETAP group (France)

2nd price: void

3rd price: Project #458900, group headed by J. van den Bogaerde (Belgium)

Ex-aequo: Project #981782, architect Jacques Karbowsky (France)

1st mention: Project #545875, group of Cruz Lopez Muller and José Luis Picardo, Carlos Picardo and Carlos Martinez Caro (Spain)

2nd mention: Project #247412, group headed by Jacek Preis (Poland); Project #279556, Group headed by Rubens Henriquez Hernandez and Javier Diaz Llanos la Roche (Spain); Project #362624, group headed by Javier Barroso Ladron de Guevara, José Martín Crespo Diaz and Angel Orbe Cano (Spain).

The SETAP project that pursued a territorial organization model had, as one of its main objectives, the achievement of an organized urban structure. To do that, one of the characteristics of the project was the shape and city model based on: concentration of services; the grouping of installations and tourist equipment as independent units. The units of grouping equipment or housing units were joined and interconnected by a network of roads and green spaces.

The peculiarity of working by units characterized the plan in a zoning system. The theory, developed by the professor André Gutton at the ENSBA, defined the functions that man needs in a city and that must be part of the urban landscape, grouped in 4 concepts (habitat, work, leisure and movement). The city model of A. Gutton for 50,000 habitants has some similarities with the Maspalomas project. A model built by: variable units, separation of functions; the tracing of the road network; the concentration of use; the plasticity used in the designs; and the prevalence of green as a natural element of the city, define the city proposed by A. Gutton and projected by SETAP at Maspalomas.

*The journalist Francisco García Torres, in the newspaper La Falange, on the 1st of October, 1961, announced after the closing of the enrollment, the participation of 148 competitors (8 Japanese, 3 Israeli, 3 Turkish, 2 Yugoslavian, 1 Algerian, 1 Uruguayan, and others from countries like: Portugal, France, Italy, Monaco, Switzerland, Poland, Denmark, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Holland, United States, UK, Mexico, Argentina, Finland, Canada, etc.). The main nationalities that participated were French, Polish and Dutch. However, the geographer Ignacio Nadal Perdomo in 1983 described the participation of 141 competitors of 24 countries with representation of 30 Spaniards, 25 French, 20 Polish, 8 Dutch, 8 German and 7 Japanese. In Nadal Perdomo, I. & Guitián Aymeto, C., 1983, El Sur de Gran Canaria: entre el turismo y la marginación, C.I.E.S., Lanzarote, page 80.*

*The UIA's periodical magazine in 1962 published the participation in the Maspalomas Costa Canaria tender of 80 competitors. Nevertheless, Ignacio Nadal Perdomo in his book El Sur de Gran Canaria: entre el turismo y la marginación, after conversations with the Maspalomas Costa-Canaria company, describes that 81 projects were handed in and that in the end half of them were discarded because they worked on the dune areas.*

In the SETAP project, with an extension of 2.000 hectares, only half of which could be used for building, with a global population density of 60 habitants per hectare and a total population of 60,000 inhabitants. This urban model characterized the intervention with a high value and respect for the landscape. The population was distributed in seven units or sectors as follows: San Pedro (7,700 pop.); Pasito Blanco (6,300 pop.); City of Maspalomas (12,300 pop.); Los Ingleses (9,800 pop.); San Agustín (12,200 pop.); Campo Internacional (4,400 pop.); and San Fernando (7,000 pop). Each of the sectors was equipped with tourist service infrastructures, roads and green spaces.

The distribution of each of the urban groups had as an objective the organization of the housing units. The large variety of tourist accommodations presented in the project was the following: luxury hotel, lower category hotels, motels, luxury villas, bungalows, apartments, leisure areas. It was a differentiating aspect in regards to the other proposals presented. Among the leisure equipment were piers for leisure boats, vehicle stations, restaurants and a racecourse.

Nevertheless, in this occasion, I have only outlined some of the general aspects of the report that describes the SETAP project. Of the existing publications, the ones by the French magazine *Urbanisme* and of the author Ignacio Nadal Perdomo in the book *El Sur de Gran Canaria: entre el turismo y la marginación* are the most accurate in the detailed description of the project.

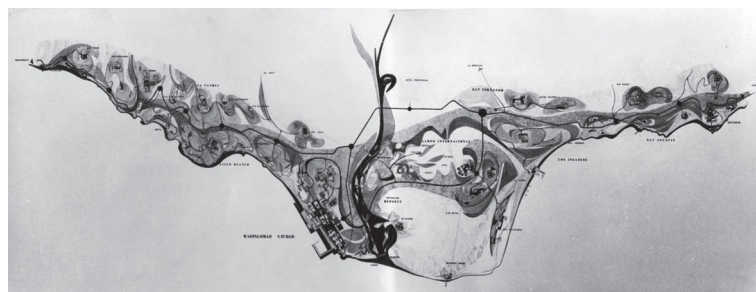


Figure 8. (provided by Pedro José Franco ) Plan presented to the tender in January 1962 by the S.E.T.A.P group

Of the SETAP plan, only the first intervention in San Agustín (1962) was respected, with the building of the restaurant “La Rotonda” and the Apartments “Los Caracoles” by the architect Manuel de la Peña Suárez. The rest of the interventions were planned by a General Organization Plan by Manuel de la Peña and some partial plans that had little to do with the initial project of the atelier SETAP. The other urban planning operations during the 60’s and 70’s responded to the expectations of the first massive tourism waves that had chosen the city of Maspalomas for vacation.

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Nadal Perdomo, op. cit., pages 82-87 (Text created through the French magazine *Urbanisme* (#87) and the documentation presented regarding the SETAP project in the Association of architects in Las Palmas)