

The Formentera Office of Economy and Formentera Tax Office have submitted six projects to the Ministry of Tourism in response to a special call for submissions to a European Union financing scheme known as the Programme of Tourist Destination Plans for Sustainability. According to Bartomeu Escandell, the councillor for both departments, the island has requested a total of €4 million for actions related to green and sustainable transition, improved energy efficiency, the digital transition and competitiveness.

For her part, Consell de Formentera President Alejandra Ferrer remarked that the projects “leverage new technologies to achieve a cleaner, more energy-efficient and more competitive island and to improve the quality of life of residents and the experience of visitors”.

### **Green and sustainable transition**

The first plans for which a grant of €300,000 has been requested involve smart access via Cavall den Borràs, Ses Illetes and Llevant beaches to the Ses Salines Natural Reserve. Since 2008, limited controls have been in place on vehicles entering the reserve, an enclave of immense ecological and scenic value. The plan’s architects propose harnessing new technologies to enhance and render more efficient of the existing process of manual controls. The aim is to ameliorate the experience of tourists and islanders accessing when the area and to safeguard the environmental and natural values it has historically represented.

Valued at €1 million, the second grant would fund plans for a new treatment and recycling plant for construction waste. Architects of the plan say waste management is increasingly key to ensuring efficient government actions, and that reusing local products and by-products is increasingly vital to reducing transport costs and transport-related pollution. This situation of cost overruns and excessive pollution is particularly concerning on islands, where products consumed must be imported, with the cost and CO<sub>2</sub>-emission increases that such transport represents. The treatment and recycling plant would serve to transform waste from construction operations into by-products usable for public and private urban improvement and upgrades, drastically cutting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with continuous maritime travel, thereby reducing the attendant carbon footprint and growing the circular economy by fomenting locally-sourced products.

### **Improving energy efficiency**

The third, €1.2 million grant would optimise use of public spaces and create a new source of renewable energy thanks to solar panel-equipped pergolas —the first would go up alongside arterials in Sant Francesc and Sant Ferran— featuring recharge points for electric vehicles. Part of Formentera's commitment to replacing dirty energies with renewable ones and vehicles that pollute the environment with other, more eco-friendly options, the project would support more sustainable mobility, reduce the island's energy dependence on outside sources, grow the Formentera's fleet of electric vehicles and improve air quality.

## **Digital transition**

A grant of €200,000 euros was additionally requested for a project dubbed Big Data Turística, Formentera — a model of tourism using mass data and in which decision-making in support of good governance is underpinned by data that are structured, dynamic and obtained in real time.

The proposal envisions a Smart Tourism System and smart destination system, mobilising data obtained with artificial intelligence —featured visions vary from socio-demographic, economic, environmental and tourism, to culture and heritage, mobility, education and sports and resident experience— to ensure competitive advantages for the destination in question.

The island requested a fifth, €300,000 grant for formentera.eco. The funding would give a boost to technical aspects of the scheme which, since 2019, has sought to regulate incoming vehicles and those which are driven on Formentera in summer.

## **Competitiveness**

The sixth and final project, for which Formentera requested a grant in the amount of €1 million, involves road upgrades and new infrastructure in La Savina and Es Ca Marí. It marks a continuation of a host of initiatives which in recent years have expanded local infrastructure and delivered road improvements and pedestrian-only zones in urban centres. Such actions have offered a host of benefits, from making towns more accessible to local residents and removing vehicle traffic from within town centres, to reactivating commercial activity and enhancing appeal for tourists.

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