This Tuesday the Formentera local police, partnering with drone pilots from the force in Sant Josep, engaged in a special sting operation targetting illegal itinerant vending in Illetes.

Devised at the headquarters of Formentera's local law enforcement with assistance from the Sant Josep force's chief of robotic process automations and drone operations, the sting was a feature of a partnership aimed at providing support for special circumstances—Formentera's understaffed force, for example, and spikes in illicit vending across the island and, especially, at Illetes.

Bartomeu Escandell, the secretary of the president's office and head of the local police, welcomed the Sant Josep local police force's help and highlighted the importance of going after itinerant vending, saying it “hurts local business and is at odds with the tranquility we seek to offer our visitors”.

With the help of drone-driven air surveillance, police detected the vendors' supply points and were able to decomission them. Plus, equipped with info from the drones, agents stationed at Illetes caught multiple vendors in action and were able to bring charges.

Fourteen bottles of alcohol and refreshments, as well cups and other cocktail-making materials, were turned up as part of the sting operation, not to mention 11 parasols, a tent, 186 cans and bottles of water and other refreshments, 63 pieces of costume jewellery, 88 pieces of fruit (pineapples and coconuts) and 60 dresses and beach blankets.

Though understaffed, Formentera's local police force has overseen similar small-scale operations since June, logging 49 cases of itinerant vending. All told, they have confiscated 346 dresses and wraparound skirts, 664 pieces of fruit, 300 bottled or canned refreshments and 63 pieces of costume jewellery.

More such special operations combining technology with manpower will be carried out through the summer.