The Formentera Council's Office of the Environment has set in motion a plan to clear berms of dried posidònia seaweed that have accumulated at sections of Es Ca Marí beach along the southern Formentera shoreline.

The specific nature of dead seaweed pile-up along Es Ca Marí beach – characterised by a near-continuous barrage that deposits extremely high volumes of plant matter on the shore – has meant the present undertaking is considered separately from the posidònia removal standard on other Formentera beaches. Both the Es Ca Marí neighbourhood association and the Formentera Island Council have recommended the removal in order to maintain a positive public image of the island coastline.

The phenomenon of seaweed pile-up is the result of a very specific natural process. The gulf formed between Es Cap de Barbaria and La Mola is hit with the typically-heavy western ponent winds in the winter, which, in turn, leave deposits of dead seaweed that in time form heavily compacted berms up to three metres high.

It is for this very reason that technical studies have cautioned against routine clearing and instead recommended more sporadic interventions, considered more sustainable. In its coastal beautification work the Formentera Council has received technical support from Xisco Roig, a geographer with an accredited history in landscape recuperation in the Balearics.

The stretch of shoreline in question is 200 m long and approximately 7 m wide, with estimates for the total volume of accumulated seaweed at nearly 3,500 cubic metres. To eliminate these deposits, technical indications recommend cutting three small canals in the berms at an angle perpendicular to the coastline so that the action of water flow slowly diminishes the berms located closest to the water. Afterward, the seaweed that remains further ashore is removed mechanically or by hand.

The sheer volume of seaweed berms amassed across Es Ca Marí makes transfer of the collected plant matter to any other beach on the island impossible. However, taking into account

property-owners that use dry posidònia for agricultural and stockbreeding purposes, a campaign has been devised to collect and re-use the seaweed.

To participate, residents must file a request at the Citizen Information Office (OAC) in which they indicate their intent to either oversee removal personally or request the help of a secondary transport company. In the event that assistance is required, the Council has come to an agreement with Formentera's local transport company making the process more affordable. Two price schemes are available, each calculating VAT separately and estimating one trip only: 50 euros for a 8 m3 truck or 60€ for 20 m3. Fees must be paid directly to the transport company at the time of service.

In view of the highly-variable meteorological conditions on Formentera, the Council will contact individuals when conditions are apt for removal. Weather permitting, the process should take between one and two days.

The application period for requests begins Monday 24 February and will continue through Wednesday 5 March.

To ensure a maximum number of applications, information on the campaign will be sent to Formentera pensioners' clubs, community organisations, farming and stockbreeding cooperatives and other local associations.