

BEST PRACTICE: MALLORCA, SPAIN



Key Challenge

Waste production and pollution.

Type of Solution

Adoption of a tourism strategy and monitoring framework; Stakeholder participation and management; Laws and Regulations; Promotional campaigns; Digital Solutions; Investments in infrastructure and product development.

Case Classification

Type of Destination | Island

Territorial Level | NUTS 3

Size of the Tourist Area | 3,640 km²

Population | 912.171 in 2020

Type of Tourism | Rural; Coastal, maritime and inland water; Sports; Cultural; Gastronomy.

DMO | 100% subsidiary of the islands' government, non-commercial.

Main Stakeholders Affected | Local authorities/ government; Local Residents; Tourists; Accommodations; Local farmers and producers.

Additional Challenges Covered | Climate protection and climate change mitigation; Appropriate local tourism strategies and policies to accelerate the transition to sustainable and resilient tourism; Lack of awareness of sustainability and resilience among tourism stakeholders; Measurement and monitoring of sustainable tourism.

Context & Background

Mallorca, the largest of the Balearic Islands, recorded 18 million tourist arrivals in 2023, resulting in 43.1 million overnight stays. Tourism is the island's main economic sector, contributing more than 45% of its GDP. While the island has been experiencing increasing numbers of tourists and media attention for years due to its mass and party tourism, it also has a rich natural, cultural, and culinary offer.

Key Challenge

With the sharp rise in the number of tourists, the amount of waste has also increased significantly. During the 1990s, Mallorca only had landfills for waste disposal whose capacity was not sufficient to handle the increased waste volumes. Therefore, new strategies and measures for waste management were required to prevent the impairment of the quality of life of residents and tourists, as well as to contrast negative environmental consequences.



Implementation of Solutions: Laws and regulations, developing good infrastructures, and concretely implementing projects can counteract excessive waste production and environmental impact.

SOLUTIONS

- The DMO advised the Regional government of the Balearic Islands throughout the development of the *regulatory framework* for waste reduction and circular economy.
 - Adopted by the Regional Government in 2019, the [Waste and Polluted Soil Act](#) focuses on reducing waste like single-use plastics, food waste, and packaging (e.g. plastic bags), among others.
 - The [Circular Economy in Tourism Businesses Act](#) (2022) establishes measures to enhance sustainability and promote a circular economy in the Balearic Islands, aiming for a regenerative effect of tourism on nature and society. According to this Act, accommodation businesses must carry out an annual circular economy assessment based on 16 mandatory key performance indicators updated and implement a circular economy plan with improvement targets. By 2024, all tourism accommodation businesses are required to have a circular economy strategy, updated every five years.
- [TIRME](#), the private company responsible for [waste treatment](#) in Mallorca since 1992, operates material recovery plants, energy recovery plants, waste disposal tanks, and manages the [Centre for Environmental Information and Education \(CIEA\)](#), which raises awareness of urban waste.
- Launched in 2021, the [Finhava project](#) uses blockchain technology to monitor and promote circular economy. TIRME collects organic waste from participating hotels, which are required by law to buy food from regional farmers, and uses it to make compost, which is then returned to the farmers. A blockchain technology-based platform allows to track resources at every stage of their lifecycle, thus acquiring valuable data (i.e., vegetable purchases by hotels, volume of organic waste collected, compost production generated). In addition, a CO₂ emissions calculator was created to determine the carbon footprint and, finally, the circularity is calculated using the methodology of the [World Business Council for Sustainable Development's Circular Transition Indicators tool](#).
- *Communication campaigns to inform citizens and tourists* is essential for efficient waste management practices. To this end, QR codes can be found in buffet stations of hotels to inform guests about [Tirme's activities](#).
- The first [Mallorcan wine "CERCLE"](#) produced according to the principles of the circular economy is available since mid-2024.

Replicability potential: Medium (requires political will, leadership, committed stakeholders and funding).

Success Factors & Barriers Regarding the Implementation

Success factors: The first [EU Circular Economy Action Plan \(CEAP\) of 2015](#) as inspiration; The interest and great ambitions of the waste company TIRME to adapt to the Action Plan; Motivated stakeholders such as hotels or the administration.

Barriers: Farmers' scepticism about the economic benefits generated by circular economy practices.

Results and Impacts

- Waste management has improved significantly over the last decades. In 2023, [TIRME recycled](#) 146,153 tons of waste *and recovered* 52,248 tons of paper, glass and packaging.
- The tourism sector in Mallorca is pushing to improve the municipality's recycling goals.
- 30 large hotels are involved in the Finhava project.
- 7% of Mallorca's energy supply is generated from all types of waste by TIRME.

Take aways

- Collaboration with public authorities is pivotal for legal initiatives, investments, and promotion activities.
- Creating stakeholder alliances involving the public and the private sector is essential to initiate sustainable tourism activities.
- Local residents should always be engaged in waste reduction and circular economy processes, as they concern tourism as well as the whole society, which should work on changing its habits (mental change).
- A circular economy approach should also be considered in economic sectors other than tourism.

Useful Links

- [Mallorca's Master Plan for Urban Waste](#) | TIRME
- [Finhava](#) | Circulare S.L.

Contact Person

Canaleta Safont, Aina, Department of Circular Economy and Sustainable Development of TIRME, acanaleta@tirme.com

Cerdá Lacaci, Amalia, Corporate Sustainability Manager of TIRME, acerda@tirme.com