

SUN&BLUE SUMMARY BOOK



Edition 2024

Blue Book

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Innovation Congress

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Edition 2024

Blue Book





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Blue Tourism is not an
option, it is the path to a
sustainable future

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Editorial note

We are pleased to present this publication, which contains a summary of the sessions held during the second edition of *Sun&Blue Congress*, International Congress on Tourism and Blue Economy, held from 20 to 22 November 2024 at the Cabo de Gata Exhibition and Conference Center - City of Almería. This event has been a key space for the exchange of ideas, research and experiences related to the following verticals: Energy, islands and territories, technology, financing, coasts and beaches, hospitality, ports and maritime industry, culture and gastronomy, and sports.

These pages offer a summary of the highlights of the presentations and round tables held throughout the congress. The summaries and conclusions included have been prepared and reviewed by the editorial team, with the aim of ensuring a faithful and accessible view of the contents covered.

We are grateful for the participation of the speakers, moderators and attendees, whose commitment and enthusiasm made the success of this edition possible. We also extend our appreciation to the sponsoring institutions and companies, whose collaboration and support have been essential for the realization of *Sun&Blue Congress 2024*.

We hope that this document will not only serve as a reminder of the important reflections and debates that took place during the event, but will also inspire new initiatives and projects in the fields addressed.





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FOREWORD

The **Blue Book** you hold in your hands is a reflection of the second edition of the **Sun&Blue Congress**: A global meeting point where innovation, sustainability and action came together to chart the future of the Blue Economy and Blue Tourism.

When we opened the doors of the congress in Almería, we did so with a clear idea: "We all want a better world, but we often wait for someone else to build it". Sun&Blue was born with the mission of being a platform for real transformation, where words become commitments and commitments become concrete actions. For months we worked so that this edition would not only grow in scope and impact, but also consolidate its international dimension with the participation of more than 30 countries and a high-level programme.

The debates that took place here were diverse and revealing: From the application of technology to optimise the sustainability of our seas and coasts to the role of culture, gastronomy and sport as drivers of blue tourism. The need to integrate the **Triple P (People, Planet & Profit)** into

any sustainable development strategy was also clear. But if there was one thing that stood out above all, it was the urgency of leaving theory behind and moving on to action.

That is why, at the closing of the congress, we reaffirmed a fundamental message: **"The future is in our hands and sustainability is not an option, but a collective commitment"**. This Blue Book is not only a testimony of what we have learned, but a guide to measure our progress, a roadmap with clear targets for action. It will allow us to assess, in future editions, whether we have made real progress or whether we have remained theoretical.

The road to a strong, innovative and sustainable Blue Tourism is well underway. Now is the time to make sure that the journey we have made really leads us to the future we want to build.

Tim Ott,
Director of the Sun&Blue Congress.



01

**Institutional
Opening**

01 Institutional Opening

An opportunity for debate and reflection on sustainable tourism and the blue economy

Speakers

María del Mar Vázquez
Mayor of Almería.

Tim Ott
General Director of
Sun&Blue Congress.

Javier Aureliano
President of the
Provincial Council of
Almería.

José de la Uz
President of RECI and
Mayor of Las Rozas.

Arturo Bernal
Regional Minister of
Tourism and External
Action of the Junta de
Andalucía.

The institutional opening of the II edition of Sun&Blue Congress 2024 begins with a video that highlights the role of tourism in Almería, highlighting its beauty, resilience and its key role in the development of the blue economy and sustainable tourism. During the three days of the congress, more than 150 top-level speakers will share knowledge and ideas with attendees from more than 30 countries. Thanks to the simultaneous translations available in all rooms, attendees will be able to follow the presentations in their preferred language.

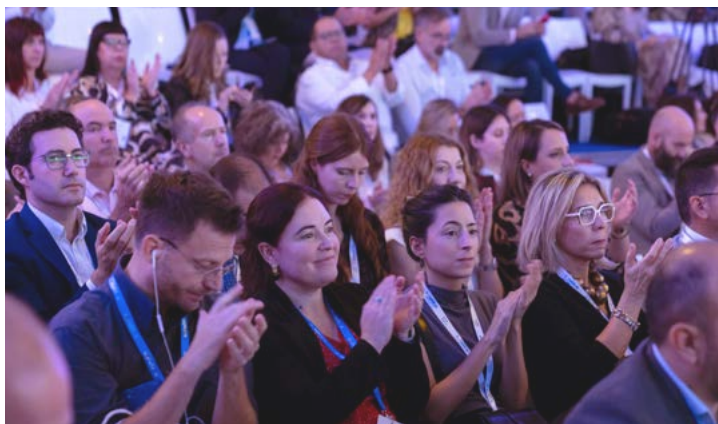
The Mayoress of Almería, **María del Mar Vázquez**, officially opened the congress, thanking the interest and effort that have made possible its celebration. She defines Almería as a city that "thinks blue and feels its sea", highlighting its transformation towards a more intelligent, efficient and inclusive model. He invites attendees to discover the climate, culture and, above all, the hospitality of its people.

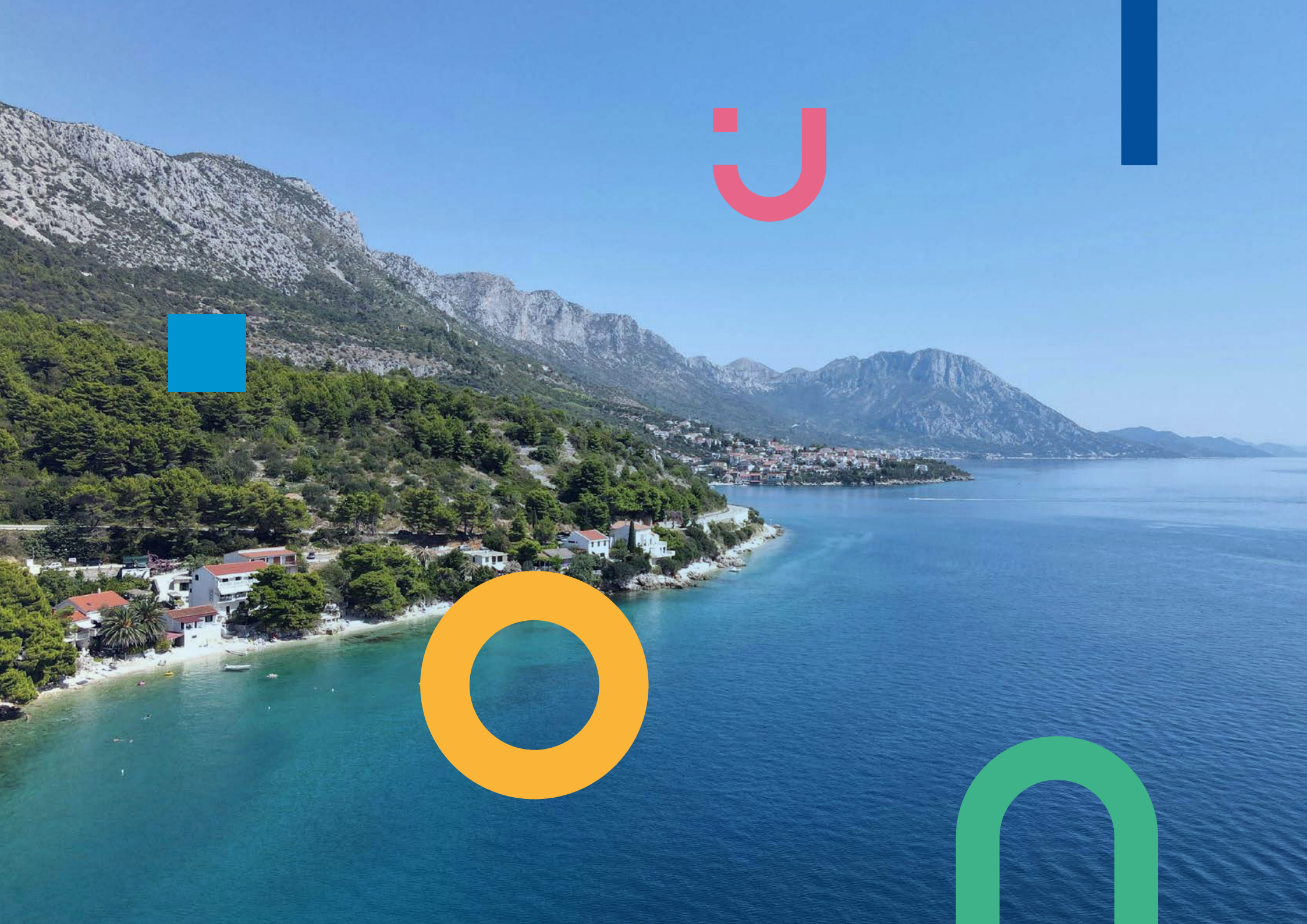
Tim Ott then underlined the growing qualitative level of the congress compared to the previous edition. He insisted on the need to move from theory to action in order to build a future based on the blue economy. He stressed that blue tourism is not just a concept, but a responsibility and a promise to do things better for future generations.

For his part, **Javier Aureliano** focused on the structural problem of water in Almería, highlighting the importance of every millimeter of water in a province with low rainfall. He points out that the coast of Almería is a key economic and social engine, providing identity and development to the region. He states that "we do not want tourism that is not sustainable, but neither is it indigestible," emphasizing the need for a balanced model. He also highlights the province's impact on the agricultural sector at the European level, linking the blue economy with horticultural production, which feeds millions of Europeans.

Finally, **José de la Uz and Arturo Bernal**, once again emphasized the importance of the congress and the performance before the charm of the Andalusians, the people of Almería, their food and their heritage. Bernal defines this performance as the *Andalusian Crush*, which makes everyone fall in love with the charms of this land. Bernal closes his speech and therefore the opening of the congress with a great statement that the President of the Provincial Council mentioned earlier and that perfectly sums up the basis of the Sun&Blue Congress: "**Tourism will either be sustainable or it won't be**".







02

KEYNOTE **Blue Innovation**

Gunter Pauli

02 KEYNOTE. Blue Innovation

Gunter Pauli

Gunter, defined as the Steve Jobs of sustainability, presents his blue economy concept as an economy that demonstrates how to develop economic models based on nature and sustainability.

He presents this concept with a video presentation with different images that show the beauty that we find in different parts of the earth to make us aware of the need to rethink the way we were developing the economy. According to Pauli, there is abundance if we want to find it, if we don't, we will find poverty and scarcity. He also points out that we have a major problem in Europe: Analysis. We analyze everything, but we do not act. And that is precisely where he puts the focus, on the need to learn to use analysis to be able to develop procedures and tools that are put into practice and provide solutions.

He presents his book *Grow your own house*, in which he states one of his main principles: The blue economy is to give value to what we have. We have to change our mentality and stop taking "no" for an answer. We need scientists and entrepreneurs who dare to participate in this revolution and aim to make the most of the resources we have to achieve the goals we want, and thus give value to what we have. He puts the city of Almería as an example of this movement and this way of acting, since the province is experiencing a revolution with the new infrastructures that nobody is recognizing, but that is having excellent results.

Gunter Pauli points to the need to challenge young people, the new generations, to be able to think something that previous

generations have not been able to think. And to achieve this end, "we have to get out of the box".

Gunter Pauli launched in 1986 the concept of 0 emissions because in this year he learned from the first report of the international climate change plan that we were going to have a change. This made him think that **we should not analyze, it was necessary to decide and execute**. In addition, he affirms that the drama of the green movement is that "they accuse and prohibit a lot". And for Pauli, the human being does not function well when everything is prohibited. It was then that he understood that a change was needed, not only in technology or processes, but also in the system. We need a system design that allows us to change the way we act. As an example of this model of action, he presents us with various photos of his first zero-emissions factory, ECOVER, for the development of which it was especially important to think about the well-being of his employees.

Gunter Pauli encourages us to be open to crazy ideas, new ideas, and throws out a question to the audience that certainly gives us pause for thought. "And you, do you want to follow the traditional methodology or do you prefer to aim for an improvement in employment and results?". Pauli evidently opts for the second option, although he is perfectly aware that this will entail a change with respect to procedures and decision-making. And so he puts it into practice with his network of 3,000 scientists, who are interested in finding

ways to bring about a change not only in behavior, but also in understanding. Pauli backs up the success of his project, which began in 1993 and has generated 23,000 jobs. And he says the project has been so successful "because his people make money and don't need to do crazy things", and so he stresses once again the importance of thinking about the needs of his workers.

He points out that one of the current needs is to generate employment, since employment is income and this income is in turn consumption to meet people's basic needs.

Gunter states that he has always been looking for food for fish. He recognizes the fly larva as the sanitizer of the entire ecological environment, which converts everything thanks to a digestion system. Nature has taught him that it is a technique that works, and we should focus on things that work.

For the coming year, he proposes a new initiative: Focusing on intelligence at sea. We have to rethink the data from the sea, the so-called data mining. Compared to the 99.9% of data we obtain on land or in the air, 0.1% is focused on what we can find in the sea. It is paradoxical, to say the least, when the sea represents approximately 99% of the space where we can find life. The problem lies in this very fact. If we have no data, we cannot develop procedures, and therefore have no way to act. The first challenge of the blue economy is what is known as data firming, which consists of data farming. However, how can we collect data if we have no communication system at sea to provide it?



We live with the evil of lack of knowledge, lack of data, and without this data it is impossible to act. Pauli gives the example of Almería, which lacks 3D mapping of the seabed. This is the reality of bad knowledge, lack of data. If in-sea communication is possible, the experience of the sea can change. He gives as an example the mask designed to enable this communication, which has a camera that allows vision.

In conclusion, he justifies that we need a strategy in the short term, since knowledge of this data will provide future opportunities. These are precisely the challenges of the blue economy, to look for the data, to have the information to be able to act. The key, therefore, lies in reanalyzing previously defined knowledge and going beyond this pre-existing knowledge by promoting research through the creation of new tools.





03

Ports and Maritime Industry

Ports of the Future: Innovation and Sustainability
in the Maritime Industry



03 Ports and Maritime Industry

Ports of the Future: Innovation and Sustainability in the Maritime Industry

Ports and Cities: Weaving the Web of Sustainable Progress

Moderator

David Simó
 Editorial Director of
 El Canal Marítimo
 y Logístico
 newspaper.

Speakers

María del Rosario Soto
 President of the Port
 Authority of Almería.

Marta Pontes
 Councilor for
 Economic
 Activities, Tourism,
 Internationalization
 and Civil Protection
 in the Municipality of
 Matosinhos.

Manuel Arana
 Director of Planning
 and Development at
 Puertos del Estado.

Ricardo Barkala
 President of the Port
 Authority of Bilbao.

The debate addresses how integration between ports and cities can be a driver of sustainable development, fostering community connection, strengthening the local economy and supporting the energy transition. It highlights examples of transformative projects such as the Port Authority of Almería, a leader in urban integration and sustainability initiatives.

The Moderator, David Simó, editorial Director of *Diario El Canal Marítimo y Logístico*, emphasizes in his initial approach the idea that ports and cities cannot live back to back, and that ports are precursors of port-city relations as well as indispensable actors in the fight in favor of the climate.

The President of the Port of Almería, María del Rosario Soto, emphasizes the importance of collaboration between ports and cities and praises the example of the Port of Bilbao as a model to follow. She also underlines the importance of collaboration between different institutions (port, city council, private companies) in order to achieve successful integration.

He mentions the integration projects that are being carried out in the Port of Almería, such as the urbanization of the Levante dock and the improvement of connections with the city. Rosario Soto also highlights the value of the recovery of the port's historical heritage, pointing out that work will begin in December 2024, as well as the rehabilitation of the dry dock. He foresees that the culmination of the entire transformation of the Port of Almería will be more or less in 2028, being about eight hectares of surface that will be opened.

Ricardo Barkala, President of the Port of Bilbao, highlights the successful port-city integration in his city, mentioning the historical importance of the collaboration between the Port of Bilbao and the nine surrounding municipalities. This close relationship has been fundamental to achieve a successful and sustainable integration. He highlights the importance of cooperation and coordination between the port and the city to achieve mutual benefit.

He explains how the decision to move the port of Bilbao from the city center to the outside was a key turning point for its integration with the city. He highlights the port's generosity in ceding the land freed up by the move to the city, which allowed the development of cultural and recreational spaces such as the Guggenheim Museum and the Euskalduna Palace. It shows how this transformation has made Bilbao a more attractive and livable city, with a higher quality of life for its citizens.

Manuel Arana, Director of Planning and Development at Puertos del Estado highlights the importance of port-city integration in Spain and presents an overview of the projects under development. In his speech he states that all port authorities have developed or will develop this type of actions, betting on urban port development, and highlights the commitment of the Spanish port authorities with the port-city integration, as established in the Strategic Framework 2022.

Spanish port authorities are devoting significant efforts to developing projects that promote integration and present concrete examples of projects in different ports in Spain, such as Huelva, Seville, Cadiz, Algeciras, Malaga and Almería. These projects seek to free up port spaces for urban uses, generating new development opportunities and improving the quality of life of citizens.

It highlights the need for a port-city integration that goes beyond large urban projects and focuses on the daily and sustainable management of port operations, and this integration requires a constant and respectful coexistence between both parties, given that ports operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Sustainability is a fundamental pillar and is manifested in different aspects such as noise management, air and water quality with concrete measures such as reorganization of activities, limiting noise at night, the use of sound-absorbent pavements and the connection of ships to the electricity grid.

Marta Pontes, Councilor for Economic Activities, Tourism, Internationalization and Civil Protection in Matosinhos City Council tells that her city is at the top of the cities in Portugal in Blue Economy and that the Port is a vibrant point linked to the community. Since 2018 they have a development strategy for the Blue Economy. IN terms of the port-city relationship, he highlights the cruise terminal, which integrates architecture into the port space. It also tells how other social agents of city life develop their work in port facilities, such as the University of Porto that studies marine biotechnology there.

The city's promenades have been redesigned in recent years by Pritzker Prize-winning architects to highlight the importance they give to this part of their projects. Among the actions they carry out are the marine reforestation of areas affected by ships in the sea. They are looking for ways to avoid fuel spills at sea, and by 2025 they will allocate 14 million euros for a new knowledge center within the port area between the University, the City Council and the Port.

Conclusion

The debate reflects the joint effort of port authorities, municipalities and the private sector to foster sustainable collaboration that benefits local communities, transforms waterfronts and leads action against the climate emergency.





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Presidenta en Auto
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Director de Planificación
Rico
Presidente en Auto
Patroc



03 Ports and Maritime Industry

Ports of the Future: Innovation and Sustainability in the Maritime Industry

Green Horizons of the Sea

Moderator

Esther Molina

Managing Director of SunCruise Andalucía.

Speakers

Javier Noriega

President of the Andalusian Maritime Cluster.

Ignacio Javier Del Río

Director of Assets at Ocean Capital Partners.

Jose García Fuentes

President of the Port Authority of Motril.

Rafael Montero Jurado

Commercial Director of the Public Ports Agency of Andalusia.

Panelists discussed the integration of sustainability criteria in blue tourism, the importance of electrification of ports and marinas, and the future of the blue economy in Andalusia. The need to do things differently while maintaining economic activity, integrating ports with cities and promoting sustainable development that benefits people and the environment was emphasized.

José García, from the Port of Motril, talks about guaranteeing logistics with lower environmental costs and claims to focus development on people, otherwise it is not sustainable and puts people at the center of its activity. He explains the Green Deal project of the Port of Motril, selected by the European Union from more than 200 submissions. The project focuses on the decarbonization of maritime transport, producing and storing energy in the port to reduce emissions and costs.

By 2030 ferries will have to be connected to the grid to avoid using secondary engines and the energy needed by the port will have to be produced in the port itself. He argues that sustainability has to be cheaper and more efficient. They reuse rainwater and have agreements with the Aula del Mar for the development of new materials. All their infrastructure projects are undergoing environmental review. He affirms that sustainability by itself has no benefits if it does not improve the lives of people, of society, providing more livable environments.

Ignacio del Río talks about megayacht marinas and the importance of integrating sustainability from the beginning of the projects. He highlights the need for electricity supply for these ships and the importance of integration with the city. This type of ships that go to mega-yacht marinas have a brutal consumption and it is necessary to give solutions to them, with the important part in the electrical supply, and maintains that it would be necessary to give more weight to the environmental part in the tenders, since at the moment all the weight is given practically to the economic part. He also points out that subsidies and aid for the implementation of new technologies is important.

They have been pioneers in implementing a type of concrete that encouraged the creation and diversification of marine fauna, a very costly investment but it is necessary to do it when you are implementing a marina. As for challenges: Investing in desalination plants seems to him fundamental in marinas, it is

necessary to advance in implementing artificial reefs, they are also advancing with biotechnology experts in luminescence of marine plants that can give their own light and illuminate the marina, even generate electricity to supply.

Rafael Montero explains the role of the Agency in the management of nautical ports, marinas and fishing facilities in Andalusia. He emphasizes the importance of collaboration with the municipalities and the sensitivity towards the fishing sector. He talks about not only thinking in the economic field, but also social, education and social participation. He lists several important agents in this process: Nautical transformations, energy transformation and states that they believe that the future with these agents is essential because an administration can not solve everything.

Javier Noriega talks about the role of the Cluster and the union of companies in the blue economy sector. He highlights the importance of collaboration between companies, universities and administration for the sustainable development of the maritime sector. Large companies and SMEs, also entrepreneurs. Regarding the concept of blue tourism, he explores the idea of how to integrate sustainability criteria in tourism and the management of facilities: We must listen to tourists. We must listen to them because sustainability is already very important to them. Public administrations must also listen to demand. In Europe, many of these things are taken into account that are not in other places and we must break a lance.

He emphasizes the need to look to the future by doing things that are already being done but doing them in a different, new way, with greater awareness and in a more responsible way. He believes it is very important to have the concept of sustainability from the beginning of any project and for it to be environmentally friendly for everyone.

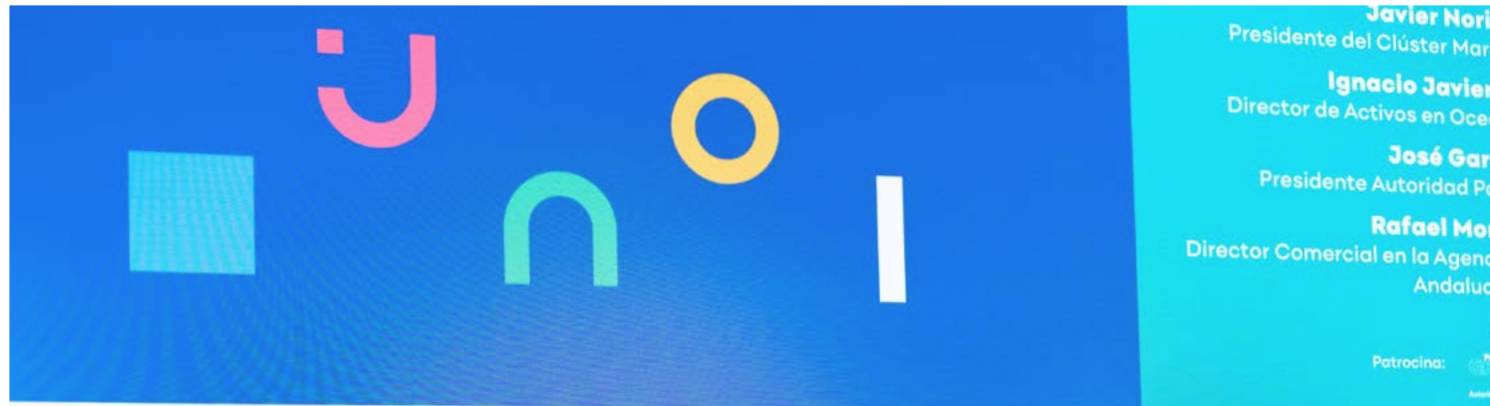
Rafael Montero, Commercial Director of the Public Ports Agency of Andalusia, proposes collaborating with nearby municipalities to promote sustainable tourism and green ports and highlights the need to apply sustainable criteria in the construction of new fishing facilities.

Conclusion

The panelists discuss how to integrate sustainability criteria into blue tourism, highlighting the importance of listening to the tourist and offering environmentally friendly experiences. Both public administrations and private companies involved in the management and construction of ports, marinas and terminals agree that sustainability must be oriented to the benefit of society, as it is meaningless on its own.

Currently, research and technological development are the key tools to promote sustainability, identifying the transition to the use of electric energy as the main challenge.





03 Ports and Maritime Industry

Ports of the Future: Innovation and Sustainability in the Maritime Industry

Ports of Tomorrow: Innovation and Sustainability

Moderator

Eva Miquel
Managing Partner at
aWp Services.

Speakers

José Llorca
Head of the
Innovation Area at
State Ports.

Emma Cobos
Director of
Innovation and
Business Strategy
at the Port of
Barcelona.

**María José
Rodríguez**
Director of Marketing
and Sales of Energy
Services at ACCIONA
Energía.

Gerardo Landaluce
President of
Suncruise Andalucía.

Antonio Bayo
Head of Planning
Department at the
Port Authority of
Almería.

The speakers discussed the new professions that will emerge in the port sector due to innovation and automation, and the need to attract young talent to the sector. José Llorca stated in his speech that there is a real problem of ignorance of the needs of ports and that talent must be attracted to them and money is needed to advance in the process, for example, of technological maturation.

He explains that innovation needs a place to carry out prototypes and ports have done this, allowing sectors that dominate technology to approach the ports. In this sense, there is interest in technological products that can be brought to the market and that the sector becomes more technical. He highlights the importance of open innovation and the need to attract external talent to address the technological challenges of the sector.

Emma Cobos shares the innovation strategies of the Port of Barcelona, including the creation of an innovation hub dedicated to the blue economy and the implementation of projects such as the electrification of docks. She says that ports are equipping themselves with instruments to be more innovative. They, for example, have Barcelona Port Innovation, a private foundation. She explains the characteristics of Fund 4.0, a very important initiative to promote innovation in the port sector. She says that by 2026 half of the docks must be electrified with an investment of 200 million euros.

María José Rodríguez maintains that the greenest energy that exists is simply that which is not consumed, and therefore we must focus on reducing current consumption. She talks about the importance of energy management in ports and how Acciona Energía is helping to reduce energy consumption in various facilities.

Gerardo Landaluce highlights the need to see ports as facilitators of the energy transition and the importance of prudent legislation. He mentions the commitment of ports to decarbonisation and sustainability. He argues that innovation brings efficiency and that means optimising. They apply models that provide sustainability because society increasingly demands this sustainability.

Antonio Bayo presents innovative projects in the Port of Almería, including one to measure and control the environmental impact of port operations and another for the construction of offshore wind platforms, as he states that the time has come when the limits have been reached and it has been necessary to consider the port of the future in Almería, which is practically considering a new port. Economic self-sufficiency criteria are being applied.

Conclusion

The speakers discuss the new professions that will emerge in the port sector due to innovation and automation, and the need to attract young talent to the sector. It is proposed to view ports as great allies and facilitators of the energy transition. It has been discussed how technological innovation will transform employment in ports, eliminating routine or intermediary jobs, but creating new opportunities for biotechnologists and experts in artificial intelligence.

Everyone agreed that the absolute priority is the transition towards sustainability, abandoning fossil fuels and adapting ports to more efficient electrical systems.





03 Ports and Maritime Industry

Ports of the Future: Innovation and Sustainability in the Maritime Industry

Green Sailing: Innovation in the Marine Industry

Moderator

Marilena Estarellas
Manager at ANBE.

Speakers

Tomás Azcárate
President of the
Spanish Navy.

Gonzalo Coterillo
President of ANBE.

David de Haro
Director of
Sustainability at
Mundo Marino.

José Ballester
Commercial Director
of XOUIVA 4.90.

At this conference on sustainable nautical tourism, several important topics related to the nautical industry, sustainable ports and sustainable nautical tourism are discussed. Gonzalo Coterillo, President of the National Association of Electric Boats (ANBE), highlighted the importance of decarbonisation in the maritime sector and the need to adopt cleaner technologies. David de Haro, founder of Mundo Marino, shared his experience in operating electric catamarans for sustainable tourism. José Ballester de Xouva presented his electric boats designed for the tourism sector without the need for a nautical license. Tomás Azcárate, President of Marinas de España, discussed the role of marinas in the transition towards sustainability.

Challenges and opportunities in the adoption of electric and hybrid technologies in the marine sector were addressed, including the need for charging infrastructure, staff training and adaptation of regulations. The potential of hydrogen as an energy source for the maritime sector was also discussed. The conference concluded with a call to action for greater collaboration between the public and private sectors to drive sustainability in the marine industry.

Gonzalo Coterillo emphasises the need for decarbonisation in the maritime sector, pointing out that ships pollute significantly more than land vehicles due to less strict regulations. He stresses the importance of adopting cleaner technologies such as electric boats for sustainable nautical tourism. He argues that it is a priority to stop using fossil fuels and points out that legislation is very behind in this regard.

Coterillo stresses the need to apply decontamination regulations to the sea that are already applied on land but not to the marine environment. He calls for improved training and information on sustainable technologies in the nautical sector to combat misinformation and promote the adoption of electric boats.

David de Haro and José Ballester discuss the obstacles to the mass adoption of sustainable technologies in the nautical industry, including the lack of unified regulations and the uncertainty in the inspections of electric or hybrid vessels. Ballester explains how they use electric vessels

for which a licence is not required, and thanks to this they can carry out recreational activities in privileged areas that do not allow noise or environmental pollution. He regrets that there is still little *daring* to have vessels of this type because there is reluctance to the new, the different.

Tomás Azcárate addresses the role of marinas in the adoption of sustainable technologies, discussing the need for infrastructure for electric charging and hydrogen supply, as well as the challenges associated with the implementation of these technologies. He points out that marinas have to adapt progressively and that all transport will eventually be electric, and that at sea the last hurdle remains, which is the autonomy of the electric boat, but that we are in a period of transition, it is an irreversible process.

The potential of hydrogen as an energy source for the nautical sector is discussed, mentioning projects under development at different points along the Spanish coast and the possibility of implementing hydrogen stations in marinas.

The Moderator announces training initiatives in collaboration with the Maritime and River Cruise Network to promote the re-motorisation and retrofitting of vessels. The importance of giving visibility to pioneering projects in nautical sustainability is emphasised.

David de Haro says that one idea would be to encourage the number of moorings or to give the best berths in ports to boats that have proven sustainability as a measure to encourage their use. Marinas de España should consider implementing dedicated spaces for electric boats in marinas, similar to what has been done with electric cars in public car parks. He also suggests unifying the inspection criteria for electric and hybrid boats at a national level to facilitate investments in the refurbishment of professional boats.

For its part, ANBE plans to sign an agreement with the Maritime and River Cruise Network to create training programs in re-motorization and retrofitting of vessels along the entire Spanish coast.

Conclusion

Ships are still highly polluting, Spanish legislation has fallen behind in this regard and it is urgent to move towards decarbonisation. It has been pointed out that technology already exists for electric navigation, with environmental advantages, and that it is essential to unify criteria, speed up inspections and make the electric boat industry visible, which has many advantages such as being sustainable or being able to navigate in places where navigation with fossil fuels and generating noise is prohibited.







04

Technology

Enable Technology: Blue Innovation



04 Technology

Enable Technology: Blue Innovation

Real 5G for a New Blue Economy: Use Cases at the Cutting Edge of Technology

Moderator

Francisco Morcillo

Expert consultant in urban and territorial innovation.

Speakers

Francisco José Huidobro

Director of Digital Services at Orange.

Antonio Castaño

General Manager - Sevilla City Office.

Dani Caro

Head of Data - Andalusia Tourism and Sport Data Office.

These three Speakers represent three fundamental pillars that any destination must have. Firstly, the municipal part of the destination that has the powers, the regional destination that brings together the destination and the private company for the role they play in conceptual development. These three Speakers affirm that data is important, as well as its analysis. Technology is giving us tools and we must begin to investigate to provide solutions. We are in an absolute change of trend, on the one hand, at a global level with the impact of COVID on the planet. The need for a change in the tourism sustainability model is highlighted, to preserve the identity and the social part of our destinations.

Francisco José Huidobro compares what we are seeing in the tourism sector with what is seen in the private sector. He uses his company Orange as an example. What is really important is to have tools with which to make decisions to solve the problems that arise. For him, data would be the necessary tool and people would be responsible for implementing them.

Antonio Castaño, at the municipal level, states that "there are no tourists, there are citizens". Tourism has gone from being something that moved our spirit and vision and now we don't know if we are doing tourism or working. All the trends in tourism with all the digital tools have changed the vision.

Castaño says that all decisions made must be based on data. Data and information have led to an increasing trend in the use of cities. He also refers to Gunter Pauli's intervention on data farming, as data is what gives us all the possibilities for governance and for having tools to know what tourism currently needs with respect to current tourists. He gives as an example the current situation of the Nervión area in Seville, which has become one of the main tourist centres of the Andalusian capital.

Dani Caro presents the situation as a classification, since at the regional level they have a series of responsibilities with respect to official data. This data has a very powerful function used by different bodies and their responsibility is to ensure that this data is reliable and true so that it becomes official data.

For Dani Caro, it is necessary to analyse data to obtain a diagnosis and they are currently at the point of the use case: Knowing for whom and for what. If we do not have these two issues clear, the data can be phenomenal, but we will not have an action. It is necessary to use all this data in such a way that the recipient does not realise this whole process, but only the action and the final result. That is why they work with methodologies endorsed by Europe. All destinations have the business sector underneath, and this understands profitability and sometimes lacks the technical and economic availability. The objective is to turn weaknesses into opportunities. Everything comes down to simplifying and being very clear about what the roles of each one are. Being clear about what, who and the underlying action.

In the second block and landing in the bluest part of the event, the contribution of 5G with respect to the network of connections and data it offers is discussed.

Antonio Castaño refers to the help that the use of technology has provided to take advantage of and boost the activity of the Seville river and its marshes. With the aim of making these marshes advance and meet current needs. Another good result is the use of cruises on the river. The river began to be advertised taking into account the complexity it has with respect to the reception of tides. Thus, 98 cruise ship stops have been scheduled for next year. Thanks to technology, we have managed to obtain data that was not known. He highlights that "the cruise passenger who arrives docks in the very centre of Seville, and is amazed to see the Giralda and the Torre del Oro".

Dani Caro outlines the steps and objectives they are following and the lines they are working on. They are working on homogenising and grouping the solutions that are prepared with an impact on the tourism sector. And, on the other hand, they see the ability to talk to certain market agents such as Microsoft and Orange or LinkedIn. There are certain destinations that do not have the same operational or economic capacity and ability to understand what the provider is offering. Or, perhaps, the inability lies with the provider to understand what the destination needs.

They have reached an agreement with Microsoft to obtain help to achieve a change in the processes and services for the sector. The starting point is the company itself, we have to analyse how we have organised our capabilities and what the needs are, since resources and efforts are limited. In this way, we have to do a self-reflection and prepare ourselves first with the focus on our companies in order to be able to move forward. This leads to actions such as training, always making the provider use their capabilities in exchange for the purchase of their platforms. And the question is: Are these previous steps worth it? The service is being personalised, the tourist promotion oriented to the order and, thirdly, a personalisation to the companies and their needs and their training.

In the third block, the use of technology and technological habits are discussed with respect to different tools and applications with the aim of solving different problems such as the one mentioned by Antonio Castaño. Castaño mentions the language problem with respect to Chinese tourists in Seville, a destination that is still the third most chosen by this nationality.

Francisco José Huidobro points out two important conclusions: The first is that it is valuable to involve universities and the private sector, which he defines as a super transversal sector. Although he highlights that it is also essential to understand their needs. And the second is a reflection on the promotion methods to use and knowing how to activate them in order to achieve our objectives, what we want when we want it and how we want it.



Conclusion

The incorporation of 5G technology in tourism management and the blue economy represents an unprecedented opportunity to optimize the use of data and improve decision-making. As highlighted by the speakers at the table, the key is to understand for whom and for what purpose these data are used, ensuring that their analysis and application have a real impact on the sustainability and efficiency of destinations. The convergence between the public sector, private enterprise and academic research makes it possible to move towards smarter tourism models adapted to current needs, where profitability and sustainability must go hand in hand.

The challenge now is to consolidate this approach and translate it into concrete actions that boost the competitiveness of tourist destinations. The personalization of services, training in digital tools and the optimization of infrastructures such as river transport in Seville are examples of how technology can transform the sector. 5G not only improves connectivity, but also opens the door to a new way of understanding and managing tourism, adapting it to the challenges of the present and the future.



04 Technology

Enable Technology: Blue Innovation

Blue Digital Twins: Shaping the Future of Tourism

Moderator

Adolfo Borrero
CEO at Aalto
Consultants.

Speakers

Daniel Ignacio Rojas-Marcos
Head of Local
Administration and
Tourism at ESRI.

Héctor Fernández Bueno
CEO at Sensing
Tools.

Gonzalo Alfredo La Rosa
Chairman of the
FIWARE iHubs
Committee.

Sari Tolvanen
CEO at Ocean Eye.

Digital twins stand out for their ability to create precise virtual representations of physical environments, allowing complex variables to be analysed and scenarios to be predicted in advance without altering the territory. According to Rojas-Marcos, these technologies democratise access to data, offering tourism managers and communities tools to make more sustainable and efficient decisions. Examples such as the digital twin developed for La Manga del Mar Menor or predictive systems for flooding demonstrate how these platforms can integrate public and private data to optimise tourism governance.

Héctor Fernández, CEO of Sensing Tools, presented an innovative case: The digital twin of the Mar Menor lagoon, a tool that combines physical sensors and artificial intelligence with social network analysis to obtain a complete view of the environment and citizen perception. This twin not only allows for a better understanding of the state of the ecosystem, but also answers key questions, such as how many visitors a destination can support without compromising its sustainability.

Interoperability and automation are essential for these tools to be truly useful on a global scale. For digital twins to be used in areas such as mobility, water management and tourism, we need to create open standards. Beyond the data available, the real challenge lies in connecting different sources of information and standardising data models to maximise their usefulness. Much relevant data already exists in the hands of private companies, which raises ethical and economic challenges on how to access and share this information for the benefit of all actors involved.

An example of how digital twins can be linked to marine conservation projects is the innovative platform Ocean Eye, which fosters collaboration between the marine tourism sector, tourists, coastal communities and other stakeholders to promote marine conservation and sustainable development. Ocean Eye's model is based on citizen science and donations from tourists, who contribute financially every time they spot marine animals. These funds are allocated to community projects that support education, environmental protection and sustainable development.

Conclusion

Digital twins are a window to a more conscious, resilient and sustainable tourism. As these technologies evolve, they offer a unique opportunity to balance the need for development with the protection of the natural environment. The task now is to integrate these tools effectively, ensuring that blue tourism is a driver of positive change for current and future generations.

In addition, Ocean Eye collaborates with NGOs and funds initiatives that preserve habitats and encourage sustainable practices. Tolvanen explained that this model not only educates local communities about the value of biodiversity, but also generates valuable data for marine management, showing how technology can be a bridge between economic development and sustainability.

Artificial intelligence was another prominent topic. Although the speakers agreed that current AI depends on the quality of its programming, its integration with digital twins promises to revolutionize predictive analysis capabilities. AI already plays a crucial role in analyzing large volumes of data. By combining diverse data sets, it is able to generate more precise solutions to complex problems in coastal destination management, such as anticipating tourist flows or natural disasters.

Digital twins represent a unique opportunity to transform blue tourism, combining technological innovation with environmental and economic sustainability. Their ability to simulate scenarios, predict risks and optimise resources allows coastal destinations to adapt to current challenges, such as climate change and tourist pressure. However, the Speakers stressed that the success of these tools depends on their integration into a broader framework of collaboration and governance. Data standardisation and interoperability are essential for these platforms to become viable and globally accessible solutions. It is essential to establish common standards that allow the connection between data models from different areas, from tourism to mobility and water management.

Furthermore, the adoption of digital twins requires a cultural and organisational shift. The technology must be seen not only as an operational tool, but as a catalyst to foster collaboration between governments, local communities and businesses. As tourism destinations adopt this technology, it is crucial that local communities are actively involved in its development and implementation. This will not only ensure that solutions are tailored to the specific needs of each territory, but will also foster a collective commitment to sustainability. Digital twins, if properly integrated, have the potential to lead a new era in blue tourism management, balancing economic development with the preservation of ecosystems for future generations.





04 Technology

Enable Technology: Blue Innovation

The Smart Destination Platform for Blue Destinations (SDP)

Moderator

John Mora

Vice President of the Smart Cities Commission and Coordinator of the Smart Tourism Working Group of Ametic.

Speakers

Toni Pérez

Mayor of Benidorm City Council.

Adrián Gómez Sola

CIO Tourism and Sport Andalusia.

José Antonio González

Director of Business Intelligence at Innovasur.

The impact of digitization on the Spanish tourism industry was the focus of the debate at this round table where the challenges and opportunities that the Smart Destination Platform represents for tourist destinations in the current context were analyzed.

Toni Pérez, Mayor of Benidorm, opened the debate by highlighting the importance of interoperability, an essential element for the integration of data in the tourism field. The ability to share information between systems allows destinations to access key data such as mobility, meteorology and tourist inflow. This not only improves municipal management, but also the visitor experience, who enjoys a more fluid and personalized environment.

In the case of Benidorm, where peaks can exceed 400,000 visitors in high season, the platform seeks not only to attract more tourists, but also to ensure that their experience is smooth and satisfactory. Its model can be replicated in other destinations that a priori do not have the same conditions.

From Andalusia, Adrián Gómez shared his experience leading a data office that is committed to transforming decision-making in tourism. The real challenge does not lie in the amount of data available, but in the ability to analyze and use it efficiently to generate intelligent decisions. As an example, the use of big data extracted from platforms such as Airbnb or cruise portals, which makes it possible to anticipate trends and adjust the tourism offer to real demands. In addition, he stressed the importance of facilitating access to this technology for small municipalities, thus avoiding their exclusion in this digital revolution. "If we do not act quickly, we could wipe small tourist destinations that do not have the resources to adapt to this digital revolution off the map".

Conclusion

The Smart Destination Platform promises to revolutionize tourism management in Spain, enabling tourism destinations to meet the challenges of the 21st century and deliver a quality tourism experience to travelers. Data integration, interoperability, semantics and artificial intelligence, along with a collaborative governance model, are key strategies and tools for the platform's success.

Provincial councils also play a crucial role in this transformation, especially to ensure that smaller municipalities can benefit from this technological innovation. The Smart Destination Platform seeks to democratize access to data and tools, allowing all destinations, regardless of their size, to adapt to the challenges of the 21st century.

José Antonio González, representative of Innovasur, presented a more technical approach focused on semantics and symbolic artificial intelligence. "Today we have so much data that it is difficult to get the real value out of it", he explained, and for this, semantics offers a solution by modeling knowledge and allowing machines to understand the meaning of the data. He highlighted the role of symbolic AI, an alternative to generative AI. While the latter operates on probabilities, symbolic AI works with direct relationships between data, which makes it more suitable for making decisions based on specific contexts. In addition, Innovasur is developing interoperable data models that integrate key concepts such as digital twins and predictive simulations.

A point of consensus among the Speakers was the need to incorporate sustainability indicators in the Smart Destination Platform. This will allow resources to be managed efficiently, minimizing environmental impact and promoting responsible tourism aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Moderator, John Mora, concluded by highlighting that the development of technology applied to tourism in Spain not only strengthens the national sector, but also positions the country as a global leader in smart solutions for the tourism industry.





04 Technology

Enable Technology: Blue Innovation

Blue Data Spaces: The Data Revolution in the Blue Economy

Moderator

Daniel Iglesias

Research Director and Data Scientist at NECSTouR.

Speakers

Ana Moniche

Director of European Projects and International Networks at Turismo Andaluz.

Dolores Ordóñez

Director of AnySolution.

Jean Francois Cases

Associate Vice President and General Counsel of Amadeus.

Vlaho Margeretic

Senior Advisor specializing in tourism.

The blue economy was presented as a key tool for revitalizing European tourist destinations and promoting their sustainability. The European Union is actively promoting strategies that integrate data to improve resource management, foster innovation and enhance the quality of life of citizens. In this context, data spaces emerge as a cutting-edge solution to promote collaboration between key sectors such as tourism, energy and mobility, ensuring more efficient and sustainable management.

Dolores Ordóñez, representative of AnySolution, emphasized that these spaces are not simple storage platforms, but integrated ecosystems that facilitate the exchange of information under a robust governance framework that respects data sovereignty. As Ordóñez explained, "interoperability between sectors is essential to maximize the impact of these initiatives".

His European project, with an investment of 16 million euros, exemplifies this approach through pilots in regions such as Andalusia and Dubrovnik. In order to delve into some of these cases and as a consultant specialized in tourism, Vlaho Margeretic, shared practical examples of these practices implemented in Dubrovnik, where data-driven policies seek to balance the relationship between residents and visitors, promoting environmental sustainability. The key is to transform data into concrete actions that benefit both destinations and local communities.

From a business perspective, the benefits of sharing data among diverse actors are considerable and concrete; "Standardized connector technology allows overcoming traditional barriers, promoting collaborations between companies of all sizes and public administrations", said Cases. However, he warned of the challenges inherent in governance and the need to ensure security and trust in these collaborative processes.

Conclusion

The integration of data from different sources or formats in the blue economy has the potential to revolutionize European tourism, promoting sustainability and innovation. The tangible benefits of this strategy, such as improved resource management and the generation of new business opportunities, are already within reach. However, the success of these initiatives will depend on the ability of the actors involved to overcome technological, legal and cultural challenges.

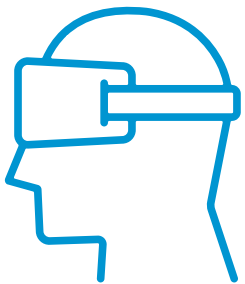
The future of sustainable tourism will be intrinsically linked to the ability to harness the power of data, turning it into effective tools for action and positive impact. The inclusion of all stakeholders, from small municipalities to large corporations, will be essential to build a European tourism that is competitive, responsible and aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

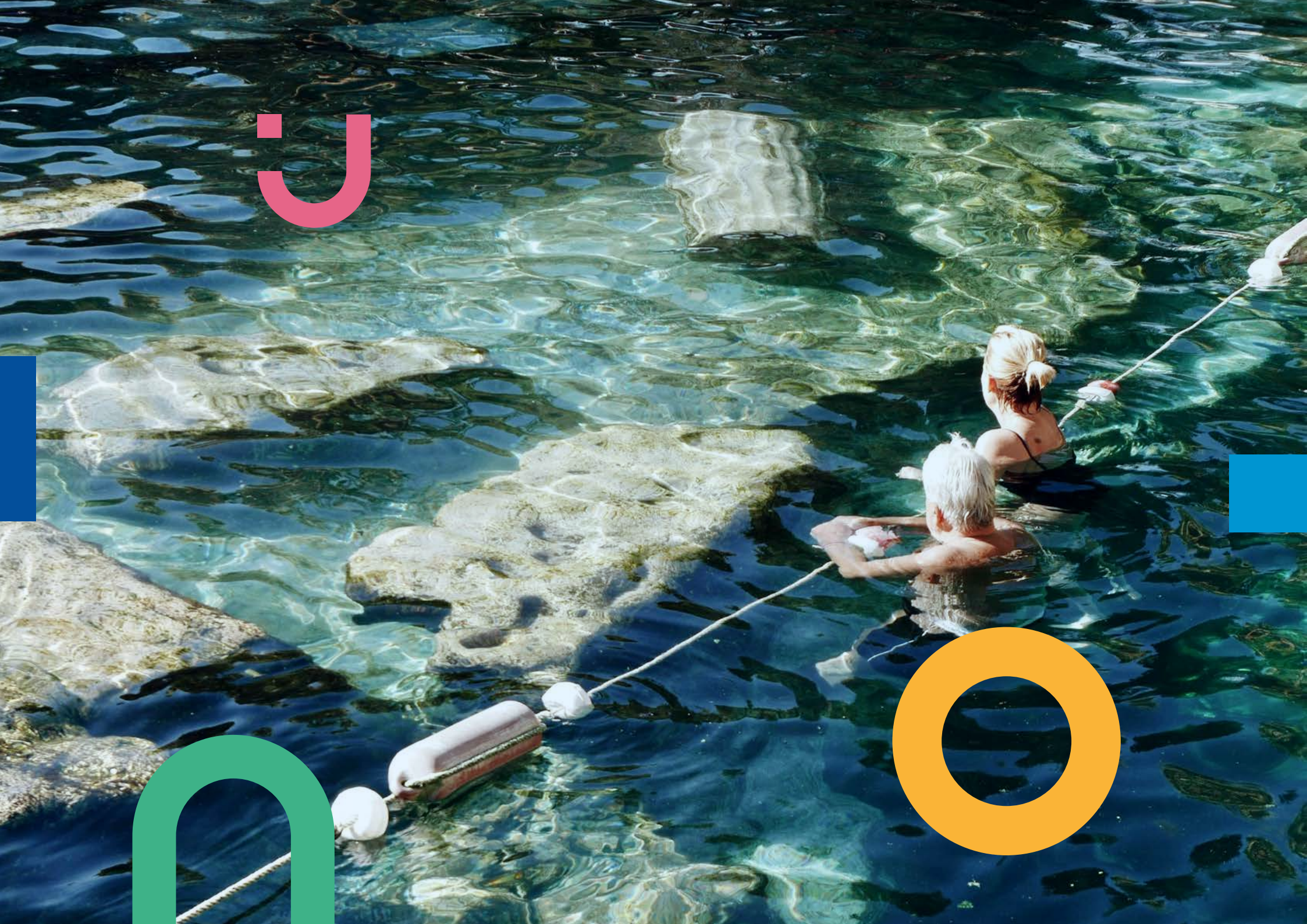
The importance of converting data into practical knowledge was underlined by Ana Moniche with examples such as the analysis of the carrying capacity in Dubrovnik and the management of tourist flows on busy beaches in Andalusia. According to Moniche, "it is crucial to integrate official and non-official sources to develop indicators that guide sustainable and efficient strategies". He also highlighted the need to train stakeholders to maximize the impact of these initiatives, including monitoring marine ecosystems and improving waste management, activities that illustrate how cross-sectoral collaboration can drive responsible and sustainable tourism.

Despite progress, the Speakers agreed that significant challenges remain. Governance, alignment of interests and lack of technological standardization are key obstacles. Dolores Ordóñez pointed out that many entities are not yet ready to share data, but initiatives such as the European Competency Center seek to close these gaps by offering training and adapted tools.

Jean Francois Cases highlighted how collaboration between small and large players can generate a more complete and valuable picture of the needs of the tourism sector. "Tourism, being a cross-cutting sector, requires comprehensive solutions that include aspects such as water, energy and waste management", he added.







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Thermal Experiences

Blue Dynamizer against Depopulation

05 Thermal Experiences

Blue Dynamizer against Depopulation

Moderator

Manuel Campos Velay

1st Vice President of the network of Villas Termales. Mayor of Cuntis.

Speaker

Catalina Herrero López

Mayor of Fortuna (Region of Murcia).

Thermal tourism presents opportunities and challenges to be an economic engine and a tool to combat depopulation in small municipalities. The representatives of Fortuna, Catalina Herrero, and Cuntis, Manuel Campos, shared how their thermal villages have evolved from being destinations for traditional curative treatments to become more comprehensive models that combine health, wellness and local development. This change not only attracts new types of tourists, but is capable of revitalizing the economy and social fabric of their communities.

Catalina highlighted the importance of thermal tourism as a key driver in her region. Located in the hamlet of Los Baños de Fortuna, the spa is not only one of the most recognized in Spain, but has transformed the economy of the municipality. According to Herrero, in the last ten years, Fortuna has seen an increase of 800 inhabitants, a significant achievement in a context where many rural areas face depopulation. This growth is largely due to the attraction of thermal tourism, which has encouraged the arrival of new residents, especially from northern Europe, and entrepreneurs willing to invest in the region.

For his part, Manuel highlighted how the Cuntis spa, the largest in Galicia, represents 40% of the municipal economy. According to Campos, the thermalism has a promising future within the blue economy, but it is necessary to adapt to the new times. To do so, it is necessary to go beyond the traditional Imsero programs and attract a diverse public that values not only the curative benefits, but also the overall experience offered by the spas and their surroundings.

Both agreed that the key to the success of the current thermalism resides in the public-private collaboration. In Murcia, joint efforts have made it possible to restore the original Roman site of the Baños de Fortuna, adding cultural and tourist value to the spa. The local administration has also improved infrastructure, such as roads and public transport, to ensure more convenient access to the facilities.

In Cuntis, investments have also been aimed at preserving the archaeological heritage, ensuring that the town's historical legacy continues to be an attraction for visitors.

Another aspect highlighted was the need to deseasonalize the thermal offer. Campos explained that, although in Galicia many spas close for months, in Cuntis they have managed to reduce this period to a minimum, keeping the facilities open almost all year round. In addition, initiatives such as guided visits to the natural environment or the creation of synergies with rural accommodations have been fundamental to diversify the offer and attract new audiences.

Catalina Herrero stressed the importance of changing the focus and what the public understands by the thermal experience. Today, Fortuna's spas receive not only elderly people seeking curative treatments, but also young families and couples looking to disconnect, get away from a stressful routine, and enjoy complementary activities, such as hiking trails or sports activities.

The discussion also addressed the need to integrate thermalism into the National Health System, a common practice in other European countries. Campos pointed out that, in places such as France or Germany, doctors can prescribe visits to spas as part of health treatment. This model could be replicated in Spain, promoting a greater appreciation of thermalism as a therapeutic resource for patients and an economic resource for the communities where the spas are located.

Finally, the role of thermalism as an engine of social cohesion and sustainable development was highlighted. In Fortuna, for example, collaboration with neighboring municipalities has made it possible to promote joint activities that enrich the tourist experience, such as cultural events and routes in the Sierra de la Pila. In Cuntis, the recovery of the historical heritage has attracted tourists interested in local history and culture, adding a new attraction to the thermal offer.



Conclusion

Thermalism, far from being a model anchored in the past, is emerging as an innovative and sustainable solution to the challenges of the present, such as depopulation. In municipalities such as Fortuna (Murcia) and Cuntis (Pontevedra), this activity has not only revitalized the local economy, but has proven to be an effective tool for attracting and consolidating the existing population. Thanks to this diversification, spas have managed to attract a more diverse public, consolidating themselves as destinations for wellness, rest and disconnection, in addition to the traditional therapeutic destination.

On the other hand, collaboration between public institutions and private companies continues to be essential to guarantee the success of thermal tourism. Investments in infrastructure, heritage conservation and the creation of synergies with other sectors have proven to be key strategies to maximize the economic and social impact of this activity. Thus, thermal villages offer not only health and serenity, but also sustainable development opportunities that benefit both their inhabitants and visitors.





06

KEYNOTE

Innovation and Sustainability: The Future of Smart Destinations and the Blue Economy

06 KEYNOTE. Innovation and Sustainability: The Future of Smart Destinations and the Blue Economy

Speakers

Antonio López de Ávila
 Director of Innovation,
 Education and
 Investment in Tourism
 of the UN.

**Stewart Sarkozy-
 Banoczy**
 Director General of the
 World Ocean Council.

To close the first day of the congress, we attended a keynote in a packed room that addressed how technology and collaboration can transform the blue economy into a key force for sustainable development.

Antonio López de Ávila stressed the importance of putting people at the center of sustainable initiatives. He stressed that "the engine of all development is people, and our mission is to invest in their education so that they can make responsible decisions". Among the topics discussed, emphasis was placed on the need to reduce CO² emissions generated by key tourism sectors, such as transportation and accommodation. "We must direct our investments towards projects and research that benefit both the environment and local communities", said López de Ávila.

For her part, Sarkozy-Banoczy underscored the crucial role of data in building solutions to mitigate the environmental impact of tourism. "Innovators and entrepreneurs working with ocean data and startups must connect with large corporations, ports and cities to maximize the positive impact of their initiatives", she said. He further emphasized that collaborative efforts should include diverse sectors, from marinas to ferries to cruise lines, to ensure a global impact on the blue economy.

Both Speakers agreed that technology is a critical tool to address the challenges facing tourism as it transitions to sustainability. "The use of artificial intelligence and other advanced technologies allows us to collect and analyze data

to make evidence-based decisions, thus reducing negative impacts and enhancing positive ones", explained López de Ávila. In this regard, he mentioned initiatives such as the University Climate Action and the Global Plastics in Tourism Initiative, which seek to integrate cutting-edge technologies to address global problems.

Another key point was the need to democratize data. Sarkozy-Banoczy proposed that the data collected should be shared in an aggregated form to enable its use by different stakeholders. "This not only increases transparency, but also makes it possible to identify patterns and develop innovative solutions for the benefit of all", she stressed. He mentioned a striking example: The ability to track plastics in the sea and determine their origin, illustrating how technology can transform the way we address complex environmental problems.

The dialogue also highlighted the need to unify efforts between international organizations, governments and private companies. Lopez de Avila suggested that "global challenges require global solutions, and this can only be achieved with effective collaboration between all sectors". Sarkozy-Banoczy added that "education and public awareness are essential to engage communities in these initiatives and ensure their long-term success".

Conclusion

The conference showed that the future of smart destinations and the blue economy lies in the ability to innovate and collaborate. With advanced technology, education and accessible data, it is possible to transform tourism into a sustainable force that benefits both the planet and its inhabitants. However, to achieve this goal, it is essential to overcome governance barriers, coordinate global efforts and engage all stakeholders in a common commitment to sustainability.



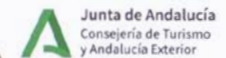
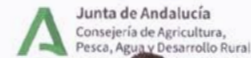


Future Conversation Starter #1)



Tourism Cities Investment Protocol (TICIP) (UNWTO)

Source: World Economic Forum



Keynote Innovación y Sostenibilidad El Futuro de los Destinos Inteligentes



ANTONIO LÓPEZ DE ÁVILA
DIRECTOR DE INNOVACIÓN, EDUCACIÓN
E INVERSIÓN EN TURISMO DE LA ONU

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07

Energy

Renewable Energy: Catalysts for
Change in the Blue Economy



07 Energy

Renewable Energy: Catalysts for Change in the Blue Economy

Challenges and Opportunities of Renewable Energies and Clean Technologies in Tourism Environments

Moderator

Lucía Segura

Head of the Territorial Delegation Service for Economy, Finance, European Funds and Industry, Energy and Mines in Almería.

Speakers

Rocío López

Head of the Environment Division at the Port of Huelva.

José María Arrúa

Minister of Tourism for Misiones.

Pedro Mayorga

CEO at Eneoceán.

Beñat Sanz

Head of Marine Energies at APPA Renovables.

Renewable energies and clean technologies are transforming the way in which tourism development is approached in natural environments. The need to decarbonise the economy has driven sustainable energy projects, such as the installation of solar panels, wind farms and electrification systems in ports, which seek to reduce emissions and minimise environmental impact. However, these projects also pose challenges, especially in protected natural areas or in sectors such as fishing and tourism, where it is crucial to achieve balanced coexistence.

Rocío López, from the Port of Huelva, explained how ports are key players in the energy transition. As large communities where industrial, logistical and tourist activities converge, ports have the responsibility to electrify their operations and promote the use of renewable energies and sustainable fuels. In the case of Huelva, the port is developing a roadmap to become a benchmark in the supply of alternative fuels for ships. To do so, a large investment must be made for the bunkering of this fuel, which will depend on public-private collaboration. According to López, this transformation will not only reduce gas and noise emissions, but will also allow the reuse of green products and generate new jobs in the region.

Pedro Mayorga highlighted the potential of offshore wind energy as an innovative and still under-exploited solution in Spain. According to Mayorga, this type of energy, especially in its floating form, has a positive environmental impact by promoting the regeneration of marine ecosystems and creating new fishing areas. Although there are usually initial reluctance in the communities where it is implemented, due to the visual impact of wind turbines, examples such as those in the Canary Islands have shown that tourists value these initiatives as

an environmental commitment. In addition, this technology could generate energy to supply desalination plants and contribute to the production of drinking water, making wind farms a comprehensive solution for energy and social needs.

From a more strategic perspective, Beñat Sanz stressed that Spain, with its 8,000 km of coastline, has enormous potential to lead the development of marine renewable energy. However, he pointed out that it is essential to raise awareness among local communities and sectors such as fishing and tourism to ensure their integration. According to Sanz, the Spanish administration is already working on a robust regulatory framework that will allow tenders and competitions in 2025, opening the door to innovative and sustainable projects. "The challenge is to convince, show successful examples and involve communities from the beginning", he said.

For his part, José María Arrúa highlighted how renewable energies can transform tourism in regions such as Misiones, Argentina. From initiatives such as the use of electric trains in national parks, to access places that were previously impossible due to the impact that fossil fuel-based means of transport generated, to the installation of solar panels in remote areas, these technologies make it possible to offer luxury experiences in natural environments without altering their ecological balance. Arrúa emphasized that the new luxury lies in living with nature in a sustainable way, and that both public policies and tax incentives are key tools to inspire the private sector to adopt these practices.

Conclusion

Renewable energies are opening up new opportunities to integrate sustainability into the tourism sector. From port electrification to offshore wind and projects in remote areas, these technologies not only reduce emissions, but also generate employment and strengthen local economies. They also offer innovative solutions to access natural environments in a respectful and sustainable way, such as energy production for desalination plants or electricity supply in national parks.

However, the key to success lies in the education and awareness of local communities. The coexistence of renewable energies, tourism and fisheries depends on effective communication and the active participation of those affected, answering their questions and listening to and implementing their proposals. As Spain advances in the implementation of these technologies, international examples and investments in research and development will be essential to ensure a fair and beneficial transition for all.



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Desafíos y Oportunidad Energías Renovables y Turismo Limpio en Ambientes

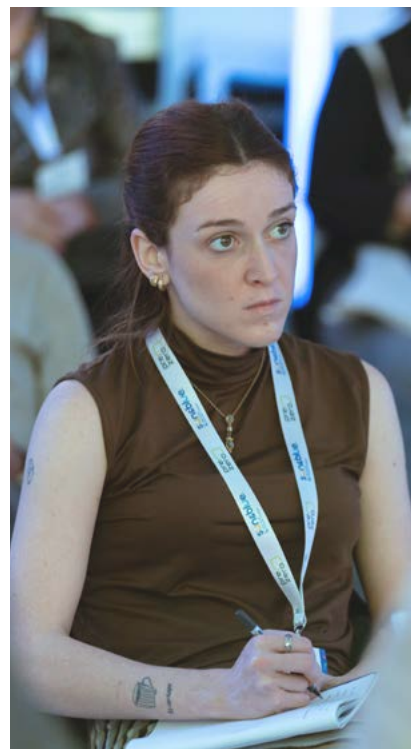
Lucía Segura (Moderadora)
Responsable del Servicio de la Delegación de Economía, Hacienda, Fondos Europeos, Energía y Minas en Almería

Rocío López
Jefa de la División de Medio Ambiente en

Pedro Mayorga
CEO en Enercocean

Bañat Sanz
Responsable Energías Marinas en AP

José María Arrúa
Ministro de Turismo de Mis



07 Energy

Renewable Energy: Catalysts for Change in the Blue Economy

Current Examples and Best Practices in Renewable Energy Integration

Moderator

Nagore Urisandi Espinosa

Director and Founder at IN2DESTINATION Research and Consultancy.

Speakers

Xavier Font

Deputy Director General of Territorial Tourism Development at the Generalitat de Catalunya.

Walter Vassallo

Founder at Blue Marina Awards.

Jesús Parrilla

Engineer and Co-Founder Partner at Albedo Solar SL.

According to Xavier Font, the tourism sector is a complex system that includes accommodation, guide services, transport and other elements. The Generalitat of Catalonia is investing 27 million euros to make tourist accommodation more energy efficient. This is due to the climate emergency and the need to mitigate climate change. Europe is asking the tourism sector to contribute to environmental sustainability. The Generalitat of Catalonia has adopted a national commitment to responsible tourism, which includes reducing the carbon footprint and energy efficiency.

Aid has been created to improve the energy efficiency of tourist accommodation, with a target of reducing energy consumption by 30%. These aids have been directed mainly to small companies, since 90% of the Spanish tourism sector is made up of SMEs. Catalonia and the Balearic Islands are the only communities with a tourist tax, and this money goes to a fund that is reinvested, for example in water efficiency and also in hotels that are the passive subject.

Jesús Parrilla said that companies in Andalusia are working on the integration of renewable energies in the tourism sector, using technologies such as aerothermal energy, geothermal energy and photovoltaic solar energy. Energy saving certificates are being used to encourage the modernisation of facilities. It is important to raise awareness in the tourism sector about the need for energy efficiency and sustainability, as well as in visitors, so that they understand the benefits of these measures. Energy communities are a solution for the integration of renewable energies in the tourism sector, but there are still legal and technological barriers.

Conclusion

The need for ports and marinas to integrate sustainability beyond their facilities, offering services such as electric charging points, has been highlighted. The importance of involving both businesses and users in sustainability, promoting the circular economy and reducing consumption has been underlined. Examples of investment in digitalisation, waste separation and more aesthetic and efficient renewable energies have been presented, such as in Catalonia and the Balearic Islands.

Sustainable tourism experiences are the spearhead for raising public awareness of the importance of sustainability. Data shows that tourists consume more during their trips, but this is changing due to awareness of climate change and the need for more sustainable travel. The integration of renewable energies in the tourism sector, since the tourism sector is responsible for 8% of the planet's carbon dioxide emissions and tourists increasingly value sustainable establishments. He also talks about the challenges of integrating renewable energies into tourist buildings, such as the relationship between installed power and the surface area of the building.

Walter Vassallo says that they evaluate and assess tourist ports with more than 70 parameters with indicators such as innovation and sustainability, not just energy. The idea is to offer support to these ports so that they integrate better and become a gateway to sustainable tourism. He says that marinas cannot be allowed to simply be a parking lot for boats. He stresses that the carbon footprint must be reduced and that there is a need for a change of mentality, and that administrations understand and support this.

He talks about the importance of communicating the efforts being made to be more sustainable and that it is important to involve visitors in environmental awareness and that games and prizes can be used to encourage tourists to consume less energy. He also talks about the importance of energy communities and the need for the tourism sector to be more sustainable in general. We need to generate added value for sustainable tourism and for the territory, being able to produce green energy, electric stations for recharging motorcycles, bicycles, not just boats. Marinas should be cultural heritage.





07 Energy

Renewable Energy: Catalysts for Change in the Blue Economy

Future Visions: Driving Innovation and Sustainable Energy Projects in Tourism

Moderator

Jeremie Fosse
Director of Eco-union.

Speakers

Alfredo Alcayde
Engineer and PhD from the University of Almería.

Sergio Maciel
General Director of Statistics and Market Research at the Ministry of Tourism of Misiones.

Ximo Masip
Co-Founder, Business & Projects Director of ImpactE.

Jeremy introduces the session, highlighting the importance of sustainable renewable energy for tourism sustainability. He mentions the ecological footprint of energy use, including CO² emissions and the impact on biodiversity. He talks about the need for social innovation to respond to the challenges of climate change and highlights the importance of planning, investment and social acceptance for the implementation of renewable energy projects. He emphasizes the need to accompany actors who need support for the transition to renewable energy.

Alfredo Alcayde presents his work at the University of Almería, focusing on marine visualization projects and renewable energy. He aims to unite technology and sustainability in marine environments. He explains how the social impact of renewable installations can be improved, for example by creating local employment and proposes the idea of offshore wind platforms that also serve as marine interpretation and observation centers, linking renewable energy with tourism.

He mentions the importance of a dual use of renewable installations to promote their social acceptance, stating that these types of projects, although they may seem like science fiction today, are already being implemented in some areas of the world.

Sergio Maciel was in charge of presenting the province of Misiones in Argentina, highlighting its commitment to sustainability and renewable energy. He describes the knowledge ecosystem in Misiones, which includes robotics, innovation and ICT schools, and Silicon Misiones, an innovation center powered by solar energy. He mentions the main economic activities in Misiones: Forestry, agriculture and tourism. He explains how biomass from forest residues is used to generate energy in the province and talks about sustainable agriculture in Misiones, with the use of organic fertilizers for the production of food for tourism.

He mentions the difficulty of implementing wind or photovoltaic projects in some deep areas of the jungle due to the biodiversity and the need for clearing, which in some of these areas is unaffordable. He highlights the importance of education for sustainability and training of the local population.

Ximo Massip presents the company ImpactE, which seeks to facilitate the energy transition in cities and empower citizens. He states that the energy transition is a social problem rather than a technical one, and that cities must lead by example before asking citizens to join in. He describes the tools that ImpactE offers to facilitate decision-making in the energy transition, such as an interactive map to assess the photovoltaic potential of homes and also the importance of energy communities to encourage collective self-consumption.

He explains how the energy transition is crucial for the tourism sector, which is affected by climate change and tourists' demands for sustainability, and gives examples of how renewable energies can be integrated into tourism, such as collective self-consumption in seasonal homes.

At the end of the panel discussion, a debate was held on the need to reduce energy consumption to achieve the energy transition, and the difficulty of completely replacing fossil fuels.

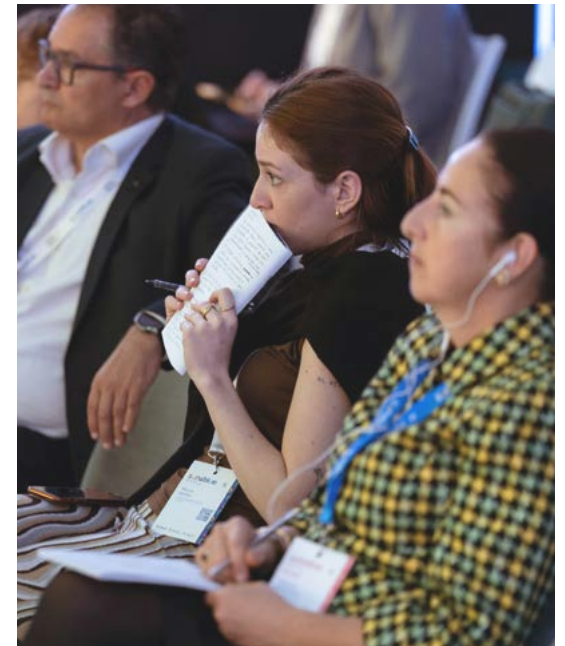
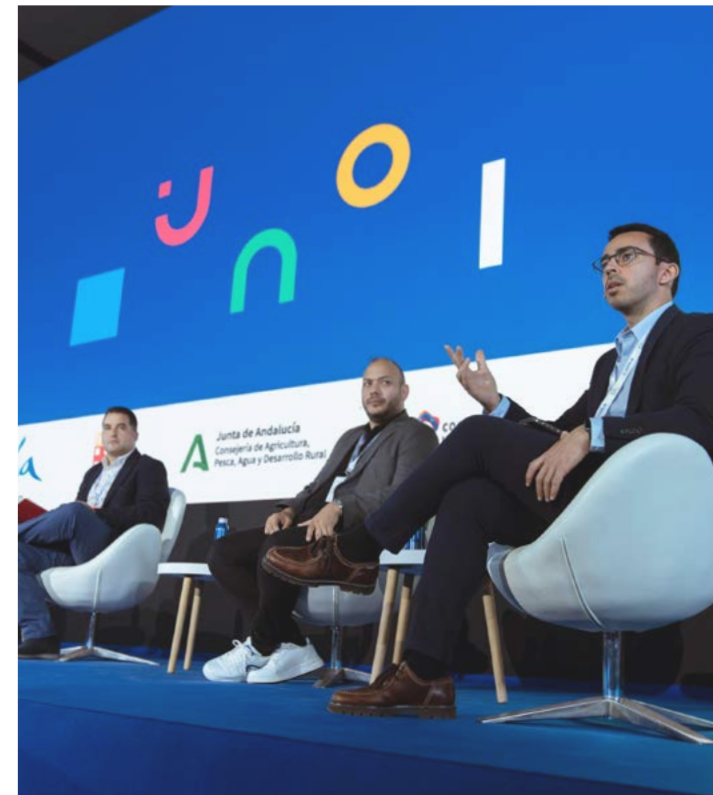
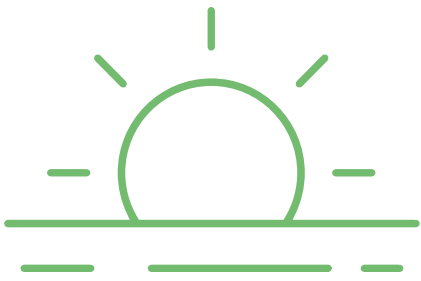
The importance of social innovation and collaboration between the public sector, citizens and companies to achieve the energy transition was highlighted, mentioning examples of good practices in Misiones and Spain to integrate renewable energy into tourism and the importance of technology, such as hydrogen and batteries, to advance the decarbonisation of the economy.

Conclusion

The session highlights the importance of sustainable renewable energy for the sustainability of tourism. The priority of decarbonisation and the dual use of energy facilities, such as converting marine windmills into tourist attractions, has been highlighted. They have agreed on involving citizens through disruptive projects that generate demand, connecting science with society. They have also underlined the importance of tourism for the local population and the need for training from an early age.

The need for a change of mentality and collaboration between different actors to achieve the energy transition is recognised. It is recognised that the energy transition is a complex process that requires time, investment and commitment.







08

Coasts and Beaches

Blue Borders: Innovating for
Sustainable Coasts and Beaches



08 Coasts and Beaches

Blue Borders: Innovating for Sustainable Coasts and Beaches

Guardians of the Coast: Pioneering Practices for Sustainable Coasts

Moderator

Amaia Rodríguez Sola
CEO of Gravity Wave.

Speakers

Karlos Simón
CEO at Karlos Simón Travel and Expeditions.

Robin Degron
Director of Plan Bleu (UN Environment).

Emmi Lindqvist
Assistant at the Marine Biodiversity and Blue Economy Programme at IUCN.

Juan Antonio Amengual
Mayor of Calvià Town Hall.

Mercedes Pardo
CEO at the Spanish Maritime Institute.

A recurring theme at the roundtable was the need to join forces between public, private and community actors. Amelia Rodríguez, co-founder of Gravity Wave, highlighted that the protection of marine ecosystems can only be achieved through effective coordination between governments, NGOs, local businesses and coastal communities.

This vision was shared by Juan Antonio Mengual, who presented concrete initiatives implemented in Calvià, such as the sustainable management of posidonia, the reuse of wastewater and the reduction of microplastics on beaches. These actions have not only improved the marine environment, but have also strengthened the local economy by attracting more conscious and responsible tourism. These initiatives are inspiring examples of how to address environmental challenges effectively and demonstrate that it is possible to achieve a positive impact on both the environment and the local economy.

Climate change represents one of the greatest challenges for global coasts. It is essential to adopt integrated measures that combine mitigation, adaptation and restoration of habitats such as mangroves and coral reefs to reduce coastal vulnerability. Mortimer warned about the effects of rising sea levels and coastal erosion, which threaten marine biodiversity as well as infrastructure and the livelihoods of communities.

Conclusion

Coastal sustainability is not only an environmental imperative, but also an opportunity to transform the relationship between people and the marine environment. Collaboration between governments, businesses, NGOs and local communities will be essential to implement comprehensive and adaptive solutions that respond to current needs. The future of coasts depends on the joint and sustained action of all the actors involved. Education, technological innovation and intersectoral collaboration are the tools that will allow us to build more resilient, healthy and sustainable coasts.

A key aspect of the debate was the role of advanced technologies in coastal management. Monitoring systems to assess environmental impacts, together with solutions to restore degraded ecosystems, were presented as indispensable tools. In Calvià, the implementation of technologies to treat wastewater has improved water quality, while the reuse of posidonia has shown how to turn a challenge into an opportunity.

Mercedes Pardo stressed the importance of education to foster a cultural shift towards coastal sustainability. "Training the new generations in responsible practices is essential to ensure the preservation of our marine ecosystems", she said. This educational effort must be integrated at all levels, from schools to vocational training programs and public campaigns.

In addition, raising awareness among tourists plays a crucial role. An informed visitor is more likely to adopt responsible behaviors, such as avoiding damaging ecosystems or supporting local conservation initiatives. This approach can generate a virtuous cycle where residents and visitors work together to protect the environment.

Despite progress, significant challenges remain. Lack of sufficient funding, limited technical capacity in some coastal communities, and the need to improve coordination between levels of government are barriers that must be overcome. However, there are also significant opportunities, such as access to international funds, the use of new technologies, and the growing interest of the private sector in sustainability.





08 Coasts and Beaches

Blue Borders: Innovating for Sustainable Coasts and Beaches

Blue Technology: Revolutionizing Coastal Destination Management

Moderator

Álvaro Carrillo de Albornoz
 Director of ITH (Hotel Technology Institute).

Speakers

Michele Colavito
 Cluster Director of Tourism Clust-ER.

Ignacio Llopis
 Director of IoTsens.

Alexandre Pereira
 Municipal Secretary of Tourism of Fortaleza.

Verónica Gutiérrez
 General Director of Innovation, Digital Transformation and Modernization at the City Council of Santander.

The concept of *Blue Technology* transcends tourism management, encompassing areas such as waste management, energy efficiency and urban infrastructure. This comprehensive approach not only benefits tourists, but also improves the living conditions of residents and protects the natural environment. Concrete examples include the accessible beach project in Fortaleza, Brazil, and sensor networks in Castellón, Spain, which have demonstrated the positive impact of these technologies.

In Brazil, Fortaleza stands out with its tourism intelligence system and innovation laboratory, which promote a sustainable and inclusive tourism model. With a population of 2.5 million, this city faces challenges such as waste management and lack of access to credit, but has made significant progress through data-driven strategies.

For its part, Santander has become a benchmark in Spain by integrating data from urban sensors and digital platforms since 2010. This city has optimized public services and offered personalized experiences to visitors, in addition to implementing the Santander Norte Litoral Tourism Sustainability Plan, which equitably distributes tourist flows and measures the carbon footprint to minimize environmental impact.

Blue Technology also promotes social inclusion. In Benidorm, for example, the installation of smart meters in homes for seniors has improved their safety and quality of life. Alexandre Pereira, representative of Fortaleza, highlighted the importance of involving local communities in the design and execution of tourism projects. This approach not only generates employment and improves quality of life, but also strengthens the sense of belonging and protection towards the environment, demonstrating how technology can be a powerful tool to meet social needs and promote equity.

Conclusion

The success of this revolution depends on the joint commitment of governments, businesses and local communities. It is essential to ensure long-term financing, promote public-private collaboration models and educate all stakeholders on the importance of this digital transformation. The future of coastal tourism will be defined by the ability to integrate technology with sustainable and inclusive practices. Destinations that adopt this model will be better positioned to face the challenges of the 21st century, consolidating themselves as benchmarks of competitiveness and resilience in a constantly evolving tourism environment.

Ignacio Llopis, from IoTsens, highlighted that data collection and analysis are essential pillars of this transformation. Tools such as sensors to monitor tourist flows or manage resources efficiently allow for the design of strategies adapted to market needs. However, Llopis also stressed that the success of these initiatives depends on a cultural change in administrations and the tourism sector, promoting the adoption of digital tools and recognising the strategic value of data.

One of the biggest challenges for the implementation of *Blue Technology* is financing. Projects supported by European funds, such as Horizon Europe and ERDF, have been crucial in driving this transformation. However, the long-term sustainability of these initiatives depends on public-private collaboration models and greater awareness of the importance of investing in technology and sustainability.

Michele Colavito, from Tourism Clust-ER, highlighted that collaboration between sectors is essential to ensure the viability of these projects. In addition, she emphasized the need for a shared vision that transcends individual interests and promotes the common good, integrating technology and sustainability at every stage of tourism management. Sustainable tourism involves not only preserving the natural environment, but also distributing the benefits equitably.

Verónica Gutiérrez, from the Santander City Council, shared how the Tourism Sustainability Plan has encouraged lesser-known routes, promoting a deconcentration of tourist flows. This approach reduces pressure on the most popular spots and allows visitors to enjoy unique experiences, contributing to the development of local communities.

Blue Technology represents a unique opportunity to transform the management of coastal destinations, integrating technology, sustainability and social inclusion. Its benefits are clear: Improved tourist experience, optimization of resources, preservation of the environment and improvement of the quality of life of residents.





08 Coasts and Beaches

Blue Borders: Innovating for Sustainable Coasts and Beaches

Standardization and Quality in Beaches

Moderator

Inmaculada Benito

Director of the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport at CEOE.

Speakers

Natalia Ortiz

Head of Tourism at UNE (Spanish Association for Standardization).

José Palacios

President of ADEAC.

Daniel Schaffer

CEO at the Foundation for Environmental Education.

Miguel Mirones

President of ICTE.

Sacramento Sánchez

1st Deputy Mayor of the City Council of Almería. Councillor Delegate of Public Works, Maintenance, Accessibility and Blue Economy.

The discussion focused on how standardisation tools can ensure the quality, safety and sustainability of beaches, while encouraging competitive and responsible tourism. According to experts, standardisation facilitates efficient and homogeneous management that responds to both environmental requirements and the expectations of tourists. This view was supported by representatives of the sector, who stressed that standards benefit all stakeholders, from public administrations to companies and users.

During the event, the Blue Flag was highlighted as an exemplary model that certifies high standards in accessibility, safety and environmental quality. This symbol, recognized worldwide, has established itself as a reference in tourism sustainability. In addition to guaranteeing compliance with demanding criteria, it promotes environmental education and encourages the involvement of local communities in the protection of natural resources. This approach not only improves the competitiveness of certified beaches, but also reinforces the confidence of a public that is increasingly aware of the impact of its decisions.

Collaboration between public administrations, private companies and citizens was another of the central points addressed. The need to unify criteria to avoid the proliferation of seals and certifications that can generate confusion among tourists was highlighted by the Speakers. Initiatives in development, such as the UNE sustainability standard and the "S" mark, were pointed out as tools to position Spain as a leader in sustainable tourism. Likewise, the adoption of international standards such as ISO certifications was highlighted, which provide credibility and reinforce the competitiveness of coastal destinations in the global market.

Conclusion

Investing in standardisation, certification and community involvement positions Spain as a benchmark in tourism sustainability and ensures that its beaches remain a valuable and respected resource for future generations. This approach not only ensures the competitiveness of Spanish destinations in the global market, but also reinforces the sector's commitment to respectful and balanced development.

Another key aspect was the importance of education and awareness-raising as transformative elements to ensure long-term sustainability. Involving both local communities and tourists in the protection of coastal ecosystems is essential to ensure the success of sustainable initiatives. This educational approach encourages more conscious and responsible tourism, creating a positive synergy between residents and visitors for the preservation of natural resources. The active involvement of citizens and training in sustainable practices are essential steps towards a balanced tourism development model.

The Speakers stressed the need to adopt responsible, sustainable and collaborative practices to ensure the future of coastal tourism. Standardisation is consolidated as a strategic axis, providing a clear and accessible framework to meet the high standards of quality and sustainability demanded by tourists and society. At the same time, certifications such as the Blue Flag and the UNE standard reinforce trust and transparency, differentiating beaches that are committed to excellence in environmental management and services.

Collaborative governance is also presented as a fundamental piece for implementing successful strategies. The joint involvement of governments, companies and citizens is key to responding to environmental challenges and ensuring a positive impact on local communities. In this sense, education and awareness play a crucial role, promoting a cultural change towards more sustainable and responsible practices.





08 Coasts and Beaches

Blue Borders: Innovating for Sustainable Coasts and Beaches

Beach Safety and Rescue Plans

Moderator

Virginia Yuste

Coordinator of the Blue Flag Program of ADEAC (Environmental and Consumer Education Association).

Speakers

José Luis Rodríguez

Security Councilor of the City Council of San Martín de Valdeiglesias.

Antonio Pacheco

Inspector responsible for Beaches in the Local Police of Sagunto.

José Archer

President of ABAAE (Environmental Education for Sustainability).

Miguel Méndez

Advisor of the Beaches Area of the City Council of Málaga.

One of the central themes was the use of risk assessment and control tables on Blue Flag beaches. Miguel Méndez explained that each municipality must present a detailed analysis of the risks associated with its beaches, classifying them in levels of probability and severity ranging from insignificant to catastrophic. This methodology allows for the identification of necessary interventions and the establishment of prevention measures, such as the placement of surveillance towers and the implementation of warning systems for climatic risks.

This approach also helps to combat the false perception of security that many bathers have when visiting Blue Flag beaches. Even if a beach is well equipped, there are always risks inherent to the sea that should not be underestimated.

Antonio Pacheco highlighted the use of innovative technologies in coastal surveillance. In San Martín de Valdeiglesias, for example, the use of rescue drones has revolutionized lifeguard operations. These devices allow for faster responses to emergencies and complement the work of lifeguards. In addition, municipalities have begun to implement jet skis, which have proven to be more efficient than traditional boats in critical situations.

Pacheco also mentioned the need to educate users about available technologies and warning signs. "Information is a powerful tool to prevent incidents", he said, suggesting that real-time alerts could be sent to bathers' mobile phones about dangerous sea conditions.

Conclusion

Coastal safety policies must be strengthened through innovation, inter-institutional collaboration and education. The presence of trained lifeguards and advanced equipment, together with public awareness strategies, are pillars to ensure safety on Blue Flag beaches.

The commitment of local governments, public and private entities, and communities is essential to build a safe, sustainable and inclusive coastal tourism model that prioritizes the protection of users and natural resources.

Collaboration between different entities was another point highlighted at the table. José Luis Rodríguez shared how his municipality, with support from the Community of Madrid, has managed to maintain an effective surveillance plan on Virgen de la Nueva beach. "Without the collaboration of SUMA 112 and the Red Cross, we could not guarantee a quality service for our visitors", he said.

In addition, José Archer explained how coordination between the Local Police and lifeguards has allowed them to act quickly in emergency situations. "The constant presence of lifeguards not only saves lives, but also reduces the burden on health and security services", he said.

Education was identified as a crucial element to improve safety on beaches. Programs aimed at children and adults on the risks of the sea and how to interpret warning flags are essential. "In Gijón, for example, rescuers visit schools to teach children how to act in the sea, who then pass this knowledge on to their families", explained Archer.

Access to up-to-date information helps prevent reckless behavior and improves the tourist experience, with mobile applications being highlighted for their implementation to inform users about beach conditions before their visit.





08 Coasts and Beaches

Blue Borders: Innovating for Sustainable Coasts and Beaches

Smart Beach Monitoring and Management: Towards Sustainable Planning

Moderator

Ginesa Martínez

Vice Dean of Tourism and Director of the International Chair of Tourism Intelligence of the Region of Murcia UCAM-ITREM.

Speakers

Verónica Gutiérrez

General Director of Innovation, Digital Transformation and Modernization at the City Council of Santander.

Patricia Giménez

Director of Playas Barcelona Cicle de l'Aigua at the City Council of Barcelona.

Cándido Seba

Head of the Rota City Platform.

Mónica Gómez

Employment and Local Development, Beaches, Environment and Sustainability at the City Council of Benidorm.

Bárbara Blaudt

Director of Planning, Intelligence, Innovation and Competitiveness of Tourism at the Government of Brazil.

Smart systems and citizen participation can balance growing tourism demands with environmental conservation and local quality of life. This comprehensive approach seeks not only to manage resources more efficiently, but also to foster a more conscious and responsible relationship with the coastal environment.

In Rota, Cándido Seba explained how technology has significantly improved tourism management in a context of high seasonality. Using a system based on Wi-Fi and smart cameras, the municipality monitors the influx of visitors to its seafront in real time, allowing it to optimize available resources without compromising the quality of services. This model demonstrates how real-time data can be used to more efficiently manage the challenges associated with seasonal population peaks, a common problem in coastal destinations.

From Santander, Verónica Gutiérrez shared how the pandemic accelerated innovation in urban beach management. Drones, cameras and data from the Cantabria Hydraulic Institute have been combined to monitor capacities and calculate available areas based on tides. This methodology has allowed the city to respond more agilely to variables such as wind and tidal fluctuations, although it still relies on human supervision that is expected to be automated in the future to gain in efficiency and responsiveness.

Bárbara Blaudt from the Government of Brazil provided an international perspective by sharing the achievements of the *Circular Beach* program in Rio de Janeiro. This project combines technology and environmental education to reduce plastic waste on beaches, involving visitors and local merchants in the search for sustainable solutions. While technological tools are crucial, the cultural shift towards greater environmental awareness is just as important to ensure the long-term success of these initiatives.

In Benidorm, Mónica Gómez highlighted the need to integrate local communities into sustainable planning processes. According to Gómez, educating from an early age about the value of natural resources is essential to promote a sense of co-responsibility. In

Conclusion

The Speakers agreed that citizen participation is essential to ensure the success of these strategies. Involving local communities in decision-making not only ensures that measures are effective, but also promotes a collective commitment to coastal protection. This inclusive approach strengthens the link between people and their environment, transforming citizens into active agents of change and sustainability.

addition, she stressed that management strategies must be flexible and adaptive, capable of responding to unexpected events such as the challenges generated by the pandemic. This dynamic approach ensures that beaches remain safe and attractive spaces for both residents and tourists.

A cross-cutting theme during the discussion was the need to integrate digitalization into a broader strategy that includes sustainability, education and collaboration. While current systems generate valuable data for management, progress is still required towards greater automation to reduce manual intervention and improve real-time response capacity.

At the same time, education and awareness-raising emerged as fundamental pillars to encourage more responsible behavior on the part of visitors, creating a deeper bond with the care of the natural environment. Initiatives such as Rota and the *Circular Beach* program in Brazil are examples of how combining technology with citizen awareness can generate a positive and lasting impact.

The Moderator, Ginesa Martínez, closed the panel with a call to act with urgency and collective commitment. She stressed that although progress has been made in the digitalization of coastal management, there is still much to be done to lead a comprehensive transformation that guarantees an ethical and sustainable model. Protecting our beaches and coasts is not only an environmental responsibility, but also an opportunity to redefine the relationship between communities, tourists and the natural environment. This joint effort will ensure that beaches remain not only attractive tourist destinations, but also resilient and sustainable ecosystems for future generations.





08 Coasts and Beaches

Blue Borders: Innovating for Sustainable Coasts and Beaches

Waste management on beaches: Innovation for a sustainable coastline

Moderator

Antonio Urdiales

Councillor for Environmental and Energy Sustainability at Almería City Council.

Speakers

Mesut Önem

Head of the Department of Environmental Protection and Control at Kocaeli City Council.

Jorge González

Technical Chief of the Planning, Budgets and European Funds Area at Ribeira City Council.

Patricia Lacera

Coordinator of the Barcelona Beach Strategy at Barcelona City Council.

Alejandro Rodríguez

Operations Manager for Andalusia at Acciona.

Waste management on beaches has become a global challenge that requires innovative, effective and collaborative local responses. During the roundtable, specific cases from different regions were presented that stand out for their ability to integrate technology, environmental education and cooperation between multiple actors. Participants agreed on the importance of articulating a comprehensive approach to address marine pollution and preserve coastal ecosystems.

From Turkey, Mesut Önem described a comprehensive management model that has transformed the way waste is dealt with on beaches and in rivers. This model combines preventive measures, such as river barriers, with advanced technological solutions, including specialized vessels and aerial and maritime surveillance. Supported by a team of 120 people, the system has managed to significantly reduce the amount of waste arriving at sea, demonstrating how coordination between technology, infrastructure and environmental education can generate profound and sustainable changes.

In Galicia, Ribeira City Council presented an approach that combines technological innovation with social participation. Jorge González, head technician of the Planning, Budgets and European Funds Department, highlighted the *Smart Sustainable* project, designed to optimise the management of urban solid waste and valorise the algae washed up by the tides. Although this project did not obtain external funding, Ribeira has strengthened its alliance with the *Amigos* association, which leads awareness-raising and environmental restoration initiatives. This effort has shown how sustainable management can be rooted in community commitment and local activism.

Patricia Lacera, coordinator of the Beach Strategy of Barcelona City Council, stressed the importance of promoting citizen co-responsibility. Initiatives such as the *Smoke-Free Beaches* programme have significantly reduced the presence of cigarette

Conclusion

The experiences shared made it clear that local solutions, supported by global policies and advanced technology, can make a difference in preserving marine ecosystems. From Turkey to Almería, via Galicia and Barcelona, the importance of continuing to exchange good practices and replicate successful models was underlined. This joint effort will ensure that our beaches are not only clean and safe spaces, but also enclaves that reflect a real commitment to the environment and future generations.

butts, improving not only environmental quality but also the user experience. Complemented by the ban on single-use containers in beach bars and the establishment of an environmental education centre, Barcelona has managed to consolidate a comprehensive strategy that combines regulations, awareness-raising and operational improvements to protect its coastline.

In Almería, Alejandro Rodríguez, Operations Manager for Andalusia at Acciona, highlighted how the region has adopted a holistic vision for waste management, especially on its urban and natural beaches. Through educational campaigns and workshops, citizen participation in the cleaning and conservation of the coastline has been encouraged. In addition, in natural environments, Almería has valued algae as a strategic resource, both as a natural barrier against erosion and for its potential for the production of biofuels, reinforcing the idea that marine ecosystems have an essential ecological and economic value.

The need for collaboration between public, private and social entities was a point of consensus among all the Speakers. Examples such as *Smoke-Free Beaches* in Barcelona or the strategies of Ribeira and Kocaeli demonstrate that sustainable results are achievable when all actors work together. Citizen participation emerged as a key comSpeaker to generate lasting change, as it reinforces environmental awareness and promotes responsible habits among beach users.

The panel concluded with a call for a comprehensive approach that combines cleanliness, technological innovation and education. Public awareness was highlighted as an essential pillar for changing consumption habits and reducing waste generation. At the same time, technology, such as cleaning robots and waste recovery systems, is emerging as a key tool for efficiently addressing this challenge. Ultimately, waste management on beaches not only represents an environmental challenge, but also an opportunity to build more sustainable and committed communities.







09

Culture and Gastronomy

Flavors and Stories: Weaving Culture and
Gastronomy in the Blue Economy



09 Culture and Gastronomy

Flavors and Stories: Weaving Culture and Gastronomy in the Blue Economy

Festivals, Concerts, and Performing Arts: Breaking Seasonality with Culture

Moderator

Valeria Méndez
General Manager at
EMTUR.

Speakers

Tony García
CEO at Tony García
Gastronomic Space.

Mariano Rodríguez
Managing Director
of Mediapro Events.

Diego Ferrón
CEO at Crash Music.

Jacobo Camba
Tourism and blue
economy consultant.

This round table analyses the deseasonalisation of tourism in Almería, an objective that has been pursued for a long time and that seems to have been achieved in recent years. The different Speakers explain to us through their different experiences how to ensure that the cultural elements and local resources of our land can be a tourist attraction throughout the year for different audiences.

Diego Ferrón, who is already on the way to this goal, gives as an example two projects that have been carried out this year and that have combined different local elements as a tourist attraction. The first example is the *Autumn and Salt* festival, which has been a great success and has welcomed 2,000 people. This, being a festival that takes place in a natural park, also has the touch of sustainability that is essential for the blue economy. As a second example we have Mojácar 5 stars, which combines haute cuisine and music to create the perfect local mix.

As a blue economy consultant, Jacobo Camba always opts to combine the local elements of his land with gastronomy, music and the great cultural heritage to de-seasonalise tourism and make it sustainable and long-lasting over time. As examples, he mentions the well-known *Sinsal Festival*. To achieve this de-seasonalisation, Camba considers the concept of transversality between all these fundamental elements that represent the local essence to be fundamental.

Conclusion

After presenting the different experiences in the different tourist areas to demonstrate how they work and ensure that destinations are sustainable and on the way to a blue economy throughout the year, all the Speakers agree on the importance of a transversality of local elements such as haute cuisine, music as an element of connection, as well as emblematic spaces that represent the city's own culture. The combination of all these speakers must cover the basic needs of customers when looking for the perfect experience in the Almería region.

We can consider that tourism has been de-seasonalised, since, if we take into account previous examples such as the Autumn and Salt festival, we can see that tourism in the province has been promoted during times other than summer. We must take these examples as a model and, if we pay attention to the characteristics of all the events that have promoted tourism throughout the year, we once again find as a main characteristic the transversality of local elements of the province that continue to be a tourist attraction regardless of the season.

On the other hand, Mariano Rodríguez refers to the new approaches to events that are being developed as a trend to achieve the deseasonalization of tourism. We currently have a great demand for experiences from clients, much greater than we had in previous years. We must take advantage of this demand to make an offer that fits the needs of clients.

He says that one of the main differences compared to other years is the great diversity of events that we find today. A while ago the tourist offer was much smaller and, therefore, reduced the supply and demand for experiences. There was little to choose from. However, currently, tourists are overwhelmed by a large number of diverse experiences that explore different fields. This explosion of events has led to segmentation and specialization of the same. And so, we find a sea of possibilities and offers that attract the attention of the client by representing the local and defending responsible consumption. According to Mariano Rodríguez, "putting creativity in value is what is needed now". He therefore invites us to continue thinking of new experiences and events to offer, always giving importance to and preferring to enhance the local product.

Tony García, from his vast experience, says that he has always worked with the local product from Almería together with large cooperatives and suppliers that guarantee that the product is of quality. He also maintains that the client who comes to Almería looks for the local product. Tourists come to experience the local idiosyncrasy, which becomes a fundamental part of the experience.





09 Culture and Gastronomy

Flavors and Stories: Weaving Culture and Gastronomy in the Blue Economy

Blue Economy and Mediterranean Diet: Sustainable Innovation in Coastal Gastronomy

Moderator

Esteban Herrera

Head of European Projects and International Networks in Andalusian Tourism.

Speakers

Víctor M. Gómez

CEO at Escaramujo Wines.

Xanti Elías

CEO of the Xanti Elías Group.

José María Vázquez

Director of Marketing, Communications, and International Trade at SALAZONES HERPAC SL.

Gaspar Ros

Professor of Food Technology, Nutrition and Bromatology at the University of Murcia.

This round table analyses how we can make the most of the different options, resources and possibilities offered by the Mediterranean Diet, favouring local products from the land with the aim of achieving a blue and sustainable economy. This is a particularly important round table for the province of Almería, since a large part of the products of the province, such as crops or fish, among others, are included in the Mediterranean Diet.

In recent years, there has been a trend among clients visiting the region to seek out the so-called *Andalusian Crush*. That is, that Andalusian charm that captivates and impresses from the first moment and that offers us a unique experience based on the local. It is not only Andalusians who recognise the value of our land and are in love with it, tourists who visit Almería want to know what the territory hides, its products, its people and they want to soak up its essence. And when they do, they themselves fall in love with its charm. Therefore, they want to experience everything that is related to the so-called *Andalusian Crush*. And, of course, the importance of the gastronomic offer represented by the Mediterranean Diet is undeniable, which constitutes another element of tourist value when visiting our province and the rest of Andalusia. Tourists who visit the region come looking for local products when they visit the different restaurants. The fruits and vegetables that are grown in the area, the fish from our seas, etc.

Víctor Gómez makes us understand how throughout his experience he has combined tourism, aquaculture, gastronomy and oenology with the aim of offering unique experiences that are attractive to customers. As an example, he presents his underwater winery that takes advantage of the environment so that the wine is developed in a natural setting. In this way, he opts for a sustainable economy that has given rise to a very interesting project that has been very well received by customers.

Conclusion

After sharing their experiences, all the Speakers agree on the great importance of the Mediterranean Diet as a tourist attraction that showcases the local product and gastronomy that the client is looking for in their experience when visiting the Almería region. They all also defend that this is a diet that promotes healthy, ethical, sustainable eating and a slow lifestyle. Clients are increasingly aware not only of the importance of following a healthy lifestyle, but of achieving this healthy lifestyle while being responsible with the environment.

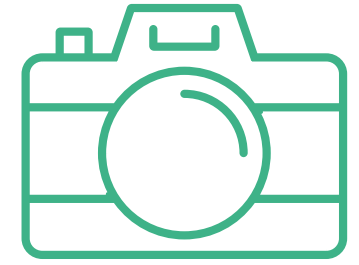
Finally, the need to seek the sustainable development of this gastronomy has been recognized, as well as to protect the local distinctiveness of our products. We must revalue the local product so that it can be recognized for its quality in the different gastronomic experiences of tourists.

For Xanti Elías, the word sustainability has three legs. On the one hand, it has to be profitable in order to move forward in time. That is, it has to provide a benefit for those who practice the activity. Secondly, he mentions that it has to be environmentally responsible. Finally, we find the social part that is essential for customers. Once again, the customer experience is one of the main factors to take into account.

José María Vázquez also opts for differentiated quality and protected geographical identification seals that indicate the authenticity of the local product. From his company HERPAC, clients and small consumers are taught how to read labels so that they are truly aware of the importance of the added value of these products. Thus, he invites the public to become demanding customers who are not carried away by price, but rather value the differentiated quality of the local product. José María Vázquez presents climate change as one of the main problems faced by sustainable aquaculture, using Barbate bluefin tuna as an example.

Gaspar Ros also advocates a rich, variable diet linked to the blue economy. For him, the Mediterranean diet is a mark not only of identity, but also of quality that defines us geographically in a very changing environment. In addition to geographically, he claims that it is a hallmark of the lifestyle that represents us. This is undoubtedly a tourist attraction for the client who is looking for an experience that brings them closer to the destination. According to Ros, "Gastronomy is not about eating on the run, it is about sitting down and enjoying the local product". This is precisely the experience that tourists from Almería are looking for, and which they will undoubtedly find.





09 Culture and Gastronomy

Flavors and Stories: Weaving Culture and Gastronomy in the Blue Economy

From the Sea to Your Plate: The Sustainable Aquaculture Revolution

Moderator

Pablo Ávila

Technician at the Andalusian Agricultural and Fisheries Management Agency.

Speakers

Roberto Rodríguez

Blue Economy Coordinator at INTEC.

María Isabel Sáez

Coordinator at CEI-Mar.

Héctor Pula

Technician in charge at Aula del Mar CEI-Mar.

Eduardo Soler

Sustainability Manager at Grupo AVRAMAR.

The main interest of this round table is to study the sustainable aquaculture revolution that is becoming one of the main sources of food for the world's population.

Roberto Rodríguez, coordinator of Economía Azul, is precise in the concepts he uses. He defines this revolution as a profound change in terms of methodologies and justifies its sustainable nature because it has the capacity to develop low-impact systems that last over time. He also defines the challenges, objectives and risks that we face when tackling this revolution. The three major challenges are the institutional challenge, the technique and the consumers.

The main objectives are to facilitate the production process and to reduce pollution, which is essential. Finally, the main risks of this aquaculture revolution are the administrative regulations and the capital that must be available.

María Isabel Sáez focuses on another concept that is also of great interest: Product quality. Globalization has made us understand that there are other cultures that have made food and products from the sea the protagonists. And, consequently, our population has become aware of the need to include high-quality aquaculture products in our diet. Which one becomes the star product? Fish. Highlighting sea bream and sea bass. What sustainable aquaculture seeks is to produce a healthy, quality, local product and maintain these qualities throughout the value chain.

Another essential concept that he mentions is price. The excess of supply causes a drop in prices, which forces us to investigate in search of new species and leads us to change the orientation towards a very well-labeled quality product that is sold as a seal of quality and distinction. This is a fairly recurrent idea in the different round tables since today the quality of the local product not only from Almería, but

from Andalusia, is internationally recognized. That is why the client seeks to find this hallmark of quality in the different gastronomic experiences when visiting the territory.

The problem, according to Sáez, is that we are abusing the term quality by applying it without knowing all the details of its definition. In this way, we apply it on occasions when the product does not meet all the requirements to be considered *quality*. Aquaculture guarantees us this seal of quality by controlling all levels of production. In this way, we can obtain a product that is not only quality, but also sustainable over time and healthy.

For his part, Héctor Pula claims the need to re-educate the new generations in this revolution and explains the different events that take place at the aquaculture congress in which he participates. As an anecdote, he tells us that the day of aquaculture is not celebrated on November 30 by chance, but because it is the day of Saint Andrew, who has been named patron of aquaculture for being the disciple who gave Jesus the two fish that the latter then multiplied.

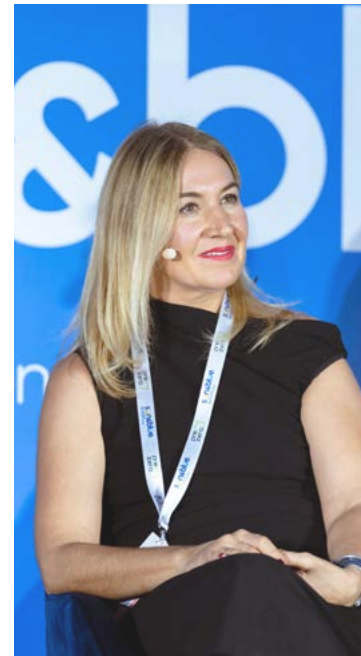
Eduardo Soler, as head of sustainability, underlines the concern about the reduction in fish consumption that had already been mentioned above. As a final touch, he highlights two major challenges that we face. Firstly, the lack of knowledge among the population regarding sustainable aquaculture and its advantages. Secondly, the positioning in relation to other countries, which is sometimes unfavourable. We need to study this disadvantage very carefully and develop different strategies to enhance the value of our product.

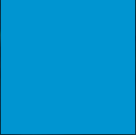
Conclusion

After discussing the revolution of sustainable aquaculture, which is represented as an activity with a long tradition and spectacular levels of technical development, all the Speakers agree that this activity will allow us in the future access to a sustainable, safe and healthy product, accessible to everyone and throughout the year. This is precisely the objective to be achieved and with this goal in mind, methodologies such as those mentioned above are put into practice.

It is necessary to call on the new generations to work on what has already been done and continue developing the ideas that have been defended and looking for alternatives that prevent the risks mentioned above from affecting the final objective of achieving sustainable and long-lasting aquaculture over time.







10

KEYNOTE

**Voices from the Ocean: An
Intergenerational Dialogue
on Coastal Sustainability**

10 KEYNOTE. Voices from the Ocean: An Intergenerational Dialogue on Coastal Sustainability

Moderator

Jessica Newfield
Senior Program
Consultant at SOA
(Sustainable Ocean
Alliance).

Speakers

Nacho Dean
Naturalist,
professional explorer,
speaker and writer.

Olivia Mandle
Environmental and
Animal Rights Activist.
Ambassador for
the European Union
Climate Pact.

Olivia is a 17-year-old environmental and animal rights activist who talks about her work to combat plastic pollution and the captivity of marine animals. She highlights the importance of education and collective action to protect the planet. She calls for the silence that exists in the polluted seas and oceans where there used to be life. She says that the oceans can no longer speak for themselves and maintains that the UN wants to solve present needs without thinking about the future.

She asks the question of why it is so difficult to think about sustainability, about progress. She reflects on the fact that most of us do nothing in our daily lives to improve the environment and companies even less so. She says that we must take on the needs of the planet. Regarding animal protection, Olivia reports that Spain is the largest dolphin prison in Europe and 6th in the world, due to the number of dolphins in captivity, and is currently devoting a lot of effort to trying to change this situation, to free dolphins.

She says we are in the midst of an existential crisis, a climate emergency with meteorological phenomena never seen before and record temperatures. She says that the floods are not anomalies but the new normal. She calls attention to the need to review environmental leadership and says that Spain is not at the forefront of sustainability.

She talks about the tourist industry putting great pressure on the environment and of a type of massive and invasive tourism, for example in the Balearic and Canary Islands. She says that 76% of travellers want to travel in a more sustainable

way and that 81% prefer to pay more if this means doing so in a more environmentally friendly way. Therefore, she says that more collaboration must be generated between companies, governments and citizens. Spain must fulfil its commitments for 2010 in marine protected areas to preserve marine flora and fauna and calls for stricter policies to control ships that fish in protected areas, for example.

She calls for each of us to be agents of change because the future depends on all of us. The change of today will determine the future, the tomorrow. He argues that these are times of climate emergency and tells young people that they cannot be paralyzed and that it is okay to feel a little fear in the face of this situation.

Nacho Dean, an explorer and environmental activist, talks about his expeditions around the world and his work to raise awareness about plastic pollution. Through his swimming, cycling and walking expeditions in recent years he has seen global warming. He says that according to the data available to him, in the next century Greenland will lose more ice than in the last 12,000 years. He talks about the loss of biodiversity and the accumulation of plastics as the main problems to be addressed.

He emphasizes the need for global action and intergenerational collaboration to address environmental challenges. For example, if only one country acts in the Mediterranean Sea it will not be a very powerful action.

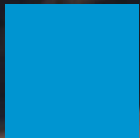
Conclusion

Both activists agree on the importance of listening to science, nature and the oceans, and on the need for industry leaders and policy makers to take bold action to protect the planet. Olivia and Nacho also talk about the importance of education, legislation, innovation and sustainable financing to create a more sustainable future.

They highlight the need to heed science, which warns of unprecedented phenomena, such as the largest ice melt in Greenland in 12,000 years. They have stressed the importance of informing the whole of society, urging administrations to act and working in intergenerational coordination, combining the experience of the elderly with the energy and vision of the young.







11

Islands and Territories

Blue Resilience: Innovation and
sustainability for our future



11 Islands and Territories

Blue Resilience: Innovation and sustainability for our future

Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change: Achieving Resilience in Islands

Moderator

Iolanda Piedra
President of the
Balearic Islands
Maritime Cluster.

Speakers

Darejan Kapanadze
Environmental
Specialist at The
World Bank.

Jeremie Fosse
Director of Eco-
Union.

Irini Barianaki
EU Project Manager
in the South Aegean
Region and the
South Aegean
Development
Agency.

The panel began with the Moderator introducing the question that the islands are more vulnerable to the impact of climate change, how can these destinations face the challenge of climate change to promote resilient and sustainable tourism development, as well as what future actions we must undertake. The weight of tourism is very important in them, taking the Balearic Islands as an example, where tourism accounts for 95% of GDP.

Jeremie Fosse pointed out that we must try to make the sector adapt, anticipate and recover from climate change. We must study based on science what will happen, an essential job to have contingency plans. When they do research they reach a series of conclusions that are shared by the different key actors who make decisions: Destination managers, local and regional governments. He also talks about policies that are not strictly tourism-related but have an enormous impact on the sector: Mobility, food and other sectors that are part of the value chain of the tourism sector. The projects they carry out have a comSpeaker of adaptation, of resilience to change.

In the current framework, changes and phenomena will multiply and the sector must have the capacity for resilience. There are three elements: **Planning:** We must study, know what scenarios may occur on the island, on the destination, science already provides a lot of information, there are thematic reports by country and region on this, and we must try to contextualize each island in its situation and develop plans. An essential task to carry out in anticipation of these phenomena; **Governance:** How institutions have to work with actors in the sector and generate relationships of trust. We must dialogue, reflect, interact and build; **Update:** The knowledge we have today is not what we had yesterday or what we will have. We must accept that we do not know everything and that we must have a mechanism for continuous improvement.

These are the three elements that a destination must have in order to have an adequate capacity for resilience.

Darejan Kapanadze explicó que Georgia es un destino turístico y This tourism contributes a lot to its economy. It should be noted that this is the country that regained independence and appeared on the world map only 33 years ago after disappearing for two centuries. So at the beginning the challenge was to

make Georgia known and attract tourists. Its tourist appeal is based on its nature, culture and gastronomy. As for the climatic part, it is very susceptible to climate change, very vulnerable, the population is very exposed. Coastal erosion is significant and unfortunately, the beaches are not stable.

The only tool to combat this process was artificially sedimenting the beaches although I am considering other methods because sometimes it is not enough. Another big problem is pluvial flooding due to extreme rainfall, and he explains that the infrastructure is not prepared for increasingly intense rainfall, the pumping systems are not able to evacuate the water. He says that storms come from the sea with waves that break violently and affect the cities. They draw red lines to determine where to build and where not to, since they know that there are areas that will flood, but they still build.

She insists that vulnerability to climate change must be minimized, and within the design for this there is a tool that they are beginning to apply. Another problem that her country faces as a consequence of climate change is in agriculture, the proliferation of pests and fungal diseases, for which they are preparing a coastal adaptation program to climate change. She points to the extension of the tourist season due to warming, this is already a reality, and says that Georgia is beginning to offer "climate tourism" that attracts people who go to enjoy the rain, the cold, the fog, it is an option that is having success. She calls for convincing political leaders and increasing knowledge of the technologies available to act against climate change.

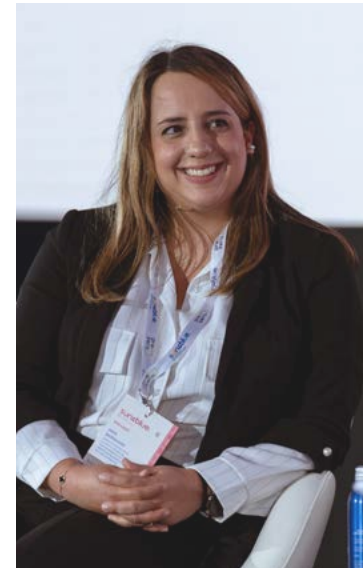
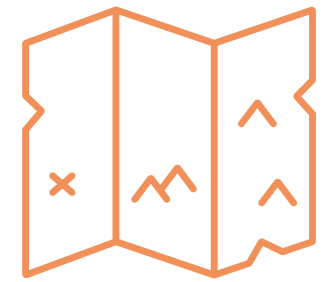
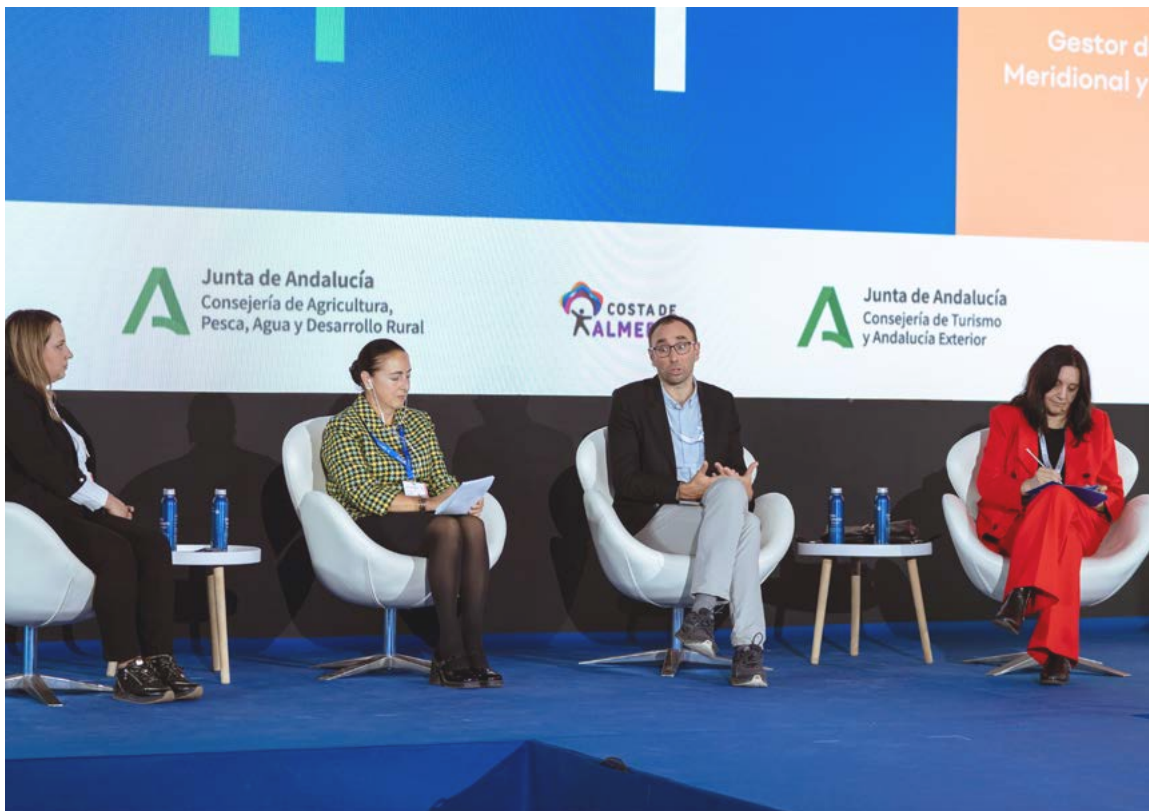
Irini Barianaki stressed that there is a contrast between the vulnerabilities of each island in the South Aegean, and it is important to take measures. They have a lot of infrastructure because there are many islands and this consumes a lot of resources. The best-known islands have an excellent economy based on tourism, there are other islands closer to land and a third typology with very few inhabitants that still do not put pressure on the environment and are very sustainable, they have a strategic function geographically. Irini says that the great challenge is to create a global strategy. They have created new departments that deal with sustainability, climate change and a department dedicated exclusively to collecting data.

Due to economic resilience they cannot say that they are going to change the business model, since these destinations have a great impact on the general ecosystem. She highlights the concept of "maritime citizenship", people who live surrounded by the sea with a unique link to the sea, and this can create sustainable practices in fishing and other activities.

Conclusion

Participants concluded that it is essential to plan based on science, with adapted contingency plans. They highlighted the need for dialogue between institutions and actors in the sector, the updating of knowledge and accepting uncertainty. The main problems on the islands are pluvial flooding, with insufficient infrastructure, and tools such as artificial sedimentation were cited. They insisted that all sectors must act, prioritising a sustainable economy, leaving fossil fuels behind and implementing existing technology immediately.





11 Islands and Territories

Blue Resilience: Innovation and sustainability for our future

Success Models: Pioneering Projects in Islands

Moderator

Ignacio Ojeda
Director Eastern
Andalusia at
PreZero.

Speakers

Luca Larossa
NaTour4CChange
Project.

**Anastasios
Baltadakis**
Responsible
for marine life
experiences at
Blutopia Marine
Park.

Ioannis Mardikis
Senior Environmental
Sustainability
Specialist at EPLO
(European Public
Law Organization).

Carlos Orozco
Undersecretary of
National Tourism
Development at the
Ministry of Tourism
of Ecuador.

This expert panel begins with Luca Larossa. The project started in January from the Croatian Institute of Tourism and focuses on the impact of climate change on coastal tourism, at a regional level, so that populations develop specific strategies and adapt. There are pilot projects in each region, for example in Cabo de Gata, and he explains that a climate action working group is established to draw up adaptation strategies, not mitigation strategies, and participating regions are asked to put into practice at least one of the solutions found, which have to be based on nature.

This project includes six countries for two and a half years. What is new about this project? He says that this group comes from the most environmentalist sector and they have put a lot of emphasis on the naturalist approach, that is, finding the solution to these problems in nature. He also points out that we have been talking about tourism and conservation for 40 years, but that he sees many problems caused by other sectors and that limits must be set, telling entrepreneurs and local citizens that tourism can be developed up to a threshold and from there on, stop.

There is a need to find a balance between quantity and satisfaction. The point is that the European Commission's regulation has two approaches: One wants to protect something and the rest doesn't matter, or the opposite. As for coastal tourism in the Mediterranean in relation to conservation, it cannot be said that it is being very ambitious in terms of conservation; one has to accept a polluted environment with a lower level of quality in general, since there are many years of accumulated tourism.

Anastasios Baltadakis, a marine biologist, says that he is from Rhodes (Greece), a very touristy island. There they look for possibilities to diversify the tourist product, they do sea walks around the fish farms for example, with added elements. The area where they work is privately owned and they manage the land, the fish farm, the dolphins. People who go on these walks are very interested in everything related to them, and they give talks on marine biology during the walk. He says that they promote marine culture during these walks, and this is the business model they are working on. This idea generates good practices for other minority producers, and can be a great opportunity for survival and a good economic model.

Ioannis Mardikis works on sustainability in island spaces with two main projects in the sector, one on the impact of CO², a continuation of other projects, capitalising on the success of the previous ones, and another that tries to address the challenges of decarbonisation of islands. The population is not stable, there are peaks and when you start to discuss a strategy the population changes and you have to start again sometimes, thus exemplifying how ephemeral the measures adopted can be due to natural population changes.

Conclusion

Examples of projects underway in various Mediterranean regions have been presented, including Cabo de Gata, where a climate adaptation strategy is being worked on. They have highlighted the need to limit uncontrolled tourism, prioritise decarbonisation and combine policies with effective communication to explain their benefits to citizens. They have also underlined the importance of strengthening political dialogue, especially in the Mediterranean Basin, as a key element that is still pending.

Regarding the characteristics of the regulations, he talks about how when there is national legislation from the top down it is not usually successful because it does not take into account local populations. Ioannis describes how they create some elements as visualisation tools to see how some elements of decarbonisation will appear. They organise living laboratories with citizens, they bring AI tools to show them how these new investments would affect them, so that they can actively visualise, for example, a wind farm, so that they understand what it would consist of.

He comments that with these projects there is ultimately a very specific roadmap for the authorities to know what to do and that the added value is not the technology that we already have, but what is missing is awareness, the consciousness of the importance of decarbonisation. Citizen pressure is not enough and that is why we talk about policies and explaining to citizens how their lives will improve once applied, and applied to tourism this is very important. He stresses that strengthening political dialogue is the element that is missing in the Mediterranean basin.

Carlos Orozco. He focuses his intervention on the Galapagos Islands, whose conservation has become a process in which showing diversity becomes a way of life for the local population. A tourism model was defined in the seventies that has been successful and continues to this day. Orozco explains that the islands become the face of Ecuadorian tourism, being its main product. It has a fixed population of 28,500 people and visitors amount to 325,000 people, ten tourists per inhabitant, which shows the complexity of the management of the territory.

It is a World Natural Heritage Site and is therefore subject to constant audits. It was declared a heritage site at risk and UNESCO warned and recommended a zero growth model for tourism as a solution. As a result, a hotel regulation plan was started as a measure to curb the growth of demand after an environmental analysis, load, a second study regarding socio-cultural issues of the islands and a third study on accommodation supply, and they saw that the first problems are that they put the supply of fresh water at risk, and the management of solid waste, for example. They also observed that a new, unregulated, private accommodation sector began to grow.

A hotel regulation plan has recently been presented, several activities are determined to specify the real capacity of the islands and the analyses that will allow to establish whether it is appropriate to increase or not this capacity. The different interests must be confronted, but above all the need to preserve the islands is very complex, but they hope to demonstrate the capacity of tourism as a driving force for preserving natural heritage as well as an economic driver.





11 Islands and Territories

Blue Resilience: Innovation and sustainability for our future

Blue Horizon: Future Visions for Sustainable Islands

Moderator

Adriana Salazar
Expert in Blue
Economy at the
Union for the
Mediterranean.

Speakers

Teresa Agovino
Expert in Tourism
- World Tourism
Barometer at UN
Tourism.

Pere Joan Planas
Director of AETIB
(Tourism Strategy
Agency of the
Balearic Islands).

**Mudrik Ramadhan
Soraga**
Minister of Tourism
and Heritage of
the Government of
Zanzibar.

Adriana Salazar, Moderator, introduces the panel by pointing to the islands as hotspots in terms of biodiversity loss and says that challenges must be faced with tourism. They are also laboratories for innovation and have the potential to lead the transition and be pioneers.

First to speak is Mudrik Ramhadan, Minister of Tourism of Zanzibar, a semi-autonomous region on the coast of Africa. He says that their main economic lever is tourism, which represents more than 30% of the island's GDP and 80% of foreign currency earnings. Regarding the environmental approach and the way of managing tourist behaviour, they are highly aware that there is still much work to be done to implement sustainable tourism practices.

They have the fishing industry, the oil and gas exploitation sector and, in relation to the digitalisation of the tourism sector, a thriving IT sector. They have many marine protected areas, in some of which the public and private sectors cooperate. There is a central strategy and they are discovering that the marine protected areas that work best are those that have the greatest community participation, from society, not just the administration. The minister explains that it is difficult for tourism to continue growing forever and they have started studies to determine what their tourist carrying capacity really is, how many tourists they can receive.

This indicator is crucial because it indicates whether they are prepared, whether they have the essential services to accommodate the number they aspire to. They are also trying to achieve balance in the coastal areas between those who come from outside and the needs of the locals, exemplifying how delicate it is to achieve this balance between, for example, seaweed farms and those who want to use those same areas for kitesurfing.

She concludes that the common denominator is the community, how to convince communities to participate in the conservation of the areas. The high biodiversity of the region cannot be ignored, there are also many cases of abusive fishing and they try to allow these areas to recover with their protection program, for example preserving fishing for a few months, and that in general it has worked very well. She recognizes that they still have a lot to do in infrastructure, alternative sources of energy, better waste management and wastewater management, and they put the emphasis on high-value tourism, more quality than quantity.

Teresa Agovino, sustainable tourism consultant for the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), shares an inspiring experience on the island of Taquile in Lake Titicaca, Peru. This island has implemented a sustainable tourism model that prioritizes connection with the local community, preservation of culture and reduction of environmental impact and poses a question: What if we could

Conclusion

The panel discussion focuses on sustainable maritime and coastal tourism on the islands, with a focus on how to balance economic growth with environmental protection. Zanzibar's Minister of Tourism and Heritage, Mr Ramadhan, highlighted the challenges facing his island, such as population growth, increasing tourism and pressure on natural resources. He outlined the initiatives they are implementing to address these challenges, including the creation of marine protected areas, marine spatial planning and the promotion of high-end tourism.

welcome tourists as part of our life, not as a transaction? If life were part of a living ecosystem and tourism were the heart of the experience.

Tourism does not consume there but sustains, everything is a reflection of community value, hopefully it will be the future for islands around the world, says Agovino. Taquile can be a model of a blue horizon, the idea is that everyone is connected. The most important thing is that they take care of their heritage, their land, their ancestors. This approach and the uniqueness of each town, where the tourist can enter the places. He maintains that we must measure and identify the type of impact we are generating, and the islands give the possibility of working with them as pilot projects.

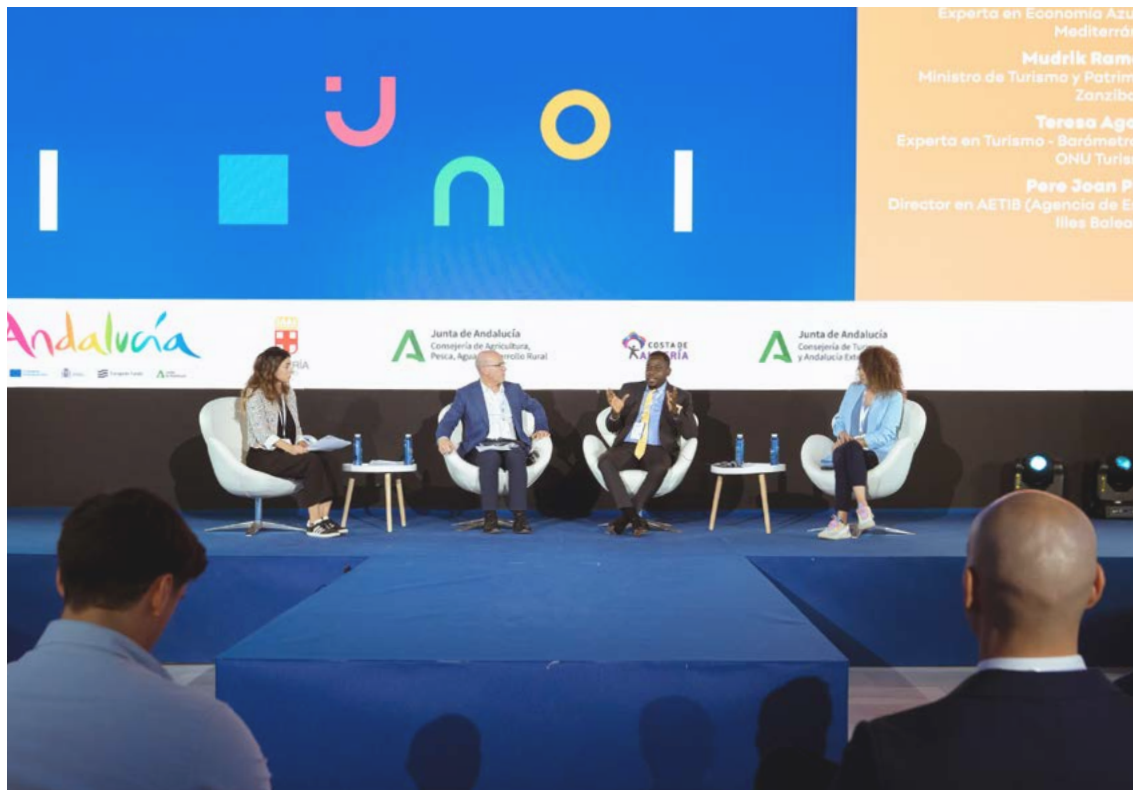
Pere Joan Planas, Director of the Balearic Islands' tourism strategy agency, spoke about the specific challenges facing the Balearic Islands, such as mass tourism and the need to manage resources sustainably. He highlighted the importance of technology, waste management and the protection of marine biodiversity. In his presentation, he indicated that the Balearic Islands are a mature tourist destination, with more than 60 years of continuous growth, and are in a scenario of almost infinite demand, so it is essential to put a limit on the number of beds, and he states that they have reached a ceiling.

He shares that they conducted a survey and a third of visitors said they were not very interested in the environmental issue. Even when they are on holiday, certain sustainable habits stop being so when they are on holiday and in his opinion something must be done without demonising visitors, but other strategies should be used. Regarding the concept of illegal supply and demonstrations against tourism or mass tourism, the priorities have been to stop mass tourism on sustainability issues, but this does not mean that it is not being addressed. This has led to support for the private sector, which is dynamic and innovative, and the public sector has provided support for processes related to water, waste and energy cycles, energy efficiency, improved insulation, roofing, photovoltaic production, which can develop circularity plans.

Some chains are already working on reducing food waste, training in sustainability for employees to reduce single-use plastics, cooperating with local producers, recycling mats, floats, etc. The panel analyses that today's tourists move much more than those of decades ago, with the impact that this entails on traffic on the islands and its consequences, and points out two challenges among the technological difficulties that must be overcome: AI and robotics.

The panel concluded with a call to action for the islands to adopt a more holistic approach to sustainable tourism, which includes community participation, environmental protection and preservation of culture.







12

Financing

Blue Capital: Financing the
Blue Economy Revolution



12 Financing

Blue Capital: Financing the Blue Economy Revolution

BLUE Financing Opportunities

Moderator

Yasmin Schinasi Romeu

Policy Officer for Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security at the European Commission.

Speakers

Axel Rodríguez

Project Manager at the Joint Secretariat of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme.

Elena Barrios

Technical Advisor at the Ministry of Finance.

Vincent Ernoux

Coordinator at the Regional Office in Interreg NEXT MED for the Western Mediterranean.

Javier Remiro

Coordinator of the Sustainable Blue Economy Area at the Biodiversity Foundation.

In this round table, the Speakers explain how the funding opportunities available at regional, European and national level work. The energies that support the blue economy, which is especially important for the tourism sector, are also presented.

Elena Barrios presents the FEDER fund, the first financial instrument of the European Commission's Regional and Cohesion Policy. The funding programmes work as programmes in competitive competition. As for cross-border programmes, Spain works with two. On the one hand, we find the POCTEF, with France and a funding rate of 75%. On the other hand, we find the POCTEFA with France and Andorra and a funding rate of 65%. Elena Barrios also points out the NEXT MED programme, which aims to promote transnational cooperation in the Mediterranean and can finance up to 89%.

In these calls, in general, there are five political objectives and two specific to INTERRED. The political objectives are those of a smarter, greener, more social and exclusive Europe, etc. Each of these has, in turn, specific competencies and goals that have been selected for this period. It is necessary to take into account the different objectives in order to participate in the different calls.

Javier Remiro is the coordinator of the Sustainable Blue Economy Area at Fundación Biodiversidad. This foundation has more than 25 years

of experience with the main mission of protecting cultural heritage. The program, according to Remiro, has different lines of work such as climate change, circular economy, green economy, job creation and support for entrepreneurs, bioeconomy or blue economy. In the specific area of tourism, it aims to bring biodiversity to the forefront of companies together with the administration.

Vincent Ernoux tells us about the opportunities that are currently available. According to Ernoux, "there is funding and it is not difficult to find it". The program is based on cooperation, and it is the most important element to take into account as bridge builders. The mission is to contribute in a sustainable way. Currently, the program provides funding that will be carried out in 9 different sectors. Finally, Ernoux defines SMEs as the driving force of the Mediterranean.

Axel Rodríguez gives us two pieces of news, one good and one bad. The bad news is that Euro-MED is not offering funding at the moment. The good news is that they have many projects that are open to participation as an associate partner. That is, you can work within the projects and contribute, but without obtaining funding as such.

Their priorities are summarized in 4 missions: The mission of inclusion, of cultural heritage, of green living areas and the mission of tourism. The latter is described as a priority. In addition, they cover a wide range of projects interested in cooperating with the outside world.

Conclusion

After listening to all the speakers, the overall conclusion of the presentation is that tourism will not stop growing. Vincent Ernoux even points out that we are in the era before mass tourism. This is a very comforting conclusion for different sectors. However, this growth has to be accompanied by development, research and innovation. For this, it is necessary to have great funding opportunities. These opportunities exist, but you have to know how to look for them and find them. This round table has allowed us to be aware of the different existing funding programs, their different calls and openings, as well as the different processes that are carried out to participate in them.

The need for collaboration is particularly highlighted. Tourism has multiple funding opportunities, although we can still work better on European funds and on what has already been developed before in order to obtain better results. The future of funding seeks simplification and an increase in the level of collaboration.





12 Financing

Blue Capital: Financing the Blue Economy Revolution

Examples and Best Practices in Blue Funded Projects

Moderator

Vincent Ernoux
Coordinator at the
Regional Office at
Interreg NEXT MED
for the Western
Mediterranean.

Speakers

Alejandro Pérez
Director of the
Central Research
Services in Salinas
at the University of
Cadiz.

**María Dolores
Guedes Socorro**
Spokesperson for
PESCATOBAL.

Thanos Smanis
Coordinator of
synergies and
networking for
the Maritime
Basin Assistance
Mechanism.

Eleonora Ambrosi
Project Manager at
X23.

We are pleased to have four experts at this roundtable who have implemented key practices to improve financing. It is a unique opportunity to discover first-hand how good financing can be achieved. Firstly, the Speakers are asked to identify one or two good practices that have been carried out, paying special attention to those that may be beneficial to the rest of the community.

Thanos Smanis refers to the previous roundtable to mention again the importance of collaboration. Smanis argues that it is essential to look for collaborators between new and old projects. It is necessary to know the blue economy ecosystem in depth and, for this, it is essential to know the synergies. He speaks of technical groups from different sectors of the blue economy that are the mobilizers to bring together the different collaborators. In addition, he highlights a fundamental idea: It is not about starting from scratch, but rather working on what has already been done. This is a call to attention for the new generations to continue analyzing what has been done so far to find weak points and reinforce them. She says that it is not about inventing, but rather reinventing what already exists to achieve an improved version.

Eleonora Ambrosi mentions a main challenge. This lies in finding the balance between super sustainable SMEs and those that are not sustainable at all. In addition, she defends the need to continue looking for digital solutions so that the results of the projects are

more effective and can be offered to other countries. That is, finding digital and innovative solutions to enjoy these experiences in a responsible and sustainable way. That is why digitalization becomes another of the main objectives to take into account if we want to improve financing. We are not surprised by this focus on digitalization if we take into account the great importance that technologies have in the current era.

Alejandro Pérez works to increase biodiversity from the Salinas, which he says have a fundamental role in the work against climate change as carbon trappers. He mentions the increase in biodiversity as fundamental, since it is used with different objectives that favor the blue economy. In an attempt to raise awareness, they are developing methodologies to balance tourism and economic activities with environmental activities.

María Dolores Guedes presents her project Rumbo al azul, which has been in existence for two years with the aim of complementing the daily work of fishermen with diversification. Under the umbrella of the blue economy, this project has served to show civil society what their unique and particular characteristics consist of when working in the fishing sector. It is through education, she says, that we have to make the idea of the opportunity for diversification attractive. She has a clear and simple challenge: To continue defending the sector. Guedes refers to the need for funding to achieve this valuable and sustainable tourism and to improve the facilities.

Conclusion

After being asked to highlight a main priority, all the Speakers agree on the importance of including society in these projects. María Dolores Guedes highlights two main needs: To make the role of women in the sector known and visible and to encourage the participation of the new generations. Alejandro borrows the idea of betting on women to work in the salt mines and, on the other hand, mentions diversification. Eleonora, as an expert in innovation, hopes to work in restorative tourism and adaptation to climate change, always involving the youngest people through schools, whose collaboration has so far brought a lot of value to her projects.

Despite the complexity of the topic, the main ideas have been perfectly presented and we have a much clearer idea of how to improve practices in funded projects. This has been possible thanks to the closeness with which the Speakers have presented their personal experiences as role models.





12 Financing

Blue Capital: Financing the Blue Economy Revolution

Financing the Future

Moderator

Marta Pascual

Head of the Spanish hub at WestMED (Western Mediterranean Initiative).

Speakers

Vincent Ernoux

Coordinator at the Regional Office at Interreg NEXT MED for the Western Mediterranean.

Vincent Favrel

Head of the "Sustainable Blue Economy" Unit at CINEA.

Inmaculada

Aguado-Muñoz
Head of the Support Unit of the General Directorate of Tourism Policies
State Secretary for Tourism.

Esther Chacón

State Research Agency.

Regarding future funding, Vincent Ernoux calls for a call to action around the Triple P of the sector: People, Planet & Profit. Action is needed for the near future and it is essential to conceive such joint action with the European Commission. He recognises that it will not be easy to obtain more funds unless the 27 states of the European Commission are shown that there are worthwhile projects, a high demand and highly trained people.

Vincent Favrel, who has been paying particular attention to the needs that have been presented at the congress, gives us an overview of funding. He also gives us an overview of projects that have already been carried out in the Mediterranean. There is currently an open call with a budget of 3.8 million for two projects based on innovation in line with the new approaches of the blue and sustainable economy. Innovation plays a very important role because it is relevant to growing in a sustainable way in the coming years. Regional cooperation is also essential, and this, he says, is the main objective. At the national level, Inmaculada Aguado-Muñoz says that the Spanish state administration is working on financing and the Ministry of Industry is working on blue tourism.

Aguado-Muñoz points out that, although it is well known that Spain is known for its cultural and sun tourism, the focus in recent years has been on achieving more sustainable tourism. In this context, blue tourism offers an excellent opportunity.

Regarding the experiences that tourists seek in Spain, she highlights that today's tourists are looking for something more than lying on the beach. They seek to discover and experience our culture and our experiences. That is why it is essential to perfectly design the experiences that are going to be offered to them.

Conclusion

Finally, all the Speakers make a call to action around the previously mentioned Triple P. After analysing the different tourism models, special emphasis is placed on working on the relationship between the value of tourism and citizenship, which currently represent a problem as important as sustainability. Once again, cooperation and collaboration between different factors is highlighted.

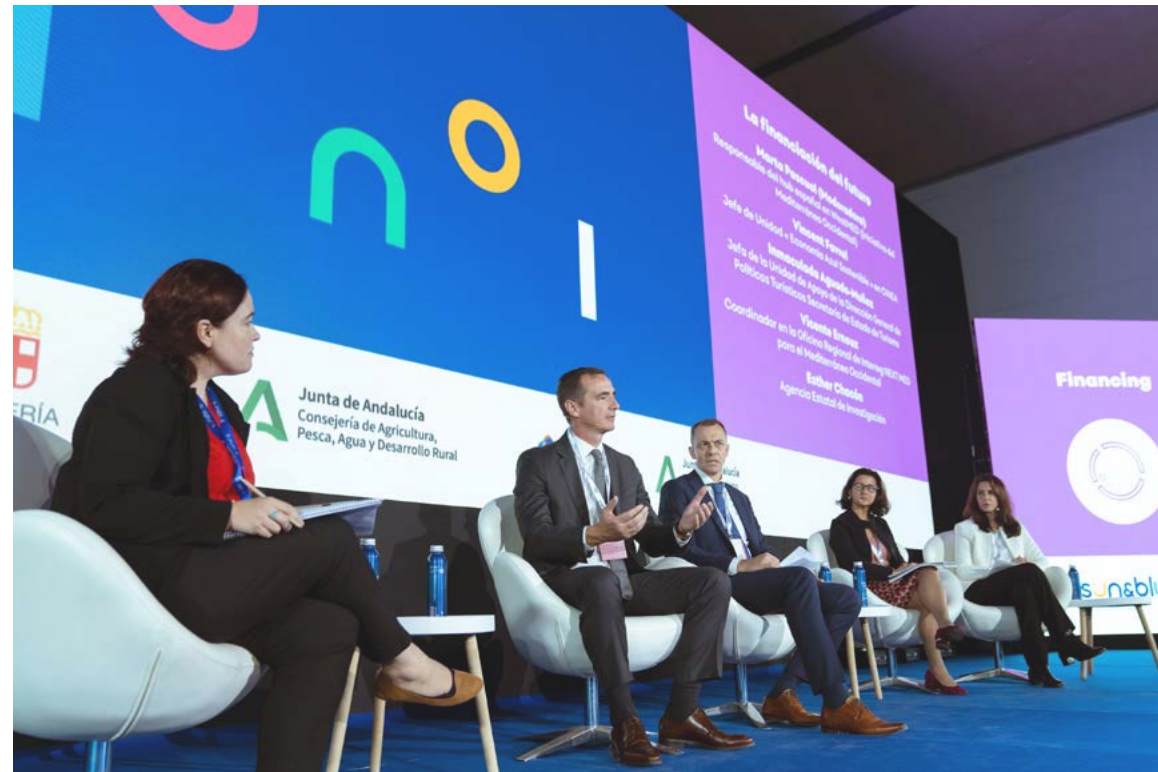
The new generations are once again the protagonists, as is digitalisation when it comes to the future of financing. After listening to the different presentations by the experts and paying attention to the different projects that are mentioned, we see how innovation also plays a fundamental role.

Inmaculada Aguado-Muñoz points out a call for proposals launched three years ago thanks to the New Generation funds of the European Union that has allowed them to offer financing to innovative tourism proposals. And here we find the key, the need to design innovative experiences that are an attraction for tourists visiting the territory.

Esther Chacón, representing the Sustainable Blue Economy association, which is also presenting funding, gives us some figures on the initiative she is referring to, which will last 7 years. Several competitions for research funding will be launched and 400 million euros will be mobilised. All this will be carried out over 6 co-financed calls in which both public and private institutions can participate. The only apparent requirement to participate in these calls is that the projects have funding agencies involved, since they finance the project within the call.

The next and third call will be held in September 2025. This is related to the present congress since it addresses a new field of intervention focused on maritime and coastal tourism, the largest within the European blue economy. Chacón states that the future of blue tourism depends on the resilience of the coastal economy, the resilience of communities and infrastructure. Marta Pascual asks them to mention the fields of action that are devoid of projects. Vincent Ernoux refers to the Mediterranean diet, adventure tourism, slow food, tourism for older people or health tourism as essential categories. As well as the relationship between the value of tourism and citizenship, where he points out a problem as big as that of sustainability. This problem must be addressed in future funding programmes. On the other hand, Vincent Favrel calls on the new generations and the progress of digitalisation. Esther stresses that, in order to cover this problem with different interests, we must look for innovative solutions that respond to several sectors.







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Hospitality

Reinventing the Hospitality Industry



13 Hospitality

Reinventing the Hospitality Industry

The social role of hospitality: Innovation and Sustainability in the Hotel Industry for the Blue Economy

Moderator

Jorge Serrano
Secretary General at IACHR.

Speakers

Javier Zori
Director of National Geographic Travel.

Gloria Juste
Global Director of Sustainability at Grupo Palladium.

Marcos Alonso
General Manager at Hotel Barceló Cabo de Gata.

Beatriz Codes
Associate Director of Public Affairs, Communication and Sustainability in the Southern Area at Coca Cola European Partners Iberia.

The hotel industry is playing a crucial role in the transformation towards more sustainable and responsible tourism. As an economic and cultural engine, hotels not only offer accommodation, but also act as catalysts for positive changes in local communities, environmental preservation and the global economy. This approach, based on sustainability and innovation, has acquired special relevance in the context of the blue economy, where natural, cultural and social resources are used responsibly to generate prosperity.

Javier Zori, Director of Viajes National Geographic, stressed that sustainability, although fundamental, has become a worn-out, empty and often misunderstood term. From his perspective, the key is that sustainability must be told effectively and, above all, taught with facts. To do this, hotels must communicate their efforts through unique experiences and positive messages, moving away from blaming, that is, not making the guest feel guilty. Sustainability should not be perceived as a duty, but as an opportunity to enjoy what is local: Own gardens, sustainable fishing or collaborations with local artists and producers. These practices not only enrich the guest experience, but also differentiate each establishment by reflecting the authenticity of its surroundings.

Gloria Juste, Global Director of Sustainability at the Palladium Group, stressed that sustainability is not a recent trend, but rather a philosophy that has been in development for decades. For her, the true impact lies in three fundamental pillars: People, communities and the planet. Listening to workers, integrating them into the sustainable commitment and ensuring that business decisions positively transform the environment are essential practices. "A hotel should not only be a business, but an agent of change that leaves a positive mark on the community and the planet", she says.

Conclusion

Sustainability in the hospitality industry should not be limited to a simple ecological effort, but should encompass a profound transformation in how companies manage their resources, interact with their communities and communicate their impact. Hospitality establishments have the ability to lead significant changes, from preserving the environment to revitalizing local economies.

In addition, communicating these efforts clearly and authentically not only strengthens the connection with guests, but also inspires a change in habits and behaviors. In this process, collaboration between companies, workers and local communities is essential to achieve a sustainable tourism model that benefits everyone. In this way, the hospitality industry can reaffirm its role as an active and fundamental pillar in the construction of a more responsible and equitable future within the blue economy.

At the Barceló Cabo de Gata Hotel, its general manager, Marcos Alonso, has developed a strategy focused on three main axes: Supporting the local economy through local and kilometer-zero suppliers, promoting social justice within the company and promoting a harmonious relationship between people and the environment. Alonso emphasizes that corporate responsibility must go beyond customer expectations, becoming an example of good practices for the entire industry.

Beatriz Codes, from Coca-Cola European Partners, provided a broader perspective on how large companies and multinationals can lead the way towards sustainability. Since 2017, her company has implemented measurable goals in six key areas: Reducing carbon emissions, returning used water through conservation projects, sustainable packaging, reducing sugar in its products, inclusion of young people and women, and sustainability throughout its supply chain. This comprehensive approach not only seeks internal compliance, but also drives and encourages its suppliers to adopt responsible practices.

Gastronomy has also emerged as a powerful tool to connect guests with sustainability. From creating dishes made with local ingredients on hotel menus to promoting responsible culinary practices, food can be an effective vehicle to convey the importance of caring for the environment. According to Zori, this approach allows travelers to experience sustainability in a tangible way, turning their stay into an educational and enriching experience.

Not to mention that hotels' commitment to sustainability does not end at their facilities. The natural, historical and cultural environments surrounding the establishments are essential elements that must be preserved and enhanced to ensure that hotels are active agents in the conservation of their environment and, in turn, that this also serves as a tourist attraction.





13 Hospitality

Reinventing the Hospitality Industry

Green Construction and Operations in the Hotel Sector

Moderator

Jorge Serrano
Secretary General at
IACHR.

Speaker

Lisa Simone
Program Director
of World Ocean
Council.

Francisca García
CEO at Casa 1800.

Participants highlighted the need to adopt sustainable practices at all stages of the hotel business, from construction to daily management. Jorge Serrano, Moderator of the panel, stressed the importance of the location of hotels, the need to assess the environmental impact and the importance of involving suppliers in the value chain.

Lisa Simone spoke about the importance of the sector in the blue economy. A key point is the location of hotels: The environmental impact must be assessed, where they are going to be built, thinking about sustainability and the principles of circular economy from the outset, considering important aspects such as the materials to be used. She also highlighted that it is necessary to be more sustainable in the design and in the phase of being in operation as well as in the end-of-life phase of the establishment.

For newly built hotels, it may be considered to use a flexible or modular design that allows the use of more flexible, less toxic materials, and also think about nature, how to contribute to the local ecosystem or marine biodiversity if you are on the coast.

One issue that she gave special importance to is when it comes to contracting with material suppliers so that they also follow the principles of sustainability. Lisa made the analysis that people who end up choosing sustainable hotels care about the experience.

As for tourists, she points out that they will be increasingly aware of where they stay and what they really want, so it is time to make a paradigm shift and hotels or destinations have the opportunity to be leaders in that now. You have to decide whether to stay behind or get on the sustainability train, you have the opportunity to be a leader and a reference, and she affirms that any hotel can contribute to a more sustainable maritime environment, even if you are not on the coast, you can reduce emissions and do many things about it.

Conclusion

The roundtable concluded that sustainability is an imperative for the future of the tourism sector. Hotels have the opportunity to become agents of change and contribute to a more sustainable future. To achieve this, it is necessary to adopt a comprehensive approach that involves all actors in the value chain and foster collaboration and leadership.

Lisa also wanted to make a special mention about the role of workers in the tourism sector: The role of employees with respect to sustainability is a shared responsibility. In hotels or cruises, employees must set an example, they must also ensure that the instructions are respected and she affirmed that there will be a future in which employees will want to work in a sustainable hotel rather than in another.

Francisca García, representative of Casa 1800, shared her company's experience in implementing sustainable practices in boutique hotels. She highlighted the importance of a comprehensive approach and the need to overcome initial challenges. The Speaker emphasized the fundamental role of collaboration between the actors in the sector to accelerate the transition towards more sustainable tourism.

She highlighted the benefits of sustainability: It is not only a responsibility, but also an opportunity to differentiate oneself in the market and attract an increasingly conscious public. Sustainable hotels can improve their reputation, reduce costs in the long term and contribute to local economic development. She also highlights the importance of certifications and concrete measures that can be implemented in boutique hotels, such as efficient water management and collaboration with the local community. Francisca affirms that those who are not already on the path to sustainability are late.





13 Hospitality

Reinventing the Hospitality Industry

Green Marketing and Market Strategies for Sustainable Hotels

Moderator

Jorge Serrano
Secretary General at IACHR.

Speakers

Francisca Molina
Delegate of Andalusia at DIRSE.

Juan Manuel Martínez
Managing Director of Green & Human.

Vicente Romero
President of IACHR.

Francisca Molina began by highlighting the need to unify concepts and use clear and simple language to communicate sustainability. She highlighted the importance of involving employees and offering participation options to customers. She introduces the concept of shortcomings or challenges when communicating and finds that there are two key questions: Sustainable management first or responsible consumption?

Companies in tourism, due to their impact, need to accompany their actions with others that are sensitive to consumers and tourists. There are hotels with implemented sustainability strategies that consumers do not comply with. You have to take initiative and push, sustainability no matter what: It has to be part of the business model but must be accompanied by awareness-raising actions for the consumer.

Francisca asks herself: What are the best practices for communicating sustainability initiatives? The first thing is to unify concepts, use a language that everyone understands. She asks another question: What is sustainable development in hospitality? Seeking satisfaction with the least possible environmental impact and highlighting the natural or urban environment that we have. It does not matter if you are a hotel chain or a small rural accommodation. He points out that we have two clients to communicate with: The internal and the external. The best prescribers are the workers and suppliers themselves, the internal clients. If they are not satisfied, the external one will not be. He also indicated that there is a need to make a roadmap with actions that are being worked on and analyze where we are, what we have done and without forgetting the economic aspect.

He reflects on the fact that there is a fear of communicating for fear of falling into greenwashing, of which he believes there is still a lot, and the larger the company, the more. In addition, they transfer the responsibility of sustainability to the consumer.

Conclusion

The roundtable brought together leading experts who analysed the challenges and opportunities in this field. Participants agreed on the crucial importance of effective communication to drive the adoption of sustainable practices in the sector. It highlighted the need for authentic, transparent and personalised communication to drive sustainability in the tourism sector.

Tourism companies were advised to invest in training for their employees, establish clear performance indicators and collaborate with other actors in the sector to promote sustainable practices, as well as avoid so-called green washing at all costs.

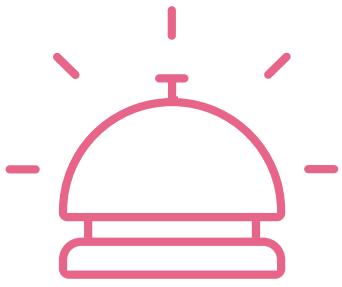
Juan Manuel Martínez emphasized the challenges of communicating sustainability effectively to the consumer. He stressed the need to personalize messages and agreed on the importance of avoiding greenwashing. He also pointed out that the language of marketing is not well understood in the discourse of transformation: Not what actions are taken but where you move, what you do. He also put the emphasis on language because we continually change names: Sustainable tourism, then responsible tourism, then something else, he maintains that we must move from a marketing model to a branding model that speaks of who we are.

He also addresses aspects such as compliance with regulations and obtaining certifications, ensuring that it is not necessary to communicate that you comply with the law, such as separating waste for example, just as it is not necessary to communicate that you have an equality plan: You should not communicate things that you are obliged to do by law. In addition, regarding certifications, he states that sometimes the consumer does not know what it is or what it entails.

Vicente Romero stressed the importance of internal communication and the relationship between technology and sustainability. He warned about the risks of increasing prices in the name of sustainability without real justification. Regarding communication and based on his extensive experience as a professional in the sector, he is clear that you have to start with the core staff.

Strength must be found in the team itself, the staff, how you communicate and relate to them is convinced that the customer will return to your establishment based on how they have perceived the communication with them, not because of the legislation you comply with. Sustainability has nothing to do with it, it is a strategy to recover economically, they take advantage of sustainability to make money and believe that there is a bubble of price increases because it will have to burst one day. He also maintains that it is crucial to communicate without greenwashing, to rely on the team, on our staff, to transmit eco, environmental and social sustainability.







14

Sports

Blue Sport: In action for
a Sustainable Future



14 Sports

Blue Sport: In action for a Sustainable Future

Beyond the Goal: Sporting Events as Catalysts of Blue Tourism

Moderator

Ignacio de las Cuevas

Director of Tourism Innovation and Strategy at Andart Global.

Speakers

Beatriz Beeckmans

Head of Communications on Ocean Policy at The Ocean Race.

Luis Alberto Guillén

General Director of the General Directorate of Tourism Strategy at the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism of Peru.

Kianoosh Mehrabi

Member of the Board of Directors of the International Rafting Federation (IRF).

Antonio Jesús

Casimiro Andújar
 Councilor Delegate for the Active City, Urban Mobility and Sport Area.

The sea, in addition to being an invaluable natural space, is consolidating itself as a catalyst for tourism, environmental awareness and the promotion of comprehensive health. Sporting events can become a key tool for the protection of the marine environment and the development of coastal communities. From world-class competitions such as the Ocean Race to local strategies in Peru and Almería, sport currently mobilizes resources and political and citizen will towards a more sustainable future.

One of the most notable cases was the Ocean Race, a round-the-world sailing trip that has become much more than a sporting competition. This event, held every four years, integrates a strong scientific research component with the aim of raising awareness about microplastic pollution. The participating boats collect data on the high seas, which is then shared with academic institutions to advance knowledge of the impacts of human activity on the oceans. In addition, the Ocean Race leaves a significant legacy in each host city, promoting environmental education programs and the involvement of the local community, from teams to spectators.

On the Pacific coast, Peru is emerging as a benchmark in the integration of sport with blue tourism and sustainability. With more than 3,000 kilometres of coastline, the country has been able to take advantage of its natural wealth and maritime tradition to position itself as an ideal destination for water sports, especially surfing. Northern Peru, where two ocean currents converge, offers a unique environment for this practice, which has grown exponentially in popularity, even in Lima, its capital. Beyond the economic benefits, surfing fosters a deep connection with nature and reinforces environmental awareness. This commitment has extended to the international sporting arena, with Peru hosting events such as the Pan American Games and the upcoming 2027 Olympic Games, in which surfing will play a leading role.

Conclusion

Sport has the potential to lead a cultural transformation towards a more sustainable development model. The sea, as a space for enjoyment and a vital resource, needs to be protected and valued. The initiatives discussed in the panel mark a clear path: Integrating sport with sustainability is a winning strategy to ensure that future generations can enjoy a clean, healthy sea full of opportunities.

This collective commitment to environmental awareness and comprehensive health positions sport as an essential catalyst in the construction of a blue future, where the balance between human development and the preservation of marine ecosystems is a shared priority.

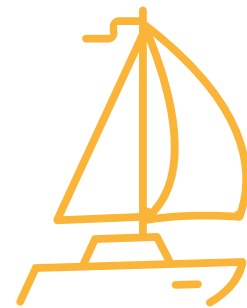
Almería, for its part, demonstrates how sport can become a driving force for social and environmental transformation. Its varied geography, which includes deserts, mountains and an extensive coastline, positions it as a privileged enclave for outdoor activities such as windsurfing, kitesurfing, cycling and hiking. From the Almería City Council, Antonio Jesús Casimiro Andújar highlighted the importance of using sport as a tool to educate in environmental values and promote comprehensive health. Initiatives such as the organization of sporting events that include waste collection in the sea and in the mountains are an example of how to connect the population with nature while promoting respect for the environment.

The panel also underlined the role of sport in promoting comprehensive health, encouraging communities to adopt active and healthy lifestyles. Through sporting events and outdoor activities, the aim is not only to promote physical activity, but also to strengthen the emotional and cultural bond with the natural environment. These strategies not only benefit residents, but also position coastal regions as unique and sustainable tourist destinations.

Examples such as the Ocean Race, Peruvian strategies and initiatives in Almería demonstrate that sport can be a powerful tool to address environmental and social challenges. By encouraging outdoor activities, promoting environmental education and protecting marine ecosystems, these initiatives reinforce people's connection with the sea and the planet in general.

The future of blue tourism is promising, with a growing interest in authentic experiences that combine sport, nature and sustainability. To ensure this future, it is crucial to continue developing programs that integrate environmental protection with sports practice. Aquatic activities and events around the sea not only generate economic benefits, but also build more resilient communities that are aware of the importance of preserving natural resources.





14 Sports

Blue Sport: In action for a Sustainable Future

Green Fairways: Golf as a Catalyst for Sustainability and Economic Development

Moderator

Kiko González
 Manager of Almería Sports Destination.

Speakers

David Gómez
 Director of the Green Section at RFEG.

Miguel Navarro
 General Secretary and Manager of the Royal Andalusian Golf Federation.

Francisco Javier Mendoza
 Director of the Playa Serena Golf Course.

Golf in Andalusia has established itself as a key economic driver, attracting players from all over Europe and generating a positive impact on the local economy, especially during the low season, which runs from October to May. Iconic courses such as Playa Serena in Almería are filled with visitors looking to enjoy this sport in a unique setting. This boom has not only positioned Andalusia as a leading destination for golf tourism, but has also transformed the perception of this activity, which has gone from being considered a complementary offer to sun and beach tourism to becoming one of the main attractions of the region.

The paradigm shift has driven significant job creation and motivated investment in golf-related infrastructure, benefiting both local communities and the tourism industry in general. However, this growth faces significant challenges, especially in terms of sustainability. The need to optimize the use of resources, particularly water, and to reduce the environmental impact of golf courses has led the industry to rethink its practices, adopting innovative solutions that balance economic development with environmental responsibility.

The Andalusian Golf Federation is leading these efforts, working in collaboration with the Andalusian Government to implement practices that guarantee the sustainability of the sector. Among the measures adopted is the use of more resistant grass species, which require less water and maintenance, as well as the incorporation of intelligent irrigation systems and soil moisture sensors that optimize water consumption. These technologies not only improve irrigation efficiency, but also reduce the environmental impact of courses, aligning with the demands of a society increasingly aware of the need to care for the natural environment.

Conclusion

Golf in Andalusia has a bright future ahead of it. Its ability to balance economic growth and sustainability positions it as an example for other regions. With a clear focus on innovation and respect for the environment, the industry is ready to consolidate itself as an economic engine of global importance, ensuring that both players and local communities can continue to enjoy the benefits of this sport in a privileged environment.

Andalusia not only reaffirms itself as a benchmark in golf tourism, but also as a model of how commitment to sustainability can transform a sector to make it more resilient and competitive.

Another significant step towards sustainability is the promotion of the use of reclaimed water for irrigation. This practice, which takes advantage of treated wastewater, not only relieves pressure on conventional water resources, but also represents a clear example of how innovation can transform environmental challenges into opportunities. The recent drought that has affected the region has underlined the importance of these initiatives, proving that sustainability is not only an added value, but an indispensable requirement for the continuity of the sector.

The sustainable approach to golf in Andalusia not only responds to environmental needs, but also reinforces the competitiveness of the region as a world-class golf destination. By offering a high-quality experience to players on courses that respect and value the environment, Andalusia positions itself as a global reference in responsible golf tourism. This commitment to sustainability not only benefits the industry, but also generates a positive impact on local communities, promoting balanced and environmentally friendly economic development.

The conclusions of this analysis underline that golf in Andalusia is at a turning point. The combination of sustainability and innovation is laying the foundations for a promising future, in which the region will not only continue to attract players from around the world, but will also stand out for its commitment to sustainable development. Optimising water use, adopting responsible environmental practices and continuously improving the visitor experience are the pillars on which the future of the sector will be built.





14 Sports

Blue Sport: In action for a Sustainable Future

Blue Sport: Local Development Opportunities

Moderator

Ignacio de las Cuevas

Director of Tourism Innovation and Strategy at Andart Global.

Speakers

Jordi Carrasco

General Manager of ANEN.

Elisabet González

Head of the Technical Office of Tourism at the Barcelona Provincial Council.

Marc Espasa

Coordinator of tourism and cultural services at the Salou City Council.

Marta Gemma Nel-lo Andreu

Director of the Chair of Innovation and Tourism Research Salou-Costa Daurada at URV.

One of the highlighted topics was the rise of recreational boating in Spain, a sector that has gained relevance in recent years, especially after the pandemic. This activity not only represents a significant source of income, but also a tool to diversify tourism in regions that traditionally depend on the sun and beach model. Carrasco insisted that recreational boating should not be considered solely as leisure, but as a strategic economic driver that generates specialized employment in coastal areas. From the province of Barcelona, Elisabet González highlighted how tourism sustainability plans have promoted this modality by combining it with cycling and hiking, promoting an offer that attracts visitors throughout the year and reduces seasonality.

Accessibility was another key point of discussion. Marta Nel-lo, Director of the Chair of Tourism Innovation and Research of Salou-Costa Daurada, stressed that ensuring that blue tourism is inclusive not only responds to a principle of equity, but also broadens the scope of its positive impact. Making these activities accessible to all people, regardless of their abilities, generates social benefits and diversifies the tourist base. In line with this vision, Marc Espasa, from Salou City Council, explained how his region is integrating blue sport into a broader tourism diversification strategy, through events, nautical infrastructure and educational programs that promote both local activity and cultural identity.

Sustainability and technological innovation were also central aspects of the debate. Elisabet González highlighted the potential of tools such as artificial intelligence and data analysis systems to adapt public policies to the needs of the environment and tourists. These

technologies allow resources to be managed more efficiently, promoting balanced and environmentally friendly development. Sustainability is not only an objective, but a competitive advantage for coastal destinations that wish to position themselves as global leaders in responsible tourism.

The Speakers agreed that the success of blue sport and, in general, of blue tourism, depends on governance and public-private collaboration. Coordination between administrations, businesses and local communities is essential to maximise the economic, social and environmental benefits of these initiatives. An inclusive and participatory model ensures that the income generated by blue tourism is distributed equitably and that local communities directly benefit from advances in this sector.

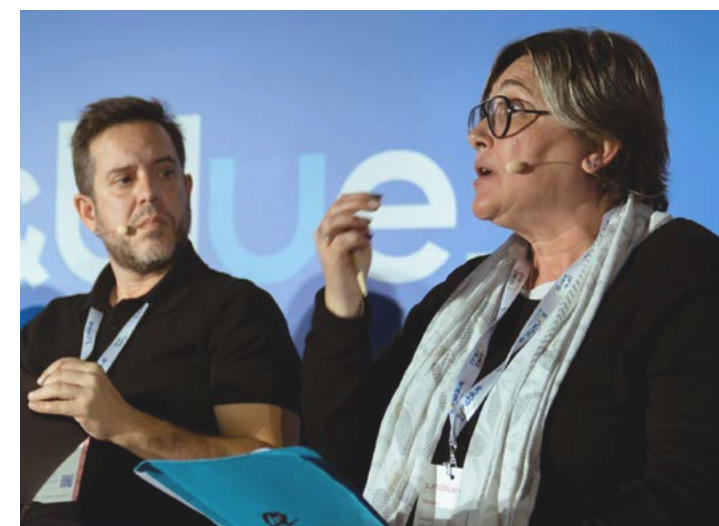
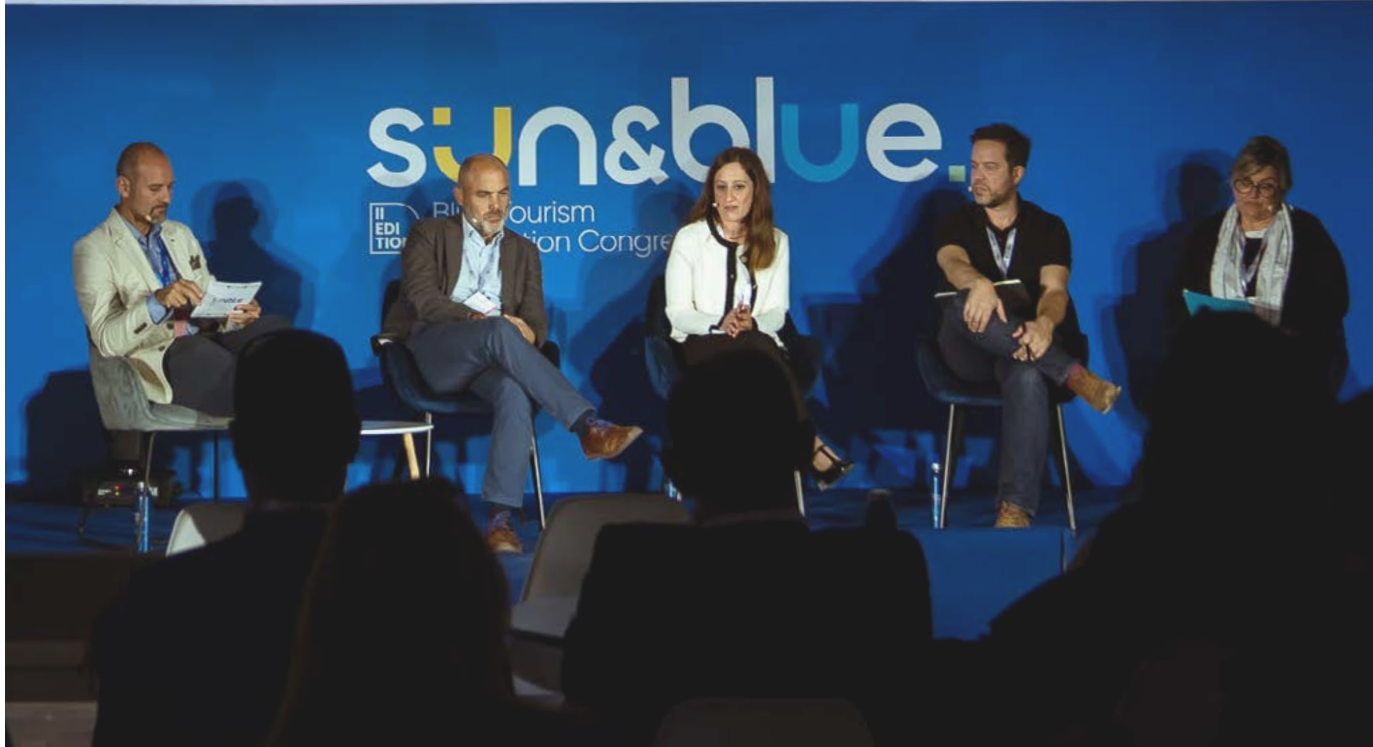
The conclusions of the congress emphasised four key elements to ensure the development of blue tourism in Spain. First, tourist diversification, through activities such as recreational boating and cycle tourism, is essential to reduce dependence on high-season tourism and generate income throughout the year. Second, sustainability and innovation must be integrated into tourism plans, using advanced technologies to create more efficient and environmentally friendly management models. Third, ensuring accessibility and inclusion is crucial to broaden the scope of blue tourism, making it more equitable and generating a positive social impact. Finally, public-private collaboration is indispensable to create a framework that allows the balanced and sustainable development of this sector.

Conclusion

Blue sport has the potential to become a driver of change in Spain's coastal regions. It is not only an emerging tourist attraction, but also a tool to address economic, social and environmental challenges.

With strategic planning and inclusive governance, blue tourism can transform coastal communities, making them more resilient, sustainable and competitive in an ever-evolving global market. This sector not only represents an economic opportunity, but also a commitment to a more balanced development that respects the needs of people and the environment.







15

KEYNOTE
Environmental
sustainability: Waste
and decarbonisation

15 KEYNOTE. Environmental sustainability: Waste and decarbonisation

Speaker

Jaume Cabre Alcoverro

Head of Engineering, Innovation and Strategic Projects at PreZero.

Jaume Cabré, who defines himself as passionate about innovation in its broadest sense, provides us with a key vision on how to lead a change towards a more sustainable future. This is the objective that has been present throughout the congress. He begins by praising the fact that there is currently greater concern about waste compared to previous times. According to Cabré, it is necessary to evaluate how the management of this waste is being carried out. He also defends the importance of this consideration by stating that this waste constitutes a source of secondary raw materials and will be a substitute for fossil coal in the future.

According to Cabré, we are living in an extraordinary moment. To support this statement, he shows a graph on the screen about the recycling objectives. The main objective would be to be neutral in 2050, that is, to reach a percentage of 0 with respect to waste. This, says Cabré, has caused a certain uneasiness because many organizations and countries do not know how to meet the objective. In fact, in Spain, the current figures are not positive since we are below the current requirements

and objectives. However, there are countries that are very advanced and are already meeting the 2035 objectives. If we analyse what these countries are doing, we see that they are committed to high-quality recycling and energy recovery.

The main barriers to the deployment of the Circular Economy are the critical mass, the regulatory framework in which we find ourselves, the *end of waste* condition, the saturation of the market that makes it necessary to search for new uses and, finally, the current prices of landfill and raw materials.

Cabré does not show how to work in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goal number 7. This goal is based on guaranteeing access to affordable, safe and sustainable energy for all people. Waste is precisely this source of energy, hence the importance of everything explained so far.

Conclusion

After all the worrying data that Cabré presents, he states that it is up to each and every one of us to decide whether the moment we are living in is extraordinarily good or bad. Therefore, he makes us responsible for acting and starting to change our individual patterns of conduct in order to achieve the objectives that have been established at a national and global level.

Cabré asks us to revalue the concept of waste and begin to distinguish what has value and is useful. In addition, it would be useful to copy the model of action of these countries in order to obtain similar results, and, therefore, there is still a lot of work to be done.







16

**Institutional
Closing**

16 Institutional Closing

Speakers

Sacramento Sánchez
1st Deputy Mayor of
the City Council of
Almería.

Tim Ott
Director of the
Sun&Blue Congress.

Juan José Alonso
Territorial Delegate for
Tourism, Culture and
Sport in Almería.

Fernando Giménez
Deputy and Vice
President of the
Diputación de Almería.

Consolación Vera
Vice-Minister of
Agriculture, Fishing,
Water and Rural
Development.

This last day of the congress has been dedicated to talk about economy and has been a shot of positivity, joy and hope. In addition, various opportunities and strategies have been presented so that no good idea is left without funding.

Sacramento Sanchez begins the closing of the Sun&Blue Congress by thanking all the participants for the set of emotions that the congress has meant. She not only thanked the 198 speakers from 33 different countries and the 331 companies that have shown their commitment to the planet, but also the various architects of the congress, institutions such as the Junta de Andalucía and the Diputación de Almería.

After listening to the various presentations, the image of Almería as a blue city that lives and thinks blue, which wants to be a reference and model for other cities, was once again highlighted. The choice of Almería as the venue for the congress was not by chance, but because it represents an exceptional enclave. This idea was already presented at the opening of the congress, but after the knowledge and ideas that have been presented in the various presentations, this idea makes sense in the official closing.

Very important conclusions have been drawn from each and every one of the experts and their respective projects. In addition, the various participants have deepened the need to act sensitively with the natural resources of the planet and have made all those present aware that it is possible to make our sea, an element that generates employment. In this line, from the municipality of Almería are committed to continue working in the line of sustainability, accessibility and quality of services.

Tim Ott mentions several main ideas that have been protagonists during the three days of the congress. For example, the urgency of promoting public-private collaboration between companies. At the port and city level, there was a focus on technological innovation. At the blue economy and technology level, the latter is key to optimizing resources and managing sustainability, as standardization and accessibility are required.

Culture, gastronomy and sport, intrinsic to our society, are catalysts for sustainable tourism and, therefore, have become the main protagonists. They are a great hallmark of quality compared to other destinations and are therefore the

starting point for designing the new experiences that tourists are looking for and for achieving the concept of regenerative tourism that we have heard so much about during the presentations. This concept of regenerative tourism is key to the sustainable future of destinations.

During the last day we were able to learn from financing projects of all kinds and understand the importance of the Triple P: People, Planet & Profit. This congress has taught us a great lesson: The future is in our hands, it does not depend on third parties. We have innovation, collaboration and decisive action, all the necessary ingredients to move from theory to action.

Finally, Juan José Alonso, emphasizes the relevance of blue tourism, referring to the nearly 1,000 km of coastline that bathe Andalusia. Its coastal strip is home to about a third of the inhabitants living in the territory, about 20 million tourists, which represents an increase of 10%, surpassed by cruise tourism, which represents a growth of 30%.

Fernando Giménez, says he is impressed by the format and how the congress center has been transformed to host such a high level congress. Almería is a province that captivates the visitor as soon as he arrives, not only because of its diverse landscape but also because of the climate that makes the province unique. That is why we are already working to revalue the brand 'Costa de Almería', always respecting the environment and being aware that we have one of the most privileged lands on the planet.

Consolación Vera, concludes by launching a message that has been shared by all the participants throughout the congress. After the three days of the congress, Andalusia has shown itself as an exceptional future leader of the blue economy in southern Europe. We find this objective on the political agenda of the government of the Junta de Andalucía as the first Andalusian blue economy strategy is being developed. Finally, he put the finishing touch to the closing and, therefore, to the congress, stating that the blue economy is an engine of growth and that our obligation is to ensure that future generations can live in Andalusia and from Andalusia. And this can only be achieved through the blue economy.







A Legacy for the Blue Future

At beon. Worldwide, we believe that tourism and the blue economy are more than a business opportunity: they are a responsibility. Over the years, society has given us the trust and inspiration to innovate, create and transform experiences into unforgettable realities.

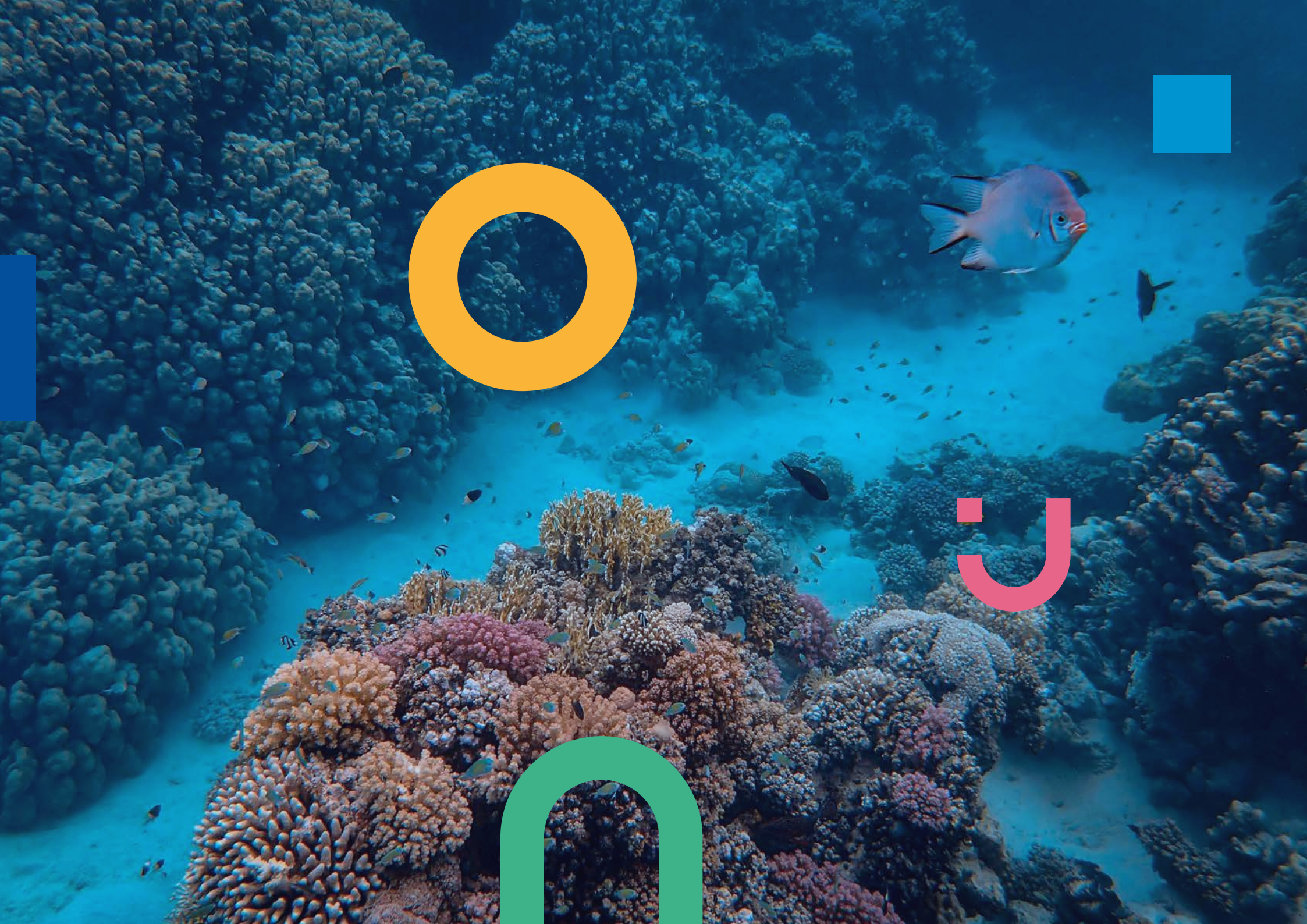
With Sun&Blue, we wanted to give back part of what we have received, creating a space for reflection, meeting and action. A congress where administrations, companies and the scientific community work together to build a tourism that not only conserves, but also regenerates.

This Blue Book is our legacy. A testimony of learning, of shared ideas and of the vision of a future where tourism is an engine of positive change. It is not just a compilation of data and trends; it is a commitment to the planet, to people and to the generations to come.

Because true success is not only measured in economic impact, but in the ability to leave the world better than we found it.

Let's continue to build the future of blue tourism together.

beon. Worldwide Team.





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II
EDITION
Blue Tourism
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