

An Urban Consortium for the Restoration of the Tourist Areas on Gran Canaria - ES

1. Policy Objective & Theme

- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Developing Europe's regional seas sustainably
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Balancing economic, social, cultural development whilst enhancing environment

2. Key Approaches

- Integration
- Socio-economic
- Technical

3. Experiences that can be exchanged

An urban consortium which includes all the competent administrations to solve a specific problem is an effective way of integrating all the sectoral interests and actors, ensuring information exchange and transparency while at the same time accelerating the bureaucratic mechanisms.

4. Overview of the case

An agreement between several Administrations has been signed to co-operate for the development and re-establish of tourism activities in 3 mature Canary Island tourist destinations. The agreement is followed by a Plan and an Urban Consortium to achieve the objectives.

5. Context and Objectives

a) Context

The Canary archipelago, in the Atlantic Ocean, comprises seven main volcanic islands and several islets. Gran Canaria, one of its main islands, offers long golden beaches and endless dunes of white sand, green ravines, picturesque villages and valuable historical quarters. Its natural richness and the good weather all year round have favoured the success of a non-stop tourist activity since the seventies. However, its tourist model, based on huge tourism resorts sometimes occupying the Terrestrial-Maritime Public Domain (including beaches, dunes and ravines) and some of them hindering the public shoreline access, has resulted in an unsustainable model. Gran Canaria is nowadays a mature tourist destination and is not currently satisfying the needs and expectations of the tourism demand. This is why the Consortium has been created, in order to re-establish the value of the area as a tourist destination, based on sustainable development and on integration and co-operation between administrations. This tool has been applied at a regional scale in some municipalities of the Gran Canaria Island.

b) Objectives

The agreement between the involved authorities and organisations aims to carry out co-operation and integration-based initiatives for the tourism development of San Agustín, Playa del Inglés and Maspalomas, including infrastructure provision, as well as land-use, urban and natural resources zoning and planning. These initiatives are based on two tools: a plan for the

restoration of the tourist areas and an urban consortium to fulfil all those land-use and urban-related decisions in the plan. Therefore, the objectives of the Urban Consortium, to be achieved by means of the integration of all the competent Administrations, are (1) to formulate the new planning of the study zone, and (2) to promote, execute and manage the foreseen urban, equipment and infrastructure works.

The agreement will stand till the end of the works defined in the plan, or at least until the 31st of December 2011. Therefore the timescale associated with the Urban Consortium implementation and goals is 2 years (2009-2011).

6. Implementation of the ICZM Approach (i.e. management, tools, resources)

a) Project Management

The Consortium is composed of 4 institutions: the Spanish Tourism Institute –TURESPAÑA- (national), the Autonomous Community of Canarias (Regional Government), the Gran Canaria Insular Government (provincial) and the Council of San Bartolomé de Tirajana (local Government). The level of importance and responsibility in the decision-making is the following: out of a total of 6 votes, 2 correspond to the State, 2 to the Autonomous Community, 1 to the province and 1 to the Local Council. Decisions are taken unanimously.

b) ICZM tools

The Urban Consortium is a planning and land management tool: it has developed the Plan for the restoration of the tourist areas, which integrates the interests of all the administrations with competences on tourism and spatial/urban planning and management. It can develop specific planning or management proposals and agreements, collaboration between administrations, hard and soft constructions, etc. The specific actions that can be carried out by the Consortium (although nowadays they are still applied by each institution after achieving a consensus in the Consortium) are the following: (1) Writing, managing, approving, checking or modifying the planning and management tools for the execution of urban planning; (2) Promoting the checking of natural resources, spatial and urban planning, (3) Writing and approving projects, (4) Inviting tenders and contracting works, (5) Elaborating urban management proposals; (6) Endorsing urban planning/management agreements, (7) Granting urban licences/permits, (8) Promoting the involvement of other Administrations, Public Entities and private companies in the Consortium, (9) Collaborating with Consortium members to accelerate the bureaucratic mechanisms, etc

Participation tools:

- a web for the Urban Consortium is being created to make all the related information available to any interested person,
- the official participation processes and filing of allegations required by any plan or project are strictly carried out,
- all the actors have been identified and both the Plan for the restoration of the tourist infrastructures and the Mobility Plan have been distributed among them; after this information process several participation and discussion sessions are carried out to achieve consensus-based proposals.

Coordination tools:

- the Governance Board, which is composed of the Consortium members, formally meets 4 times a year and its sessions are called by the Consortium President;
- the Monitoring Commission, composed of the 4 Consortium members and other specific sectoral administrations/associations, has an open structure and its sessions are called by the Commission's president - which is the Local Council President - at the request of any interested member, usually meeting once a month, and is the figure promoting the exchange of information between the members;
- Coordination agreements promoted by the Consortium are signed with specific actors, such as the University and the Spanish Confederation of Entrepreneurs.
- Working Groups, created to encourage the participation and co-ordination in some specific topics, are composed by the Monitoring Commission and other sectoral actors (i.e. the involvement of the Maspalomas Dunes Reserve Board in the Working Group dealing with environmental issues). Any interested institution can request to be involved in the working groups (as the Canary Island Entrepreneurial Federation and the Hotel Management Association did) and they will be involved having a voice, but no vote.

7. Cost and resources

The budget for the implementation of the Plan is €5,800,000, funded by the involved Administrations. The budget for the Urban Consortium comes from the involved Administrations and from its activities' returns, sales, agreements, taxes, subventions, etc. The manpower used nowadays for the implementation of the tool is 3 people but there is foreseen to be 8 people eventually: 1 manager, 4 technical staff and 3 administrative staff.

8. Effectiveness (i.e. were the foreseen goals/objectives of the work reached?)

The effectiveness of the consortium has been high. In the first six months of existence: it has developed the Plan for the restoration of the tourist areas, the first (out of two) objectives to achieve. The Consortium still has 2 years to promote, execute and manage the foreseen urban, equipment and infrastructure works. The creation of the Consortium was published on November 2008, but it started to work in June 2009.

9. Success and Fail factors

An important factor that was helpful in achieving the objective was that the entities included in the Consortium have the competences required to achieve the Consortium's goals. Also, (1) the high tourist and environmental degradation of the zone that makes the need for reforms in the tourist sector obvious; (2) the global crisis that highlights the need for a more competitive and modern tourist area to derive benefits from it, as it was declining; and (3) the existence of a legal framework promoting the achievement of a more competitive and sustainable tourism model in Spain (Spanish Tourism Plan 2020-Spanish Tourism Plan 2008-2012) which also promotes a definition of a re-qualification programme for mature tourist destinations; and the achievement of a more competitive, sustainable, integrated and consensus-based tourism model in the Canary Islands (Agreement for the Competitiveness and the Quality of the Canarian Tourism 2008-2020).

A factor hindering the achievement of the objectives is the resistance of the institutions, both technical and political, to change their work plan. Another factor that could hinder the achievement of the objectives is that the plan is not consolidated yet, so it is highly dependent on the government and political structure. Future elections could threaten the Consortium success.

10. Unforeseen outcomes

No unforeseen outcomes have been resulted up to now.

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13. Sources

- Convenio de colaboración entre el Instituto de Turismo de España (TURESPAÑA), la Comunidad Autonoma de Canarias, el Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria y el Ayuntamiento de San Bartolomé de Tirajana para la rehabilitación de las infraestructuras turísticas de San Agustín, Playa del Inglés y Maspalomas (3 de noviembre de 2008). Boletín Oficial de Canarias núm. 38, miércoles 25 de febrero de 2009.



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