



Governance 2025



Table of contents

1. INTRODUCTION	Pag. 7
2. STARTING POINT	Pag. 13
3. GOVERNANCE MODEL: SMART TOURIST DESTINATION MÁLAGA	Pag. 39
3.1. Strategic vision and implementation. Creation of the Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga	Pag. 42
3.2. Management Efficiency. Strategic Planning for Sustainable Tourism. Development of the PESTO plan and promotion of key Destination Projects	Pag. 55
3.3. Responsibility and Control. Research managers and partners in monitoring of the objectives achievement marked by the destination and based on existing data sources and key tourism indicators	Pag. 62
3.4. Transparency and participation. Diffusion and transparency of knowledge generated by destination intelligence systems. Participation of all tourism sector	Pag. 63
4. LINES OF ACTION IN THE GOVERNANCE OF THE MÁLAGA DESTINATION	Pag. 77
5. FINAL REFLECTIONS	Pag. 83
6. ANNEXES	Pag. 89
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY	Pag. 93

Introducción

Málaga's tourism governance seeks comprehensive management as a Smart tourist destination (DTI: Destino Turístico Inteligente), focused not only on economic growth, but also on social development and institutional strengthening. According to the Smart tourist destination model, which Málaga adapts to its needs and follows the requirements and indicators established by SEGITTUR (State Company for the Management of Tourism Innovation and Technologies), governance represents the highest level of public-public and public-private cooperation to ensure efficient, transparent, and participatory management.

Tourism is one of the world's most important economic and social phenomena, as reflected in the figures compiled each year by key tourism indicators. However, the constant transformations in the global economic scenario, demographic and environmental changes, and, crucially, rapid technological advances suppose multiple challenges for tourist destinations, while also offering significant opportunities for development.

Málaga has not stopped working on incorporating the concepts of sustainability, innovation, and culture into its strategic tourism plans of the city, which has led the destination to the following milestones in its sustainable development process within the framework of smart tourist destinations:

- Since Málaga is a well-established tourist destination in the four main areas addressed by this award: Sustainability, Accessibility, Innovation, and Cultural Heritage Málaga had received a recognition as the 2020 European Capital of Smart Tourism awarded by the European Commission.
- Málaga has been a member destination of the Smart tourist destinations Network since 2020, having met more than 80% of the established requirements and championing a long-term, sustainable tourism model in all its aspects (socio-cultural, environmental, and economic). The Smart tourist destinations Network aims to promote destinations as innovative tourist spaces, consolidated on cutting-edge technological infrastructure, ensuring the sustainable development of the tourist territory, accessible to everyone, facilitating visitor interaction and integration with the environment, increasing the quality of their experience at the destination, and improving the quality of life of the residents of each destination.

According to the DTI Methodology Management Manual (2024), the Smart tourist destination program is an initiative that promotes the implementation of a management model that takes into account the transversality of tourism activity and the differentiating characteristics of each destination with a focus on the territories and the Local Entities that manage them.

The DTI model's action axes are as follows:

- **Governance:** Maximum public-public and public-private cooperation to ensure efficient, transparent, and participatory management.
- **Innovation:** Innovation applied to processes, systems, resources, and products focused on the destination's tourism.
- **Technology:** New technologies applied to destination management and optimization.
- **Sustainability:** Management of all resources to ensure sustainability in the sociocultural, economic, and environmental aspects.
- **Accessibility:** Application of universal accessibility policies to tourism products, services, and resources.

Given that the main objective of the DTI model is to contribute to a change in the formula for tourism development of destinations based on knowledge, sustainability, and comprehensive digital transformation to boost and maintain competitiveness over time, while also promoting resilience and improving both the visitor experience and the quality of life of residents, it is important to promote a governance model where tourism sustainability management is seen as a "heart" of the entire basic structure of the Destination.

For this reason, the creation of STO Málaga (Sustainable Tourism Observatory of Málaga) and its incorporation to the INSTO Network (International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories) of UN Tourism in 2022 have marked key milestones in Málaga's evolution as a Smart Tourist Destination and in its sustainable tourism strategy. The Observatory is responsible for providing comprehensive, accessible, and reliable data that support informed and sustainable decision-making. Its work aims to strengthen collaboration between public and private stakeholders, identify risks and opportunities, and strike a balance between the needs of the local community, the economy, and the environment. With an inclusive approach, STO Málaga promotes smart destination management, encourages multisectoral cooperation, and places sustainability at the heart of tourism development. Through data collection, reports, and research, the Observatory helps guide Málaga towards a more sustainable and resilient future, reinforcing its position as a global leader in responsible tourism.





CR TORREMOLINOS

micola

PEDREGALEJO
MALAGA 17-5-2003

Starting point

The city of Málaga is recognised as one of the best cities in the world to work and live in, according to the 2023 Forbes¹ survey: among 420 cities across 89 countries, Málaga was highlighted as the most impressive and charming spot in the world.

It is important to highlight the growing trend of long stays by digital nomads and the creative class (engineers, artists, lawyers, etc.) in Málaga, with this type of visitor rediscovering the city's many attractions. In addition, according to survey respondents, Málaga is the highest-rated city in the world for the friendliness of its residents: 89% say the locals are particularly charming and welcoming to foreign residents (compared to a global average of 65%). Quality of life, climate, and weather are also highlighted as some of the key aspects of Málaga, alongside many other highly rated factors mentioned in the report.

As demand and interest in living in Málaga continues to grow, there is an increasing need for a new, intelligent approach to tourism management that ensures environmental protection, economic development, and social progress. Given that achieving a transition towards sustainable, resilient, and inclusive tourism requires taking into account the economic, social, and environmental impacts—both current and future—to meet the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities, it is essential for the destination to promote alternative tourism experiences. This means encouraging visitors to explore other areas with tourism potential, thereby relieving pressure on the most popular sites while also highlighting charming, more authentic spots that remain relatively unknown to travellers. efficient and responsible management.

© Madden, D. (2023, febrero 11). Explore this map of the world's best alternative capital cities. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/duncanmadden/2023/02/11/explore-this-map-of-the-worlds-best-alternative-capital-cities/>

© InterNations. (2023). Best cities for expats 2023. Expat Insider. <https://www.internations.org/expat-insider/2023/best-cities-for-expats-40421>

Additionally, in line with SDG 17, Partnerships for the Goals, the city has forged strategic connections with national and international organisations that support its sustainability initiatives. These partnerships strengthen its objectives in urban regeneration and the promotion of quality tourism, providing access to resources, knowledge, and technologies that enhance governance and reinforce its commitment to efficient and responsible management.

Figure 1: SDGs applied to Tourism



Source: <https://tourism4sdgs.org/>

In recent years, Málaga has strengthened its collaboration with national, European, and international bodies. The projects in which Málaga has participated throughout the last years are shown in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Major milestones in developing strategic management for the city's sustainable tourism, achieved in collaboration with national and international organisations

2019	European Commission Accessibility Award
2020	European Capital of Smart Tourism Membership of Smart Tourist Destinations Network
2021	Málaga Strategic Tourism Plan 2021–2024
2022	STO Málaga's joining of the UN Tourism INSTO Network
2023	Workshop 'Present and Future of Sustainable Destinations', in collaboration with UN Tourism
2024	Workshop 'Water Management in Destinations', in collaboration with UN Tourism Call for proposals to develop Málaga's Smart Destination Platform
2025	Participation in the European D3Hub Project, which offers sustainable solutions based on data evidence.

Source: Prepared by the Department of Tourism and City Promotion, Málaga City Council.



Málaga as Smart tourist destination has promoted highly important actions and activities that have consolidated relations at all levels, from internal to interdepartmental and international, in recent years, especially in 2024, based on the strategic management methodology promoted by the State Secretariat for Tourism.

The following section details the key actions carried out in managing the Smart Tourist Destination in 2024, within the framework of Sustainability, as further elaborated in 2024 REPORT. Section on Special Programmes, Tourism Business Development, and Relations with Governing and Collegiate Bodies. Department of Tourism and City Promotion. Málaga City Council.

Given Málaga's participation in the Digitalisation and Intelligence Programme for Destinations and the Tourism Sector, funded through the PRTR – NEXT GENERATION initiative (2024 call), and promoted by SEGITTUR, the following smart tourism management tools have been developed as part of Málaga's Smart Tourist Destination strategy:

- Collaboration agreements
- General protocols of action
- Memberships
- Sponsorships
- Subsidies awarded
- Sustainable tourism destination plan: sustainable decentralisation of tourism in the city of Málaga

Sustainable tourism destination plan: sustainable decentralisation of tourism in the city of Málaga

In 2024, the following actions were implemented under the Sustainable Tourism Destination Plan:

Pillar 1: Green and Sustainable Transition:

Contracting of technical assistance for the study and design of needs and requirements for:

- > Equipment for the Environmental Route.
- > Environmental Seal Certification.
- > Launch of MTB Centres.
- > Urban Shelters.

Pillar 2: Improving Energy Efficiency:

Contracting of technical assistance for the study and design of needs and requirements for:

- > Tourist Carbon Footprint Analysis.
- > Transition Plan towards a Renewable Energy System.

Pillar 3: Digital Transition:

Contracting of technical assistance for the study and design of needs and requirements for:

- > Transformation of two Municipal Tourist Information Offices into sustainable, smart, and accessible spaces.

In addition to the preparation of dossiers for:

- > Route digitalisation.
- > Content development and storytelling for route enhancement.

Pillar 4: Enhancing Competitiveness:

Contracting of technical assistance for the study and design of needs and requirements for:

- > Improvement of route facilities.

In addition to the preparation of dossiers for:

- > Oficina Técnica del proyecto.
- > Ampliación Establecimientos Adheridos SICTED.

STO Málaga a member of the Insto Network

Launch and promotion of STO Málaga within the Support Programme for the Digital Transformation and Modernisation of Local Entities forming part of the Smart Tourist Destinations Network.

As STO Málaga's activities must be aligned with the requirements set out by UN Tourism, the Department of Tourism and City Promotion has carried out a series of initiatives and actions. These are detailed under each milestone corresponding to the UN Tourism requirements (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: STO Málaga activities in accordance with UN Tourism requirements

UN Tourism Requirements	Activities eligible for funding	STO Malaga project milestones	STO Malaga activities completed
Stakeholder engagement (workshops)	Workshops Training sessions Necessary materials (technical, etc.) Speakers Rental of venues, equipment, and materials	MILESTONES 1: Definition of the STO Malaga management model	Activities and workshops have been carried out involving both internal stakeholders (management groups) and external stakeholders.
Development of thematic areas and indicators	Web platform Database Digital tools	MILESTONES 2: Development of the technological supports for STO Malaga	Creation of the dedicated STO Malaga website: sto.malaga.eu Digital support tools developed, including specific dashboards for each thematic area, integrated into the website.
Monitoring and reporting	Satisfaction surveys Reports Data analysis	MILESTONES 3: Knowledge management	Reports produced include: - Annual reports - Reports covering the mandatory thematic areas as well as those of particular interest for Malaga Specific reports such as: - Water management in tourism - Adaptation of signage for easy reading. - User satisfaction surveys, such as airline surveys. - Strategic Plan for STO Malaga.
Communication and information sharing	Marketing and promotion plans Digital and adapted promotional materials	MILESTONES 4: Communication and Marketing Plan	As part of STO Malaga's communication and marketing plans, activities related to the corporate image have been undertaken, including photography, videos, merchandising, etc.

Source: Prepared by the Department of Tourism and City Promotion, Málaga City Council.

Below are the activities carried out at each milestone, in accordance with the requirements established by UN Tourism.

MILESTONE 1: DEFINITION OF THE MANAGEMENT MODEL FOR STO MÁLAGA: REGULATORY, OPERATIONAL, AND STRUCTURAL.

As established by UN Tourism, all new Sustainable Tourism Observatories must organise a workshop for destination stakeholders during their first year of operation. This workshop aims to help all parties gain a clear understanding of the Observatory's needs, vision, value, approach, and methodology, fostering shared knowledge to ensure agreement and commitment to the INSTO Network. From the second year onwards, at least one annual workshop must be held.

Within the activities funded by the grants, meetings have been held with both internal stakeholders (management groups) and external stakeholders. Between 2023 and 2024, the following activities took place:

2023:

STO Málaga Expert Panels. A fundamental pillar of the Network is the participation of the entire sector in decision-making processes. Accordingly, these panels—organised into thematic blocks—enable participants to identify needs, information sources, indicators, and make proposals related to various areas of study.

The panels convened under the auspices of UN Tourism are as follows:

- **Economic Sustainability Panel.** Covering the following thematic areas:
 - Sustainable production
 - Employment
 - Economic benefits at destination level
 - Tourism seasonality

- **Social Sustainability Panel.** Focusing on the following areas:
 - Social events
 - Local satisfaction
 - Accessibility
 - Education
 - Training in sustainability and health-related information
- **Environmental Sustainability Panel:**
 - Energy management
 - Water management
 - Wastewater management
 - Solid waste management
 - Climate change
- **Tourism Governance Panel**
 - Mobility (including cruise ships)
 - Tourism offer
 - Governance

Organisation of the first Stakeholders Workshop: 'Present and Future of Sustainable Tourist Destinations'.

2024:

- Organisation of the Annual Stakeholders Workshop: 'Water Management in Destinations'.
- Collaboration in organising the international online consultation of INSTO Network members on 'Water Management in Destinations'.
- Organisation of the event presenting the report 'Water Management in Tourism'.

MILESTONE 2: DEVELOPMENT OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL SUPPORTS FOR STO MÁLAGA.

As a member of the INSTO Network, members are obliged to develop and maintain a publicly accessible Observatory website, which must include at least a summary in English.

The website is required to be regularly updated with current information, provide analysis of monitoring results, and clearly present the data sources and methodologies employed.

Thanks to funding support, the dedicated STO Málaga website has been launched: <https://sto.malaga.eu/> (including content, website design ensuring consistency with the visual and corporate identity, etc.).

Notably, the website's architectural design for data integration, corresponding dashboards, and data source management was developed in close collaboration with the former Municipal IT Centre (Centro Municipal de Informática, CEMI) and the University of Málaga (UMA).

MILESTONE 3: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Another requirement established by the INSTO Network is that each Observatory must provide annual reports on progress in both mandatory thematic areas and those of specific interest. To enhance understanding of tourism's links with other sectors, its impact on the destination, and to enable efficient, evidence-based decision-making, it is essential to analyse and interpret the data collected.

In this regard, the main research partner for knowledge management has been the University of Málaga (UMA), through the IATUR team — the Andalusian Institute for Tourism Research and Innovation. Specifically, with the support of the funding programme, the following reports have been produced:

2023:

- Annual Report 2023. The first annual report following STO Málaga's membership in the INSTO Network in 2022.

- Reports covering the mandatory thematic areas as well as those of particular interest for Málaga.

The 11 mandatory thematic areas for all network members are:

- 1) Tourism seasonality
- 2) Employment
- 3) Energy management
- 4) Water management
- 5) Wastewater management
- 6) Solid waste management
- 7) Climate change
- 8) Economic benefits
- 9) Local satisfaction
- 10) Accessibility
- 11) Governance

The six specific focus areas for the Málaga destination are as follows:

- 1) Mobility
- 2) Sustainable production
- 3) Sustainable events
- 4) Education and training in sustainability
- 5) Health-related information
- 6) Tourism offer

2024:

- Final annual report
- Research and studies on the mandatory thematic areas
- Preparation of reports, particularly those addressing the high-priority challenges identified by STO Málaga, such as:
 - Water management in tourism destinations.
 - A specific report on the adaptation of tourist signage to easy-to-read formats, as accessibility is one of the identified challenges—especially since the city positions itself as an inclusive destination.
 - Specific Strategic Plan for STO Málaga: PESTO 2025–2029.
- Preparation of an infographic featuring the main sustainable tourism indicators for the city of Málaga, based on 2023 data.

MILESTONE 4: COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING PLAN

The main objective of this milestone is to raise awareness of STO Málaga, facilitating communication and access to information for all users—including collaborators, residents, tourists, and other stakeholders.

The activities carried out include

- Development of a corporate identity and stationery for STO Málaga (presentation templates, reports, document formats, etc.), aligned with the branding and advertising image of the Málaga City Council.
- Publication of photos and videos from major events on the STO Málaga website.
- Communication of STO Málaga's work to all stakeholders through the official corporate video of the Sustainable Tourism Observatory of Málaga.
- Preparation and distribution of promotional materials (merchandise).
- Participation in the 2024 Global INSTO Meeting and the III Sustainable Destinations Summit, held in Mallorca on 16, 17, and 18 October, respectively.

Málaga as a member of the smart tourist destination work

As part of the Smart Tourist Destination Network, in addition to participating in various webinars and completing both basic and advanced Smart Tourist Destination management courses, the following key activities were undertaken in 2024:

- Renewal of Málaga's membership in the Smart Tourist Destination Network, accompanied by a Diagnostic Report from SEGITTUR containing the main recommendations across the network's pillars. This report will serve as a strategic roadmap for continuing the city's development as a Smart Tourist Destination.
- Development of the operational guidelines of the Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga.

On 21 June 2024, the Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga was officially established. Among other agenda points, the meeting included:

1. Summary of actions carried out by the destination as a Smart Tourist Destination Network member in preparation for the certification renewal.
2. Protocol signed with SEGITTUR.
3. Introduction of the Monitoring Commission members.
4. Approval of the operational guidelines for the Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga.
5. Formal constitution of the Commission.



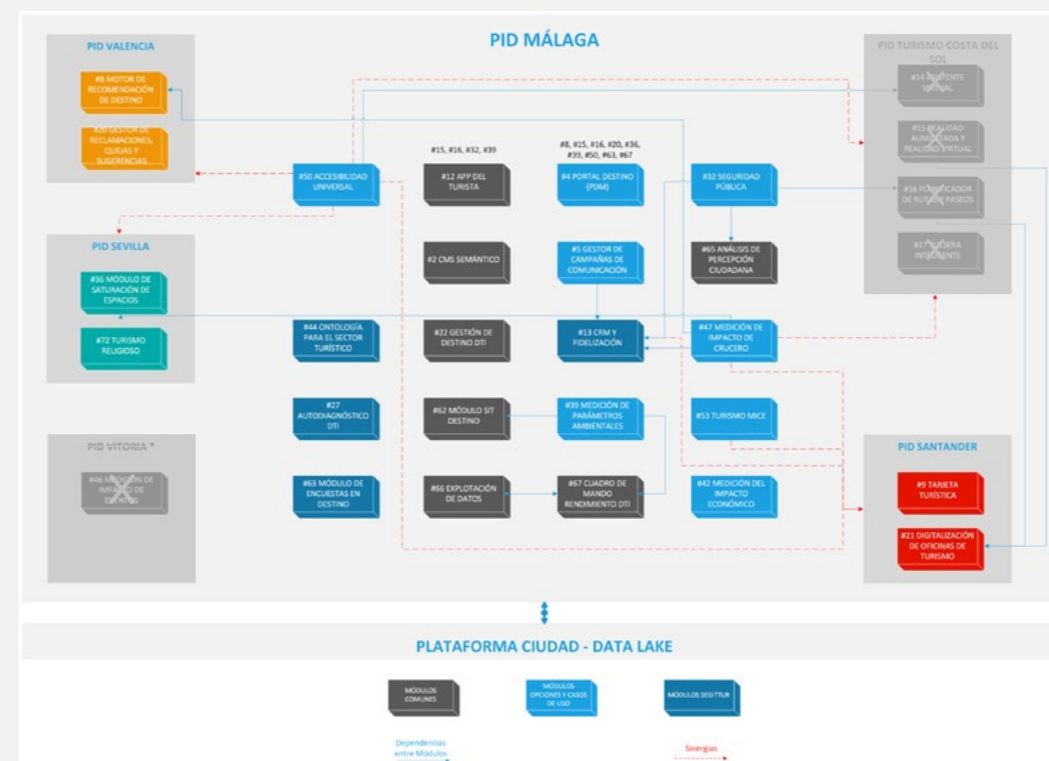


Smart destination platform

In July 2024, an application for funding was submitted to support the implementation of a Smart Destination Platform. The proposal was prepared by a collaborative team representing three municipal departments: Tourism and City Promotion, Innovation and New Technologies, and European Funds.

The aim of these grants is to fund the development and deployment of smart destination modules and/or optional reference modules within existing platforms by potentially eligible entities, as specified in Article 6 of the call for proposals. Additionally, the grants support the interconnection and integration of the various platforms and solutions with the national platform, which will act as the central node of the Smart Destination Platform.

Figure 4. Common and optional modules of Málaga's Smart Destination Platform, creating synergies with other destinations



Source: Department of Tourism and City Promotion, Málaga City Council.

Accessible tourism plan

On 20 June 2024, the Accessible Tourism Panel convened with representatives from the Department of Tourism and City Promotion, the Department of Accessibility, and the Development Group. The meeting focused on reviewing priority actions outlined in the Accessible Tourism Plan, as well as initiatives related to other projects such as the Sustainable Tourism Destination Plan and the Smart Destination Platform.

Figure 5: The Accessible Tourism Panel drives strategic and priority actions



Increasing awareness of the accessible tourism offer
Training in tourism accessibility for municipal technicians.
Training and awareness-raising actions for the private sector
Ensure accessibility in technological tools

HIGH-PRIORITY ACTIONS

Greater understanding of tourist demand
Monitoring compliance with regulations
Improving accessibility in streets, public spaces, popular festivals, events, etc.
Promotion and dissemination of accessible tourism offerings

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Accessible Tourism Committee in the Tourism Forum
Ensuring that tourist signs meet accessibility criteria
International visibility of Malaga as a destination

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS

Tourism marketing and development actions

In line with Málaga’s vision to evolve towards more sustainable, diversified, and high-quality tourism, and with the aim of strengthening its appeal by enhancing the quality of local life and highlighting the authenticity of the destination, the city aspires to become a premium Smart Tourist Destination. The objective is to attract high-value tourism that seeks luxury and authentic experiences.

Throughout 2024, numerous marketing and tourism development actions were carried out to support the destination’s evolution into a premium Smart Tourist Destination, including:

- **Digital marketing:**
 - Content
 - Social media
 - Visita.malaga.eu website
- **Promotion:**
 - Actions at origin
 - Actions at destination
- **Destination promotion events.**
- **Creation of the annual infographic featuring key figures and main tourism indicators.**
- **Convening of technical panels for tourism segments.**
- **Communication. Issuing of press releases.**

The Department of Tourism and City Promotion of the Málaga City Council is more committed than ever to promoting the destination in key markets such as Asia, the Middle East, the United States, and other strategically important markets for Málaga. This effort is aligned with various key initiatives under the current Málaga Tourism Strategic Plan and aims to consolidate the attraction of high-spending tourists, premium and luxury tourism, while also focusing on developing segments linked to high-value visitors. As part of this strategy, a range of marketing and tourism development actions have been actively pursued, including but not limited to the following:

- TURESPAÑA DIRECT WORKSHOPS IN JAPAN, KOREA, AND TAIWAN - Tokyo, Seoul, Taiwan, 11-14 March 2024.

Source: Department of Tourism and City Promotion, Málaga City Council.

- MCARTHURGLEN CENTRE IN PARNDORF (AUSTRIA) - Parndorf, Austria, 13 March 2024.
- SEATRADE MIAMI. Miami, Florida, 8–11 April 2024.
- DIRECT CONFERENCES SUPPORTING THE MARKETING OF SPANISH TOURISM IN THE US AND CANADIAN MARKETS 2024 - Monterey, California, 15–18 April 2024.
- TURESPAÑA GULF CONFERENCES - Abu Dhabi, 2–5 May 2024.
- MIDDLE EAST ROADSHOW - Doha, Abu Dhabi, Riyadh and Bahrain, 13–16 May 2024.
- MÁLAGA PROMOTION IN SEOUL. MÁLAGA LOVES SEOUL MURAL - Seoul, 9 July 2024.
- MÁLAGA IS HERE...LONDON 2024. London, 11 December 2024, etc.

Quality initiatives

In 2024, Málaga became, for the fourth consecutive year, the leading city in the number of tourism services awarded the SICTED quality certification. Throughout 2024, Quality Actions at the destination have been developed to strengthen Málaga's positioning as a Smart Tourist Destination within the framework of Sustainability. These actions align with the core objectives of SICTED, which are to:

- Establish a permanent management structure that ensures the continuous improvement of the competitiveness of the destination's tourism services.
- Provide a consistent quality level across all tourism services.
- Increase tourist satisfaction and promote their loyalty.

The key actions carried out during 2024 include:

- Ceremonial event for the 15th edition of the SICTED diploma and recognition awards.
- 16th SICTED Forum.
- SICTED improvement workshop: Tourism in the Future.
- SICTED–Destination Málaga training activities:
 - The Future of Tourism with AI.
 - Customer Success Fundamentals and NoCode Tools for Tourism SMEs.
 - Applying NoCode to Improve Customer Success in 2024.





Málaga Convention Bureau Activities

MICE tourism in Málaga not only generates significant economic benefits but also fosters professional development, knowledge exchange, technological innovation, and social cohesion—leaving a lasting legacy for the city. In 2024, Málaga has further established itself as a leading Smart Tourist Destination for business tourism at both national and international levels. According to the Málaga Convention Bureau report, the city hosted a total of 2,190 meetings with 323,100 participants throughout the year.

A total of 94 initiatives were carried out across various strategic areas, including:

- Participation in specialised trade fairs and congresses.
- Organisation of inbound and outbound workshops.
- Institutional meetings.
- Site inspections.
- Marketing and promotional campaigns.
- Familiarisation (fam) trips.
- Press trips.
- Technical training aimed at enhancing destination competitiveness.

Consequently, 2024 was a period of dynamic activity for the Málaga Convention Bureau, marked by the consolidation of Málaga as a competitive player in the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) sector.

Participation in flagship events such as IBTM World, IMEX America, and the ICCA Congress, alongside collaboration with key organisations including the Spain Convention Bureau, Turismo Andaluz, the Spanish Tourist Office abroad, and the EMA, has bolstered Málaga's international profile, enabling the city to showcase its MICE offering to the world's leading event organisers and influencers.

Locally, efforts have focused on strengthening alliances with Convention Bureau partners, consolidating the local business fabric within the sector, and promoting Málaga's capacity as a premier venue for congresses and events.

Furthermore, Málaga has been selected as a pilot destination in a project led by the FEMP / Spain Convention Bureau to design and implement an ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) Actions Guide tailored to the MICE sector. This initiative is promoted by the FEMP (Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias, the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces) through the Spain Convention Bureau. Its aim is to foster

sustainability and the generation of positive legacy within the MICE sector (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions) across Spanish tourist destinations.

During a working session held on 7 October 2024, the Málaga Convention Bureau team met with representatives from the Málaga City Council (social rights, citizen participation, social welfare departments) and local social organisations. Specialised consultants involved in the project also took part. The group shared a common local objective: To design a practical catalogue of social and sustainable initiatives that professional event organisers can incorporate into their programmes, thereby leaving a positive legacy in the Málaga community.

Within the framework of the FEMP project, the following key actions were promoted:

- Mapping local social organisations with potential to collaborate on events (such as Red Cross, food banks, diversity associations, health groups, etc.).
- Designing a project management Canvas to structure objectives, stakeholders, resources, tasks, and risks.
- Defining a Project Plan with clear phases: selection criteria, identification and contact with associations, mutual training, development of the directory, and communication plan.
- Creating a digital ESG guide to be published on the Convention Bureau's website, including visual resources, an association directory, and an impact assessment system.

These actions aim to achieve the following objectives:

- Encourage collaboration between the MICE sector and local associations.
- Highlight the social commitment of events organised in Málaga.
- Position Málaga as a responsible MICE destination and a benchmark in sustainability.
- Establish a replicable methodology for other SCB destinations.

Therefore, Málaga will continue to commit to sustainability, decentralisation, diversification of its offer, and communicating the real benefits this industry generates for the city. Málaga has not only positioned itself as a competitive alternative to major national destinations like Madrid and Barcelona, but its international recognition for generating positive legacy in the destination







03.

Governance model: smart tourist destination Málaga

Tourism governance is coordinated through a structure comprised of different bodies and entities operating at the local, provincial, regional, national, and international levels. This structure fosters inter-institutional cooperation and addresses specific tourism challenges, from the event planning to the tourism flow management and the promotion of sustainable tourism in the Destination.

Based on the areas of the Governance axis of the DTI model, which are:

- Strategic vision and implementation,
- Management efficiency,
- Accountability and control,
- Transparency and participation,

The Governance management model in Málaga has been designed, with STO Málaga (Sustainable Tourism Observatory of Málaga) in the center of the entire system.

Figura 6: Governance Structure of the Málaga Sustainable Tourism Observatory (STO Málaga).



Source: Prepared by the Department of Tourism and City Promotion, Málaga City Council.

Furthermore, in order to achieve the continuous development of the Governance model, the short, medium, and long-term objectives must be met:

- Strategic Vision and Implementation – Create and promote the Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga;
- Management Efficiency – Ensure Strategic Planning for Sustainable Tourism. Develop the Málaga PESTO (Strategic Plan of the Málaga Sustainable Tourism Observatory) and promote key projects;
- Accountability and Control – Name research leaders and partners to monitor the achievement of the destination’s objectives based on existing data sources and key tourism indicators;
- Transparency and Participation – Ensure the diffusion and transparency of the knowledge generated by destination intelligence systems (STO-Málaga website <https://sto.malaga.eu/>), in addition to guaranteeing the participation of all tourism sector stakeholders.



3.1. Strategic vision and implementation. Creation of the Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga

The creation of the Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga is a significant step forward in the governance of Málaga as a Smart Tourist Destination. The Technical Committee is an interdepartmental committee that is one of the DTI Network's requirements for full members to remain at Level II. It is a coordination tool that allows the City of Málaga to more effectively and quickly gather all the information required for any DTI diagnosis or study and future periodic reports. It also serves as support for the destination's sustainable strategic planning.

Objective and Purpose

The main objective is to foster the efficient management of the tourism strategy, while strengthening interdepartmental coordination and cooperation within a framework of shared and accountable governance. The purpose of the Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga is to act as a coordinating body between the different departments of Málaga City Council that are directly or indirectly involved in tourism in the city, ensuring and strengthening the necessary internal communication, coordination, and cooperation across all areas.

Members of the Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga

This governance tool aims to establish coordinated work structures that foster synergies aligned with the Smart Tourist Destination model, while promoting procedures that enhance decision-making efficiency, shared responsibility, and the monitoring and control of tourism-related actions implemented by public managers in the territory. The Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga has the following three components: Presidency, Internal coordination, Technical committee.

Presidency

The commission is supported by the head of policy of the city of Málaga, leading and chairing this coordinating body, thus demonstrating the political commitment to the tourism development of the destination

and promoting agility in the implementation of the agreements. Therefore, the Presidency will correspond to the Mayor of Málaga. The Mayor may be substituted by the Councillor for Tourism and City Promotion.

Internal coordination

In terms of competence, the Department of Tourism and City Promotion is the internal coordination department responsible for driving, coordinating, supporting, and promoting the city of Málaga as a full member of the Smart Tourist Destination Network. Its duties include:

- Promoting the integration of the various departments in the development and implementation of the destination's tourism strategy.
- Promoting dialogue between the departments and knowledge of the different departmental initiatives, bringing together interests for the benefit of the destination's tourism development.
- Sharing projects and actions related to tourism in the various departments of the Local Authority.
- Promoting the joint development of actions between the tourism department and other related departments, taking into account the destination's STD conversion strategy and, therefore, the convergence of projects and actions with the five pillars of the STD model.
- Presenting results and monitoring and controlling the implementation of territorial and/or tourism policy, as well as setting actions related to tourism in the destination.
- Identifying needs, areas for improvement and new services that require a common response between the different departments.
- Establishing and promoting a support system among local stakeholders in the tourism sector.

The senior technical representatives appointed by the Department of Tourism and City Promotion to coordinate the Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga are the Head of Service of the Department of Tourism and City Promotion, and the Head of the Special Programmes Section of the same department. Additionally, it should be noted that the Department of Tourism and City Promotion has created a dedicated generic email address for all communications related to the Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga: malagaDTI@malaga.eu.



Technical committee

The Technical Committee of the Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga will include technical representatives appointed by the departments directly linked to the five strategic pillars defined by SEGITTUR for Smart Tourist Destinations (Governance, Innovation, Technology, Sustainability, and Accessibility), as well as those departments whose responsibilities have a direct or indirect impact on tourism in the city. This structure reflects the City Council's strong commitment to Málaga's development as a Smart Tourist Destination.

Taking into account the Structure of the Executive Municipal Administration of the Málaga City Council, as approved by Mayoral Resolution on 17 June 2023, the Department of Tourism and City Promotion—responsible for coordinating the Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga—will be joined on the Commission by technical staff appointed by representatives from the following Municipal Departments:

1. Department of the Presidency

The Department of the Presidency plays a crucial role in ensuring that all actions carried out within the destination operate under the framework of governance. This arrangement guarantees the implementation of targeted strategies designed to enhance the destination's resilience and comprehensive management.

- > **Mayor's Office.** Its functions are linked to the efficient management and implementation, through administrative, technical, and legal support to the Mayor's Office – Presidency, institutional relations, and handling information requests addressed to the Mayor's Office – Presidency, among others.
- > **Department of Communications.** This department is responsible for directing, planning and developing institutional communications. It manages relations with the media, prepares and disseminates the City Council's official communications, oversees social media channels, and carries out tasks related to transparent governance.

2. Department of Economy, Finance, Management of European Union Funds, Coordination of Districts, and Human Resources and Quality

The responsibilities of these departments are directly linked to actions that have a clear impact on the destination, including:

- > **European Fund Management.** This unit is primarily responsible for securing and managing new funding streams—an essential function for implementing new projects and initiatives.
- > **District and Integrated Project Coordination.** This unit serves as the public administration's closest point of contact for citizen demands and neighbourhood requests.
- > **Department of Human Resources and Quality.** The Quality and Modernisation Service of the Málaga City Council falls within the Department of Human Resources and Quality. It is responsible for designing, developing, and implementing improvement projects within the organisation, as well as advising all municipal departments on the path to continuous improvement by providing public employees with a range of strategies and tools to facilitate the effective management of services and activities.

3. Department of Culture, Sport, Tourism, Education, Employment Promotion, and Youth

- > **Department of Culture and Heritage.** One of the main functions of the Department of Culture is the coordination of the city's cultural policy, the fundamental basis of a resilient tourism model based on respect for the socio-cultural authenticity of the destination, in which tourist resources and attractions and cultural assets are valued.
- > **Department of Tourism and City Promotion.** This municipal department is responsible for the internal coordination of the Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga.

4. Department of Environmental Sustainability and Operational Services

- > **Department of Environmental Sustainability:** Tourism sustainability is a transversal tool that ensures the long-term continuity of tourism activity, upholding all quality and well-being standards for both visitors and residents. Therefore, it is essential to involve this department to ensure the following:
 - Management of tourism sustainability
 - Preservation of cultural heritage
 - Environmental conservation
 - Economic and social development
- > **Department of Operational Services, Internal Affairs, Beaches, and Festivals.** Among its many functions, particular attention must be paid to those most closely related to the sustainability of the destination, such as:
 - Conservation and maintenance of municipal buildings
 - Management of public lighting
 - Beaches
 - Festivals
 - Oversight of Málaga's cleaning service (LIMASAM)

5. Department of Commerce, Public Space Management, Business Promotion, and Strategic Public Procurement

This department is tasked with promoting business growth and employment.

- > **Department of Commerce and Public Space.** Tourism and commerce are strategically interconnected activities; therefore, having representatives from this department on the monitoring commission is essential, as it manages everything related to markets, fairs, events, and business openings.

6. Department of Innovation, Urban Digitalisation, Promotion of Technological and Business Investment, and Attraction of Investment

—> **Área de Innovación y Digitalización.** Innovation is understood as the introduction or improvement of new services, processes, marketing or organisational methods in the Destination Management Entity's internal practices and in its external relationship with its residents and tourists, with the aim of improving benefits provided and competitiveness.

The Department of Innovation and Urban Digitalisation has among its main functions the alignment of municipal organisation efforts with the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the digitalisation of services, implementation of measures to assess and improve the city's energy and environmental situation, and technological modernisation of the Málaga City Council's ICT systems.

Therefore, with the inclusion of this department in the Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga, the areas encompassed within the Smart Tourist Destination framework include:

- Technologies applied to governance
- Technologies applied to tourism marketing
- Destination technology infrastructures
- Tourism knowledge systems

—> **Trade Fairs and Congress Centre of Málaga (FYCMA):** With regard to responsible management, FYCMA is a fundamental axis in terms of the coordination and management of tourist events and a necessary collaborator in measuring the impact of events held in the city.

7. Department of Social Rights, Diversity, Equality, Accessibility, Housing, Citizen Participation, Transparency, and Good Governance.

The Department of Social Rights, Equality, Accessibility, and Inclusive Policies aims to provide social services that meet the needs and expectations of citizens, facilitating their social inclusion within the framework of its own, assigned, and/or delegated competencies, while using available resources effectively and efficiently.

—> **Office of Social Rights, Diversity, Equality and Accessibility.** The universal accessibility of a Smart Tourist Destination entails developing tourism that enables all people—without exception—to access, use, and enjoy environments, goods, services, products, and technologies, ensuring equal opportunities in the safest, most comfortable, autonomous, and natural way possible.

The implementation of universal accessibility entails adopting a strategy based on 'universal design' or 'design for all', without prejudice to any reasonable accommodations that may be introduced. Therefore, in collaboration with the Department of Accessibility, the following areas of action are monitored:

- Regulatory framework
- Accessibility management
- Implementation in the destination
- Technological tools

—> **Office of Public Participation, Migration, External Action, Development Cooperation, Transparency, and Good Governance.** Among the functions of the Department of Public Participation are the preparation and coordination of the Open Government Plan of the City of Málaga, Transparency and Good Governance, and the coordination of Sector Councils. All this is necessary to assess local satisfaction with tourism, take into account public participation in strategic decision-making for the city, and manage the destination with a governance model based on efficiency and transparency.

8. Department of Urban Planning, Mobility, and Security.

—> **Municipal Urban Planning Management.** It is essential to consider how urban planning and territorial management impact progress towards sustainable tourism. Therefore, it is important to include the Municipal Urban Planning Management in this commission, as it is responsible for drafting, modifying, and reviewing the municipality's general planning, urban management, and urban infrastructure works within Málaga's municipal boundaries.

- **Department of Mobility.** In tourism management, the mobility strategy is marked by sustainable and intermodal transport. This department also oversees Empresa Malagueña de Transportes (EMT Málaga), the city's public transport company, and Sociedad Municipal de Aparcamientos y Servicios (SMASSA), the municipal parking and services company.
- **Department of Safety.** For a destination to be safe, the public work of the Police is essential, along with the coordination of security forces and emergency services, to ensure the well-being of both residents and tourists.

Functions of the Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga

The Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga will serve as a technical office and, at a minimum, will have the following functions:

- Coordinate, implement, and monitor the Smart Tourist Destination project by supporting the execution of actions derived from the development of Smart Tourist Destination Málaga. This includes monitoring the Smart Tourist Destination Action Plan and overseeing the follow-up and control of indicators validated during the diagnostic process, thereby ensuring the project's ongoing development over time.
- Manage and ensure the destination's participation in the activities of the Smart Tourist Destination Network.
- Coordinate the actions carried out by the different departments and ensure the proper implementation of Smart Tourist Destination Málaga actions involving other relevant areas of knowledge and management.
- Promote the destination's participation in projects at the provincial, regional, national, and European levels.
- Ensure transparency in all activities carried out within the Smart Tourist Destination Málaga framework by regularly informing the relevant social stakeholders.

- Additionally, the Commission is assigned the following responsibilities:
- Propose opportunities for collaboration on matters of common interest to both parties (SEGITTUR and the Málaga City Council).
 - Prepare programmes or projects and propose the corresponding specific implementation protocols related to the General Action Protocol signed between the State-Owned Company for the Management of Innovation and Tourism Technologies, known as SEGITTUR, and the Málaga City Council, dated 6 June 2024.
 - Submit the proposals it develops to the competent bodies of both parties (SEGITTUR and the Málaga City Council).
 - Monitor the specific protocols signed as part of the initiative, as well as clarify and resolve any questions that may arise regarding their interpretation and execution.

These functions may, as the implementation of the Smart Tourist Destination progresses, be supported by technological tools that provide the destination with the necessary resources for optimal management of the data generated and collected—ensuring it is made available to all those involved in the development of tourism-related activities.

It is important to note that the Technical Monitoring Commission for Smart Tourist Destination Málaga does not have an organic or legal status and, therefore, does not constitute a decision-making body within the regulatory framework established by law. That is to say, its agreements are intentions only and cannot create obligations or rights on behalf of the signatories for the execution of actions carried out under the General Action Protocol signed between SEGITTUR and the Málaga City Council.

Meeting types

The Technical Monitoring Commission may operate in plenary session, as a standing committee, or, where appropriate, through the establishment of working groups.

→ **Plenary Committee**

The Plenary Committee is composed of:

- The Chair
- Department of Tourism and City Promotion. Internal Coordination
- Technical Committee

The Plenary Committee will meet at least twice a year, or whenever requested by the Chair, the Department of Tourism and City Promotion, or at least one third of the members of the Technical Committee.

For meetings to be held and decisions to be made, the presence of at least one third of the members of the Technical Committee, or their duly authorised delegates with voting rights, is required.

Decisions will be adopted by at least one third of the Technical Committee members and recorded in the minutes of each meeting, which will be signed by all attendees.

—> **Standing Committee**

The Standing Committee is composed of:

- Department of Tourism and City Promotion. Internal Coordination
- European Fund Management
- District and Integrated Project Coordination
- Office of Public Participation. Migration. External Affairs. Development Cooperation. Transparency, and Good Governance
- Department of Operational Services, Internal Affairs, Beaches, and Festivals

At least four meetings will be convened annually to monitor the progress of the Smart Tourist Destination Málaga Action Plan.

- Two meetings will take place prior to the Plenary Committee sessions.
- Two ordinary meetings will be held to review and follow up on the various topics within the Committee's remit.

—> **Working Groups**

Working groups may be convened based on the destination's needs, at the request of the Chair, the Department of Tourism and City Promotion, or at least one third of the Technical Committee members.

Meetings may be held either in person or virtually and will be accompanied by the relevant agenda and any necessary documentation to ensure proper understanding of the topics to be discussed.

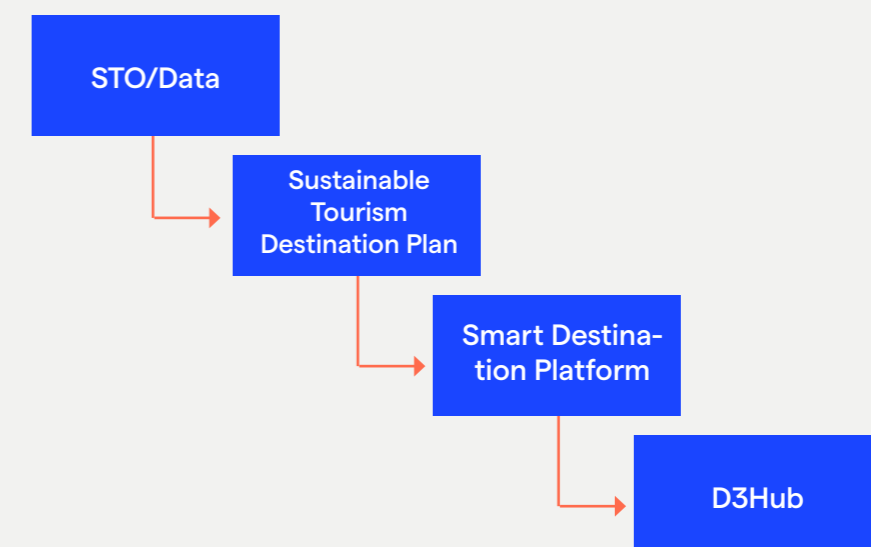


3.2. Management Efficiency. Strategic Planning for Sustainable Tourism. Development of the PESTO plan and promotion of key Destination Projects

The Málaga Strategic Tourism Plan 2021–2024 has provided a solid foundation for driving current strategic planning initiatives, as well as for the monitoring and oversight of tourism activity. It represents a set of important tools developed through careful reflection, with the aim of securing the future of tourism, Málaga’s key industry. It supports the adoption of a management, governance, and tourism promotion model in line with the principles of the Smart Tourist Destination Network.

In addition to the Strategic Plan for STO Málaga, several key projects are currently being developed at both local and international levels (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Key projects in the data-driven strategic planning and management of sustainable tourism in Málaga.



Source: Prepared by the Department of Tourism and City Promotion, Málaga City Council.

Strategic Plan for the Sustainable Tourism Observatory of Málaga

The Strategic Plan for the Sustainable Tourism Observatory of Málaga (Plan Estratégico del Observatorio de Turismo Sostenible de Málaga, PESTO) 2025–2029 aims to lay the foundation for promoting a Smart Tourist Destination model based on sustainable tourism. Its goal is to support the balanced development of the city of Málaga, in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the demands of today’s global context.

It is important to remember that the role of Sustainable Tourism Observatories is to provide data and feedback mechanisms that support adaptive management. These tools help destinations refine their strategies and respond to shifting challenges, while also ensuring that data production supports governance structures and reflects the specific characteristics of each destination. Furthermore, as Observatories support destination managers in evidence-based decision-making and sustainable tourism management, effective communication among stakeholders is essential to ensure informed and well-founded decisions.

This plan is being launched as a living and continuously evolving project. Its development is enriched by the integration of new initiatives, projects, trends, data sources, and innovative methodologies. Through a participatory approach involving key stakeholders from the tourism sector, public institutions, and civil society, the plan aims to establish a working framework that enables Málaga to become a benchmark in smart and sustainable tourism management.

The implementation of this plan is intended not only to address the immediate challenges posed by tourism growth but also to anticipate future concerns related to sustainability, climate change, and social inclusion. This approach will allow Málaga to position itself as a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive tourist destination—fully aligned with the principles of environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

The Sustainable Tourism Observatory of Málaga (STO Málaga) is committed to ensuring that all strategic decisions are grounded in data-based evidence and a deep understanding of tourism’s impact on the local environment. In this way, the Observatory will serve not only as a platform for continuous monitoring and evaluation but also as a hub for sharing knowledge and best practices, both locally and internationally.

PESTO Málaga 2025–2029 has been designed with flexibility in mind, allowing it to adapt to new trends, projects, and technological developments—ensuring its long-term relevance and effectiveness. With the coordinated efforts of all stakeholders involved, this Strategic Tourism Sustainability Planning document will serve as a key pillar in guiding Málaga’s digital and sustainable transformation of tourism, benefiting both its residents and its visitors.

Sustainable Tourism Destination Plan

The Sustainable Tourism Destination Plan of the Málaga City Council—developed within the framework of Spain’s Recovery, Transformation, and Resilience Plan and funded by the European Union through Next Generation EU—is being implemented by the Department of Tourism and City Promotion as the ‘Sustainable Decentralisation of Tourism in the City of Málaga’ project. The objective is to promote alternative tourism experiences by encouraging visitors to explore areas beyond the traditional tourist core that also hold strong tourism potential.

The Sustainable Tourism Destination Plan will serve as a foundation for STO Málaga in the process of data collection and analysis, following the Smart Tourist Destination model. This ensures that destination management is intelligent and sustainable across all levels of the city, helping to strengthen Málaga’s competitiveness.

PID

The Smart Destination Platform 2024 aims to enhance tourism management in Málaga through the implementation of an integrated, multimodule system. This digital platform will centralise the capture, storage, processing, and analysis of a new generation of tourism data to support decision-making, improving both the sustainability and resilience of Málaga as a tourist destination through digital transformation.

The Smart Destination Platform will connect to the National Central Node and ensure technical, semantic, and organizational interoperability, allowing efficient data management and coordination between different systems and applications.

Additionally, the Smart Destination Platform aims to achieve:

- **Governance:** Developing a strategic vision and efficient, transparent, open, and participatory management carried out responsibly and under control.
- **Innovation:** Implementing tools that enhance management processes and improve products, services, marketing, commercialisation, and training.
- **Technology:** Developing solutions based on destination technological infrastructures.
- **Sustainability:** Optimising the management of this key dimension of tourism in all its aspects (environmental, economic, and social).
- **Accessibility,** Improving its management.:

Additionally, the Smart Destination Platform aims to achieve:

- Increased digitalisation: boosting the number and quality of digital tourism tools and their use by visitors.
- Enhanced promotion strategy: optimising the impact of promotional campaigns and increasing tourist attraction.
- Real-time data collection to improve strategic decision-making.
- Sustainability and resilience: implementing practices that strengthen the destination's sustainability and its ability to adapt to future changes and challenges.

Therefore, this project represents a necessary commitment to consolidating Málaga as a Smart Tourist Destination. Digitalisation, innovation, efficient promotion, and sustainability will improve the tourist experience while ensuring sustainability and resilience, allowing Málaga to leverage its potential and make a significant qualitative leap towards the forefront of sustainable tourism. Furthermore, the Smart Destination Platform will contribute to establishing synergies with other destinations and organisations, consolidating the national strategy outlined since the beginning of the 2024 initiative.

D3HUB

One of the most important tools for Málaga as a data-driven destination is the D3HUB project (Data-Driven Destinations HUB).

The primary aim of D3HUB is to provide tourist destinations with sustainable solutions grounded in data-driven evidence. D3HUB seeks to establish a self-sustaining European Competence Centre for Tourism Data, designed to assist destinations in advancing their ecological and digital transitions.

The European Competence Centre for Tourism Data, D3HUB, is committed to providing comprehensive support to European organisations in evidence-based destination management through the following initiatives:

- Assisting destinations in understanding present and future challenges
- Identifying potential data sources, statistics, and analytical tools
- Sharing expertise in data collection and processing
- Building knowledge through data analysis and interpretation
- Providing practical guidance on using data for smart destination management
- Supporting an increasingly broad tourism ecosystem

D3HUB is building a community of destinations committed to shaping the future of sustainable, data-driven destination management. By participating in this project, the aim is to gain training and skills to be prepared for aligning all data sources and efficiently analysing the information gathered across various institutions. The importance of learning from how other destinations in similar situations operate is also highlighted—being more effective, minimising resources, and maximising results by selecting different tools and methodologies based on benchmarking and best practice analysis.

As Málaga is leading the project 'Sustainable Decentralisation of Tourism in Málaga', under the Sustainable Tourism Destination Plan framework, the city is participating in one of the clusters: Tourist Flows, which focuses on redistributing tourist flows across space and time—addressing the temporal and spatial distribution of visitors and highli-

ghting existing imbalances. This cluster seeks to provide strategies for managing tourist flows, improving efficiency, and encouraging balanced tourism growth in the destination. Key challenges such as seasonality and territorial pressure are being addressed through the following proposed lines of action:

- Tourist Intensity and Density: Analysing the ratio of tourists to the local population and their distribution across different areas of the destination.
- Seasonality Analysis: Identifying peak and low tourism periods using techniques such as time series analysis and the Gini index. These insights can help guide policies to manage seasonality, using official data sources to compare regions while taking local context into account.
- Impact on Employment and Local Resources: Examining the link between tourist flows and job creation, supporting a better understanding of how to balance tourism with local economic development.
- PMS Data Integration: Making use of Property Management System (PMS) data to gain insights into tourist flows and optimise management. Future integration with European data spaces on water and energy will enable more comprehensive analysis.
- Forecasting and Prediction: Using data modelling and artificial intelligence to develop scenarios and assess the impact of potential interventions or likely future trends.



3.3. Responsibility and Control. Research managers and partners in monitoring of the objectives achievement marked by the destination and based on existing data sources and key tourism indicators.

Research partners are collaborating entities that share an interest in promoting Málaga as a Smart Tourism Destination within the framework of Sustainability. The main research partners are:

- **University of Málaga (UMA).** The University of Málaga is a key partner in knowledge management. Málaga City Council collaborates with the University of Málaga in all those projects in which it is necessary to promote the generation and significant advancement of scientific knowledge and research of proven quality as well as to advance towards the search for solutions to society's challenges.
- **Andalusian Institute for Research and Innovation in Tourism (Instituto Andaluz de Investigación e Innovación en Turismo, IATUR).** The Institute, based in Málaga, is established as an Andalusian Knowledge Centre of the Universities of Málaga, Granada, and Seville. It has a multidisciplinary scientific team of more than 200 members and acts as an intermediary between the tourism sector and advances in knowledge, with the primary objective of showcasing and transferring R&D in this field.

Also, it is worth mentioning the institutions and organizations such as INE, SEGITTUR, Turismo Andaluz, Turismo y Planificación Costa del Sol, Fundación CIEDES, City DNA, D3Hub, etc., which, together with UN Tourism, play a very important role in the tourism governance of the city of Málaga, collaborating in the development of STO Málaga activities and actions when promoting sustainability in its three fundamental aspects: economic, social, and environmental.

3.4 Transparency and participation. Diffusion and transparency of knowledge generated by destination intelligence systems. Participation of all tourism sector stakeholders.

In the public sector, the key factors for evidence-based decision-making include stakeholder participation, reliable measurement of management systems, exemplary leadership, proper allocation of resources, and the competent management of an innovative organisational culture. In addition, high-quality data, robust technological infrastructure, and clear objectives regarding each Observatory's vision also play a crucial role in successfully achieving the goals set out in line with the destination's strategy, including motivating stakeholders.

Figure 8 illustrates the participatory process involving all stakeholders in evidence-based decision-making. STO Málaga is responsible for providing comprehensive, accessible, and reliable data. Its work is focused on strengthening collaboration between public and private stakeholders, enabling the identification of risks and opportunities to strike a balance between the needs of the local population, the economy, and the environment.

Figure 8: Public-public-private coordination in the STO Málaga participatory process for data-driven decision making.



Source: Prepared by the Department of Tourism and City Promotion, Málaga City Council.

Through its inclusive approach, STO Málaga promotes intelligent destination management, fosters multisectoral cooperation, and prioritises sustainability as a central pillar of tourism development. By collecting data and producing reports and research, the Observatory contributes to Málaga's progress towards a more sustainable and resilient future, establishing itself as a global benchmark in responsible tourism. As previously mentioned, the three fundamental components of the participatory process are:

→ **Governance:** STO Málaga is backed by Málaga's highest political authority, who leads and chairs the coordination body, showing political commitment to its sustainable development as a tourist destination. Accordingly, the Presidency is held by the Mayor of Málaga, Mr. Francisco de la Torre Prados.

→ **Participation:** The main network of local agents collaborating as key elements in Málaga's development as a Smart Tourist Destination is the Málaga Tourism Forum. The current tourism-related working groups, coordinated by the Málaga City Council's Department of Tourism and City Promotion, are as follows:

- STO Málaga Expert Panels
- Segmented Technical Panels
- Accessible Tourism Panel

The Local Stakeholder Group section provides a more detailed look at the stakeholders, including the Málaga Tourism Forum, which represents the city's main stakeholder network.

→ **Communication:** It is worth highlighting that the reports are the result of an open knowledge-sharing process, with participation and collaborative learning as key components. STO Málaga has different communication channels, which will be explained in the Transparency and Communication section of this report. These include the website <https://sto.malaga.eu/>, which is the main channel for accessing information from the Observatory.

Local stakeholder group

The main network of local stakeholders collaborating as key elements in the development of Málaga as a Smart Tourism Destination is the Málaga Tourism Forum.

The Málaga Tourism Forum is an advisory body that, with over two decades of activity, continues to bring together different departments of the Málaga City Council and the tourism sector to defend Málaga's interests as a destination. This forum represents public institutions, business organizations, private agents, and all tourism sector stakeholders with the goal of planning and coordinating actions that positively impact local tourism. The Málaga City Tourism Forum is the ideal setting for the exchange of ideas and joint analysis of the destination's tourism situation. In fact, this body has developed a series of actions that have improved Málaga's position as a competitive destination, helping the city's tourism industry consolidate its position as one of the main sources of employment, wealth, and well-being in the city.

The Tourism Forum currently comprises the Málaga City Council through the Departments of Tourism, Culture, and Sports; the Airport; the Port Authority; the Málaga Trade Federation (Federación de Comercio de Málaga, FECOMA); Turismo y Planificación Costa del Sol; the Professional Association of Tourist Guides (Asociación Profesional de Informadores Turísticos, APIT); the Málaga Business Confederation (Confederación de Empresarios de Málaga, CEM); the Chamber of Commerce; the University of Málaga; the Hotel Business Association of the Costa del Sol (Asociación de Empresarios Hoteleros de la Costa del Sol, AEHCOS); the Association of Spanish Language Schools; the Historic Centre Association; the Málaga Hospitality Business Association (Asociación de Empresarios Hosteleros de Málaga, MAHOS); the Business Association of Travel Agents (Asociación Empresarial de Agentes de Viajes, AEDAV); the Vehicle Rental Companies Association; and the Málaga Trade Fair and Congress Centre (Palacio de Ferias y Congresos de Málaga, FYCMA). (See figure 9).

Figure 9: Members of the Málaga Tourism Forum.

Áreas del Ayuntamiento de Málaga: Turismo, Cultura y Deporte	Federación de Comercio de Málaga (FECOMA)
Puerto	Aeropuerto
Málaga Convention Bureau	Cámara del Comercio
Confederación de Empresarios de Málaga (CEM)	Asociación Empresarial de Agentes de Viajes (AEDAV)
Asociación de Escuelas de Español	Asociación de Empresas de Alquiler de Vehículos
Asociación de Empresarios Hosteleros de Málaga (MAHOS)	Asociación de Empresarios Hoteleros de la Costa del Sol (AEHCOS)
Universidad de Málaga	Palacio de Ferias y Congresos de Málaga o FYCMA
Turismo y Planificación Costa del Sol	Asociación Profesional de Informadores Turísticos (APIT)
Asociación del Centro Histórico	

Source: Prepared by the Department of Tourism and City Promotion, Málaga City Council.

Additionally, all relevant sector associations will be included in any working group depending on the topic, such as:

- > **Development Groups.** The Málaga City Council has promoted social participation through the establishment of Development Groups—networked working groups made up of social organisations operating within specific areas. These groups aim to reach consensus on joint actions focused on raising awareness and providing information to prevent various issues. One of the most active groups related to the tourism sector is the Accessible Málaga Development Group, which is part of the Accessible Tourism Board of Málaga.
- > **Neighbourhood Associations.** The importance of neighbourhood associations within communities is widely recognised, both in terms of the benefits they bring and the variety of activities they undertake. In this context, the most relevant associations will be taken into consideration, as they play a key role in representing the views and proposals of local residents before the authorities. Their work contributes positively to community well-being, particularly in areas such as tourism, safety, infrastructure, public services, the environment, and urban development. Neighbourhood associations also promote citizen engagement, foster collaboration, and encourage a culture of teamwork among residents.
- > **Segmented Associations.** Depending on the topic to be addressed, associations that represent the various professional segments related to tourism activity will be involved.

Working groups

Within the Commission, any number of working groups may be created around specific thematic areas. Representatives from other relevant tourism-related entities, experts, or other territorial stakeholders may also participate as advisers, contributing their knowledge and supporting the destination's progress within the Smart Tourist Destination model.



The currently established working groups directly related to the tourism sector and promoted by the Department of Tourism and City Promotion are as follows:

—> **Segmented Technical Panels.** Segmented technical panels are constituted within the framework of the current Málaga Strategic Tourism Plan, composed of representatives and professionals related to any of the tourism segments. In these panels, experiences are exchanged, the potential of each tourism segment is explored in depth, new opportunities for destination promotion are examined, and proposals and suggestions are gathered for the development of the Málaga Strategic Tourism Plan by the Department of Tourism and City Promotion of the Málaga City Council.

The Segmented Technical Panels already established include the following:

- Eno-Gastronomic Technical Panel.
- Nature, Sun and Beach Tourism Technical Panel.
- Cultural Tourism Technical Panel.
- Premium Tourism, Golf and Shopping Technical Panel.
- Cruise Ship Tourism Technical Panel.
- Educational-Language Tourism Technical Panel.
- MICE Technical Panel.
- Cinematographic and Audiovisual Technical Panel.
- Health and Well-being Technical Panel.
- Family Tourism Technical Panel.

—> **STO Málaga Expert Panels.** The INSTO Network is a collective of tourism observatories that monitor the economic, environmental, and social impacts of tourism at the destination level. This initiative builds on the United Nations' commitment to fostering the sustainable and resilient growth of the tourism sector through measurement and monitoring, supporting evidence-based tourism management.

Among its objectives is to foster a dynamic network of partners striving to create healthy places for both visitors and local communities, while ensuring destinations remain resilient for future generations.

A fundamental pillar of the Network is the participation of the entire sector in decision-making processes. These panels, organised into thematic blocks, serve as forums where participants identify sector needs, analyse information sources, establish relevant indicators, and propose strategic actions within each area of study. The panels convened under the auspices of UN Tourism are as follows:

- **Economic Sustainability Panel.** Covering the following thematic areas:

- Sustainable production
- Employment
- Economic benefits at destination level
- Tourism seasonality

- **Social Sustainability Panel.** Focusing on the following areas:

- Social events
- Local satisfaction
- Accessibility
- Education
- Training in sustainability and health-related information

—> **Environmental Sustainability Panel:**

- Energy management
- Water management
- Wastewater management
- Solid waste management
- Climate change

Tourism Governance Panel:

- Mobility (including cruise ships)
- Tourism offer
- Governance

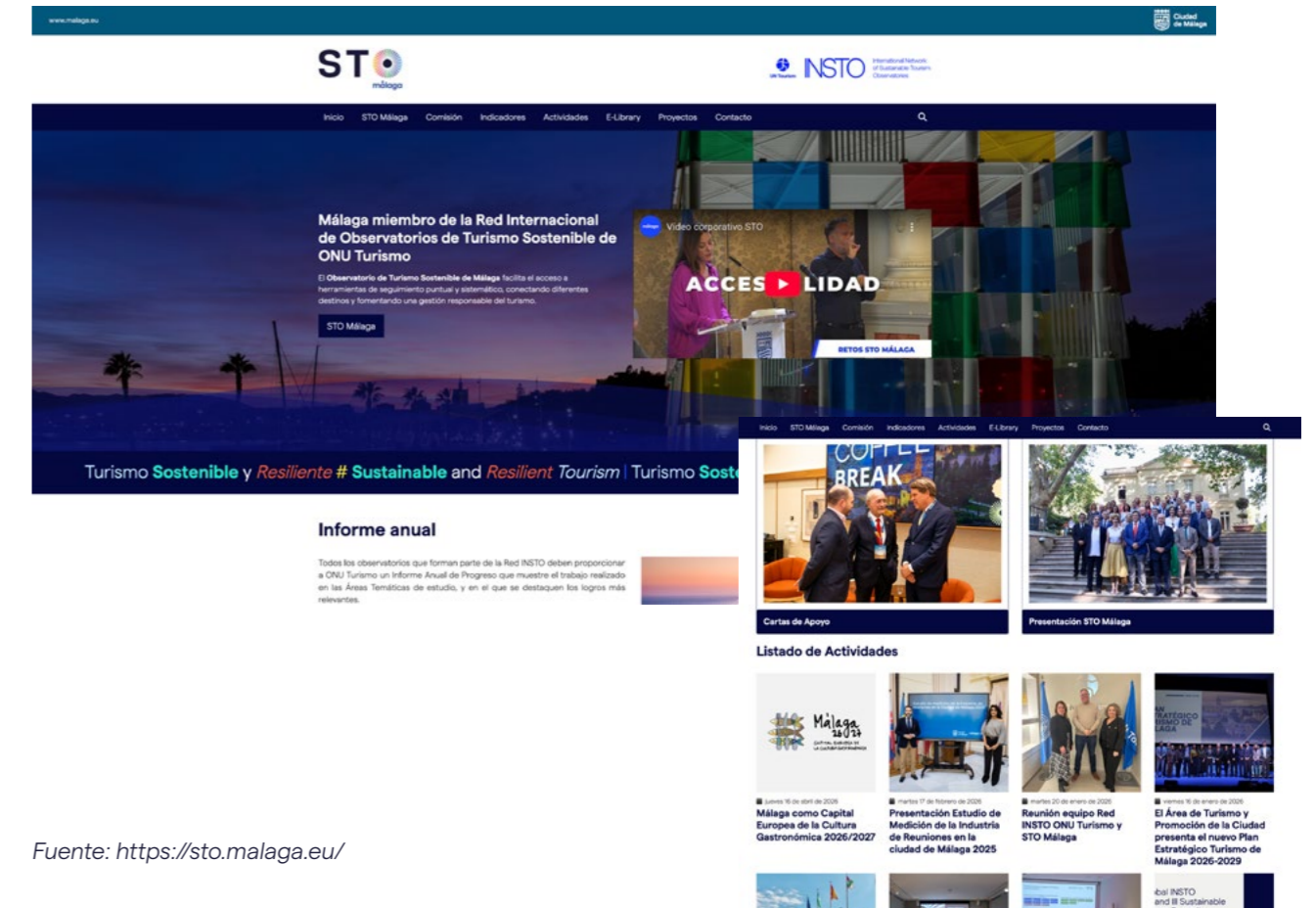
Accessible Tourism Panel. One of the main milestones of the Málaga City Council's Accessible Tourism Plan, developed by Ilunion Accesibilidad of the ONCE Social Group in collaboration with the Department of Tourism and City Promotion, the Department of Accessibility, and the city's network of associations, is the establishment of an Accessible Tourism Panel. Its main objective is to define a methodology to articulate and channel the roadmap for the actions set out in the plan. The creation of this panel is a clear reflection of the Málaga City Council's commitment to creating an accessible destination for both residents and tourists.

Transparency / communication

STO Málaga has various communication channels. The main channel for accessing information is the website (sto.malaga.eu), which publishes reports, studies, and key statistics on the impact of tourism on the local environment, as well as strategies for its sustainable management. One of the requirements established by UN Tourism is the creation of a dedicated website where the Observatories share information on the measurement of indicators. This allows the city of Málaga to build a more complete, coherent, and up-to-date view of the state of tourism at the regional, national, and international levels. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting the city's commitment to collaboration with the other Observatories by sharing and exchanging information.

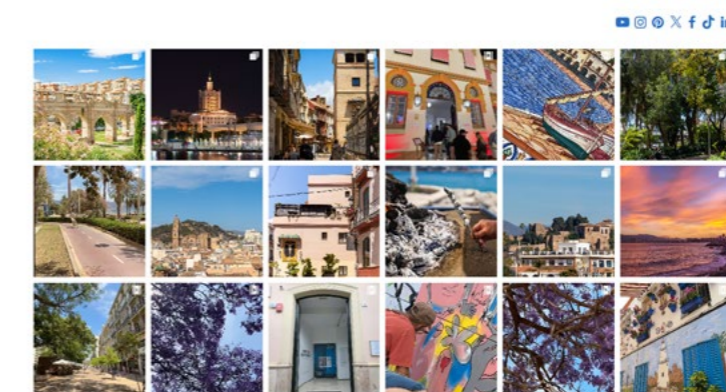
All the resources on the Observatory's website are organized into the most important sections of STO Málaga: the STO Málaga Technical Committee, the main Indicators, the Observatory's activities, and the sustainable initiatives currently being implemented. This portal provides greater transparency to municipal management and streamlines dialogue between the government and citizens.

Figure 10: STO Málaga web page



Fuente: <https://sto.malaga.eu/>

Figure 11: Málaga Destination web page.



CONOCE MÁLAGA | PLANIFICA | QUÉ VER Y HACER | LA CIUDAD NATAL DE PICASSO



Source: <https://visita.malaga.eu/es/>



Lines of action in the governance of the Málaga Destination

Given that the main objective of STO Málaga is to transform the destination into a hub for knowledge and information transfer in the sustainable tourism sector, Málaga's vision is to become a benchmark sustainable city, inspiring other destinations to follow a governance model based on data management and evidence-based decision-making.

Therefore, it is essential to develop initiatives focused on the active participation of citizens, businesses, and public organisations, promoting sustainable development that preserves social and economic well-being.

From the lines of action outlined below, it is clear that to promote and strengthen collaboration among stakeholders, encourage citizen participation, and ensure the satisfaction of both the local population and visitors—while deploying Málaga's tourism strategy based on data governance and sustainability—the right tools for sustainable tourism planning and management are necessary:

1. Improve participation of all tourism stakeholders at local and international levels and increase collaboration among key tourism actors.

- Enhance public-private communication.
- Ensure continuous communication and exchange with relevant stakeholders to foster trust, understanding, commitment, collaboration, and support for the initiative.
- Guarantee regular exchange of experiences with other international destinations.



2. Identify new information sources and optimise real-time data collection and processing.

- Continuously review, adjust, and improve knowledge from internal and external data sources.
- Regularly review thematic indicators and design new proposals for topics to be monitored.
- Share evidence-based data generated for the different destination actors.
- Continuously strengthen and expand alliances for research and data analysis.
- Integrate data into the Smart Destination Platform, ensuring proper storage, processing, and analysis to support evidence-based decision-making.

3. Strengthen citizen participation in tourism planning processes.

- Organise regular meetings between representatives of the local community, tourism businesses, municipal authorities, and other key actors to discuss and co-create tourism strategies.
- Develop an online platform where residents can engage in consultations and surveys on key tourism projects (Smart Destination Platform).

4. Evaluate and improve the perception and satisfaction of citizens and tourism sector agents.

- Conduct surveys to gauge residents' satisfaction with tourism, defining questions, approach, continuity, and key indicators.

5. Support the city of Málaga in its sustainable tourism objectives.

- Assist in the Sustainable Tourism Decentralisation Project developed by the Department of Tourism and City Promotion.
- Strengthen collaboration to achieve the Climate Action Plan's targets, including emission reduction goals that incorporate tourism.
- Coordinate with IATUR in developing indicators related to climate risk and other environmental, social, and economic sustainability issues.
- Support the development of regenerative tourism practices.



The lines of action and initiatives presented here are ongoing and subject to continuous review and adaptation according to the destination's needs and circumstances, considering potential changes to short-, medium-, and long-term actions.



reflexiones del día



Ayuntamiento de Málaga

málaga
TOURISM BOARD



málaga
TOURISM BOARD



málaga
TOURISM BOARD



málaga
TOURISM BOARD



málaga
TOURISM BOARD



Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia

Final reflections

Málaga consolidates an advanced tourism governance model, where strategic planning, intensive use of data, and the involvement of all stakeholders in the tourism ecosystem allow for the construction of a more resilient, competitive destination aligned with the principles of sustainable development. The creation of the Málaga DTI Technical Monitoring Commission, the close collaboration with research partners IA-TUR and UMA, among others, and the promotion of the participation of the most important stakeholders in the tourism sector, such as the Málaga Tourism Forum, are the best proof of the historic and positive evolution of smart tourism governance in Málaga.

The commitment to quality, innovation, and multisectoral cooperation positions the city as a benchmark in smart tourism management, committed to the well-being of its residents and the experience of its visitors.

Currently, in addition to the STO Málaga Strategic Plan, several key projects are being promoted not only at the city level but also internationally, such as: PSTD, which has deployed the Sustainable Tourism Decentralization Project in the city of Málaga; the PID: Smart Destination Platform; and D3Hub, the project led by the European Commission in which Málaga participates within the Tourist Flow Cluster.

In terms of collecting and monitoring tourism data, Málaga draws on established platforms at both national and regional levels. Key among these are DATAESTUR and the Tourism Intelligence System (Sistema de Inteligencia Turística, SIT), both supported by the State Secretariat for Tourism, as well as SMART TOURIST DATA, promoted by Turismo Andaluz through the Regional Government of Andalusia. These platforms provide access to a wide range of key indicators, including those related to tourism supply, demand, and mobility, among others.

Málaga is also making strides towards the development of its own digital tourism platform: the Smart Destination Platform. This integrated, multi-modular system is designed to improve tourism management through the centralised collection, storage, processing, and analysis of a new generation of data. The platform will enable more effective, evidence-based decision-making while enhancing Málaga's resilience and sustainability as a digitally transformed destination.

Málaga's vision is to become a city that not only adapts to new environmental demands but also inspires other cities to follow a sustainable, balanced, and environmentally friendly path. Through the PESTO (Strategic Plan for the Málaga STO), the city seeks to develop initiatives based on the active participation of citizens, businesses, and public agencies, promoting sustainable development that maintains social and economic well-being.

Given that the main objective of the Tourism Sustainability Observatory (STO) is to establish Málaga as a centre for knowledge and information transfer in the field of sustainable tourism, the creation of the Smart Destination Platform marks a turning point in the city's strategic management as a Smart Tourist Destination. The integration of Málaga's Smart Destination Platform into the National Central Node is a key milestone in the city's journey towards becoming a smart, resilient, sustainable, and inclusive tourism destination, enabled through comprehensive digital transformation.





06.

Annex II. Members of the technical commite

Having requested each of the representatives of the Government Areas of the Honorable City Council of Málaga to designate a technician to be part of the Technical Monitoring Commission of the Málaga DTI, and after the notification made to the designated members in a meeting held on June 21, 2024, the employees of the municipal corporation who will be part of the Commission are listed, with the aim of promoting the activities promoted by the DTI Network and the development in general of joint projects and / or collaboration for the implementation of actions through this meeting and debate forum that seek to promote synergies and transfers of information and knowledge between Smart Tourist Destinations (DTI), promoting the project and maximizing the benefits of the application of the methodology in the Málaga destination.

Figure 12. Government Areas members of the Málaga DTI Technical Monitoring Commission.

Government Department	Dependency
Presidency	Mayor's Office
	Communication
Economy, Finance, Management of European Union Funds, Coordination of Districts, and Human Resources and Quality	European Fund Management
	District Coordination
	Human Resources and Quality
Culture, Sport, Tourism, Education, Employment Promotion, and Youth	Culture
	Tourism
Environmental Sustainability and Operational Services	Environmental Sustainability
	Operational Services
Commerce, Public Space Management, Business Promotion, and Strategic Public Procurement	Shops and businesses
Innovation, Urban Digitalisation, Promotion of Technological and Business Investment, and Attraction of Investment	Innovation and Digitalisation
	Trade Fairs and Congress Centre
Social Rights, Diversity, Equality, Accessibility, Housing, Citizen Participation, Transparency, and Good Governance	Social Rights, Equality, Accessibility, and Inclusive Policies
	Citizen Participation, Transparency, and Good Governance
	Urban Planning
Urban Planning, Mobility, and Security	Mobility
	Security





Bibliography

1. SEGITTUR, 2024, mayo. Manual de Gestión de la Metodología DTI.
2. Madden, D. (2023, febrero 11). Explore this map of the world's best alternative capital cities. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/duncanmadden/2023/02/11/explore-this-map-of-the-worlds-best-alternative-capital-cities/>
3. InterNations. (2023). Best cities for expats 2023. Expat Insider. <https://www.internations.org/expat-insider/2023/best-cities-for-expats-40421>
4. UN Tourism or UNWTO, 2023. Tourism for SDGS. <https://tourism4sdgs.org/>
5. Área de Turismo y Promoción de la Ciudad, Ayuntamiento de Málaga (2024). STO Málaga. <https://sto.malaga.eu/>
6. Área de Turismo y Promoción de la Ciudad, Ayuntamiento de Málaga, 2024. STO Málaga. <https://sto.malaga.eu/>



sto.malaga.eu