

Interreg Mediterranean



MITOMED+

Models of Integrated Tourism in the MEDiterranean Plus

GREEN BEACH MODEL

Toolbox



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Contents

Introduction	4
1. The Green Beach Model	4
1.1 The list of indicators	5
2. Assessments	8
2.1 Internal assessment – GBM Audit sheet	8
2.2 External assessment – User satisfaction questionnaires	9
3. Lessons Learned	10

Introduction

Pilot Action 2 provided for the **implementation of the Green Beach Model** through the application of good practices, the improvement of existing standards and regulations and the approval of methodologies and criteria to be used.

The aim of this Action was to support beach operators in making better-informed decisions about managing their beaches using a consistent approach based on best practices, providing guidance in establishing benchmarks for beach management and safety. In doing so, the variety of the Mediterranean beaches due to their geomorphology and historical uses, was properly considered, so as to realize an inclusive, sustainable model to the benefit of the different demands of tourists, and easily replicable into other destinations. Each partner Region selected three destinations fairly popular for their maritime and coastal tourism, and there the model was tested.

1. The Green Beach Model

A “Green Beach” can be described as a coastal area which incorporates the principles of sustainability, such as the protection of environment and natural resources, the sustainable management of waste and special waste, the use of renewable energy resources, and the reduction of urban sprawl of the coastal zone as the beach boundaries are well defined.

According to the World Tourism Organization "Sustainable tourism development responds to the needs of tourists and regions that welcome them, protecting and improving opportunities for the future. It must translate into an integrated management of all the resources needed to meet the economic, environmental and social needs and at the same time preserve cultural integrity, ecosystems, biodiversity and basic living conditions."

GBM is a product rich in content closely related to sustainability. That's to say an ecobeach or a sustainably managed recreational beach, embedding aspects of sustainability into its planning framework, allowing for leisure and economic development and, at the same time, preserving natural and cultural heritage.

The GBM applies to local authorities and beach operators to make better-informed decisions about managing beaches using a consistent approach.

The model was created by the consortium analyzing 10 best practices identified in the 4 partner countries and tested in 15 pilot destinations.

You can download the Green Beach Model document at the following link:

<https://mitomed-plus.interreg-med.eu/index.php?id=7269>

1.1 The list of criteria

The review of the existing best practices identified a list of 65 criteria that beaches use to apply sustainability principles in their beach management process. The «Green Beach» model is divided into 8 categories/ standards which all are related to some aspect with sustainable development and the green agenda and can be applied to any recreational beach.

The selected criteria fall under the following categories:



The 8 categories are subdivided into 28 criteria. Each criterion has been allocated an individual weighting/ importance score as follow:

5 = essential to a "green" beach • 4 = important to a "green" beach • 3 = desirable for a "green" beach,
 2 = added value for a "green" beach • 1 = low importance for the "green" beach.

The full list of criteria is here below:

Code	Category	Name
1	Bathing water quality	Water quality monitoring
2	Bathing water quality	Standards and requirements for water quality analysis for parameter Escherichia coli
3	Bathing water quality	Standards and requirements for water quality analysis for parameter Intestinal Enterococci
4	Bathing water quality	No industrial, waste-water or sewage-related discharges at the beach.

Code	Category	Name
5	Beach area quality	No cigarette butts at the beach
6	Beach area quality	No general waste on the beach
7	Safety	Beach Safety with a lifeguard and equipment
8	Safety	Safety measures at the beach
9	Accessibility	Access for the physically disabled people in the water and beach area
10	Accessibility	Facilities provided for the physically disabled people in the water and at the beach.
11	Green Facilities and Eco-furnishing	Sun loungers must be sustainably and/or aesthetically sensitive to the natural environment
12	Green Facilities and Eco-furnishing	Beach umbrellas must be must be sustainably sources and/or aesthetically sensitive to the natural environment
13	Green Facilities and Eco-furnishing	Toilets should be housed with sustainable material, must be in adequate number for the beach users and have sewage disposal and water saving devices
14	Green Facilities and Eco-furnishing	Shower facilities must have water saving devices and solar thermal panes to heat shower water and thanks to collect and recycle waste water
15	Sustainability	Adequate number of bins
16	Sustainability	Beaches must respect and support the identity and conformation of the sites, especially in protected areas the endemic and/or indigenous plants, habitats, species, and ecosystems to attract high levels of native biodiversity
17	Sustainability	Promotion of local food and drinks
18	Sustainability	Promotion of sustainable transportation at the beach area
19	Managment	All relevant regulations should be in place at the beach
20	Managment	Sufficient number of toilet and restroom facilities at the beach
21	Managment	No camping, driving or dumping at the beach
22	Managment	The beach must have limited noise pollution
23	Managment	Management of different users and uses of the beach
24	Managment	Community participation and stakeholder involvement in the beach management
25	Managment	No domestic animals at the beach
26	Information and Education	Information board at the beach and relevant information displayed
27	Information and Education	Bathing water quality shuld be displayed at the beach

Code	Category	Name
28	Information and Education	Satisfaction: The beach is caring a feedback survey on the satisfaction of the beach users on the level of services and the general performance of the green beach

2. Assessments

For the monitoring and evaluation of the pilot actions the consortium agreed on adopting two different tools. The first one (GBM audit sheet) was addressed to the municipalities for evaluation the level of implementation of the model; the second one was addressed to the users of the beaches, in order to receive feedback and information from them.

After the implementation of the 15 tests in the partner countries, the consortium invites the public bodies adopting the model to adopt these tools, as they allow to monitor and check on progress and ensure a constant development of the green beaches.

2.1 Internal assessment – GBM Audit sheet

The municipalities were invited to adopt the audit sheet for checking the level of implementation of the GBM. Thanks to this easy tool, they were able to receive a score, which gave them clear information about their strengths and weak points.

Each criteria has a different “weight”, according to the level or relevance of it for the GMB.

The Green beach model has a total scoring of 850 points. For being defined Green Beach it should reach at least 550 points. The clear weighting scoring allows the classification of the beaches. A beach that has a scoring of 850 - >800 points it is characterized as a Gold Green Beach, a beach that has a scoring of between 800 - >700 points is characterized as a Silver Green Beach and a beach that has a scoring of 700 - >600 points is characterized as a Bronze Green Beach.



You can download the audit sheet template here:

<https://mitomed-plus.interreg-med.eu/index.php?id=7269>

2.2 External assessment – User satisfaction questionnaires

On the other hand, the partners defined also another assessment tool, addressed to the users of the beaches. The rationale behind this choice is that public authorities must listen to the needs, requests and suggestions of the users of the green beaches, in order to allow them to constantly improve the services they provide.

This easy assessment tool is aimed to collect few but relevant information from the users.

You can download the user satisfaction questionnaire at the following link

<https://mitomed-plus.interreg-med.eu/index.php?id=7269>

3. Lessons Learned

What worked well:	Challenging points and solutions provided:	Suggestions for other regions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Great collaboration between partner communities; - The new beaches were greatly appreciated and deemed as “an added value” from their final users; - The cleanliness, eco-friendliness, overall sustainability and good management of the beaches were highly praised by all their users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization of all the relevant actions that need to be done; - The budget at disposal was not enough to create green beaches where there are not any; - The follow-up actions seem hard to be put in place; - The whole bureaucratic process behind public procurements is flawed and makes it harder to achieve the expected results in the given time; - Several indicators, among those listed in the Green Beach model, were impossible to be applied to the destinations selected for implementing Pilot Action 2, where “free beaches”, i.e. unfurnished and unsupervised beaches managed by public bodies, are actually the most common ones. This problem was notified to WP Leader and the partnership will discuss whether to change some of the indicators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Start from a well-designed action plan, where responsibilities are made clear and financial resources adequate to the estimated expenditure - Carry out more surveys and interviews addressing beach users in order to take their suggestions into proper consideration - It would be advisable to design new strategies to attract different users and meet their needs as efficiently as possible.