

Good Practice Cases in Sustainable Tourism Destinations

Smoke free beaches, Baiona (Spain)

ITEMS		DESCRIPTION	PICTURES
Name of the organization submitting this practice case	Name	Coastal and Marine Union EUCC and the Municipality of Baiona (Concello de Baiona)	
	Contact	research5@qualitycoast.info ; secretariat@qualitycoast.info ; turismo@baiona.org	
Name (in EN) of the destination	Baiona		
Administrative Organizations and country	Baiona is a municipality located in the autonomous community of Galicia, Spain, in the province of Pontevedra.		
Tourism Organizations	Turismo Rías Baixas and Turgalicia		
Surface	34.63 km ²		
Resident population	11,337		
Tourism Arrivals	116.357 (2012)		
Tourism nights	568.646 (2012)		
WHO	Name	Municipality of Baiona (Concello de Baiona)	
	Website	www.baiona.org www.turismodebaiona.com	
WHY	The reason for action	Baiona's beaches are a popular summer choice for visitors, being clean water and clean beaches the most important aspects for tourist satisfaction. The majority of the beaches in the municipality of Baiona are frequented by families with children. The harmful effects that second hand smoke have, especially on children, coupled with the environmental impacts of cigarette litter, has made the municipality of Baiona to consider regulating smoking and tobacco use on their beaches. Cigarette butts are the single most collected item each year in beach cleanups worldwide, representing about a third of the beach litter, and they take between 5 and 10 years to degrade. Litter from tobacco products is costly to manage and it has been proven to be toxic, posing serious threats to water quality and marine wildlife.	
	Issues and challenge	The smoke free beach program, being an entirely voluntary scheme with no fines or enforcement, relies on the civility and good will of beach goers. Public and political opinion doubted that this initiative could be realized, and initially beach goers would still throw cigarette butts in the beach even if they smoked them out of it. Information and outreach were essential.	
			 

<p>HOW</p>		<p>In 2012, the municipality of Baiona designated two of its beaches (A Ribeira and Os Frades) as smoke free, the first ones in the autonomous community of Galicia. The success of this initiative has led to include the beach A Barbeira in the list of smoke free beaches in 2013. Green flags indicate that the beach is smoke free. In addition, information boards have been installed at various locations and ashtrays have been placed at beach access points, so beach-goers who smoke can dispose their cigarette butts before they enter the beach. As part of the information and dissuasive campaign, members of the Civil Defense Service and tourism office staffers deliver leaflets and provide information about the advantages of smoke free beaches, as well as other environmentally friendly measures related to the beach, such as responsible use of water in showers.</p>	
<p>RESULTS</p>	<p>Benefits</p>	<p>The main benefits have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beach cleaning: Volunteers clean Baiona's beaches at the beginning of summer, and since the implementation of smoke free beaches the amount of cigarette butts collected has dropped to half of previous years. - Public opinion: The initiative has been greatly appreciated by beach users, mainly by families with children, schools and handicapped organizations that make trips to the beaches. 	
	<p>Recognition and Awards</p>	<p>QualityCoast Gold Award 2013</p>	
<p>REFLECTION</p>	<p>Multiplier effect and transferability</p>	<p>Currently there are no other beaches in Galicia designated as smoke free. The municipality of Baiona is currently considering making all its beaches smoking free in a progressive manner.</p> <p>Only another beach in Spain, L'Escala in Girona, has a non-smoker section. In Gran Canaria an attempt was made to declare the beach of Mogán as smoke free, but opposition local businesses and tour operators prevented this.</p>	
	<p>Lessons learned and critical success factors</p>	<p>The most important factor for the implementation of the smoke free beaches has been public awareness. A remarkable information campaign was undertaken through informative leaflets, press releases and direct information from the Civil Defense service, besides informative signals and ashtrays at the beaches themselves.</p> <p>The main lesson learned has been the realization of the need of having a good level of environmental education, as it is essential for the implementation of new environmentally friendly measures in the tourism model of Baiona. A greater awareness from the public contributes to better results and acceptance of these measures. Besides the better beach experience from users, other benefits include less waste thrown in the beaches and reduced cleaning expenses.</p>	

* Pictures courtesy of J.P. Gómez Pérez, A. Salman and the Municipality of Baiona.