

Best practice 33: Malaga's URBAN programme to improve resident and tourist services, Spain.

Scale: Historical centre

Stage of tourism development: Mature

Main objective: Tourism quality management/ Improve urban quality of life

Categories of effects:

Effects on urban governance

- Integrated urban planning
- Destination management

Effects on quality of life

- Built heritage diversity
- Urban economies

The city of Malaga, a heady blend of Arabic/Andalusian tradition and unfettered tourist hedonism, grew at a spectacular rate between 1960 and 1980, with its population doubling, and swelling even more in the summer. The new housing built during this period, at times with few if any controls, have not been accompanied by a corresponding increase in urban infrastructure and municipal services. Consequently, the very attractiveness of this seaside town had become its main drawback. Urgent action was called for. In 1995, work within the URBAN programme started on giving a facelift to Malaga's historical centre, with projects to develop parks and green areas, refurbish dilapidated buildings and cultivate the town's historical heritage. The main objective was to develop better quality tourism and improve services to residents. Houses in the town centre were restored in their original style - baroque, eccentric, contemporary, modern - and sewage and waste-treatment systems were created, extended and modernised, with three new green areas laid out and two others restored, covering a total area of more than 1 million m² and giving the city a much-needed breath of fresh air. To better inform and advise foreign visitors and tourists, about a hundred officers were selected for special training in foreign languages. Some 85 local shops and businesses were given subsidies to improve their signs and increase safety provisions and customer service. Clothing and book shops, bars and restaurants are using small incentives to put up better signs, improve security and update furniture and information systems. In the process, 75 new jobs were created. Malaga's social services were given special attention, and relocated to a fully refurbished office and the number of staff was increased to improve service. The appearance of Malaga's city centre, enclosed by the nazari, or ancient wall, has been improved considerably through physical regeneration. To sustain this new "look and feel", the URBAN programme also integrated a set of social and economic measures that were implemented together with building renovations. The set of projects has been designated as a "success story" in the European Info regio database.

Source: EU, 2005. Info regio Success Stories Database. Profiles of projects in Europe. Accessible from:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/projects/stories/index_en.cfm

Links:

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