



# “Costa Nostrum Sustainable Beaches”

Private certification protocol “Certification  
for Sustainable Management and Development  
of the Mediterranean Beaches”

## / Region of Crete



### Description of the good practice

Mediterranean beaches constitute an important natural heritage for the region and a worldwide tourism destination. However, although that they are also a highly sensitive ecosystem, until today, no properly structured effort has been made towards their sustainable development and management of the Mediterranean beaches, resulting in a variety of environmental, economic and social consequences: such as biodiversity loss, pollution of coasts from wastes, excess of the beach carrying capacity and many more others.

“Costa Nostrum Sustainable Beaches” (created by Costa Nostrum Ltd), is a private innovative certification standard through the effect of which the sustainable management and development of each beach may be achieved in an objective manner. Is based on specific indicators and criteria, allowing the sustainability classification and assessment of each beach, through an objective grading scale.

It can be applied at all beaches (organized and non organized, public or “private”) and can be adopted by all MUNICIPALITIES – REGIONS (the main partners of Costa Nostrum Ltd), as well as, by hotels & camp-

ing. From 2016 until 2018 Costa Nostrum – Sustainable Beaches protocol have been awarded in two international and one national innovative contest.

It consists of three main pillars: The initial study of the certified beach incorporates suggestions on the sustainable development and management of the beach based its capabilities, infrastructures and its characteristics. Secondly, the beach assessment - certification is following, with 39 objective criteria – indicators (social, economic and environmental). Finally, the third pillar is the worldwide promotion of the beach through the website ([www.costanostrum.org](http://www.costanostrum.org)) and the free mobile app, which is a free online information portal for the Mediterranean tourists, in regard to the infrastructure, classification and characteristics (natural – technical) of all certified beaches, allowing visitors to search and choose for an awarded beach depending on their personal requirements avoiding unnecessary wanderings.

Globally there is NOT any other certification standard for the sustainable management, development, certification & promotion of the beaches.



# Results

The major outcomes of the project are the environmental - sustainable and qualitative improvement of the awarded beaches, resulting firstly in environmental protection, conservation & increase of the awareness of a very fragile ecosystem; coastline, as well as, the improvement of the provided services and therefore, at the improvement of the satisfaction of visitors – tourists - bathers at each certified Costa Nostrum Sustainable Beach.

## Type of waste

The types of waste treated are all types of waste which are “produced” on a beach, recyclable and non recyclable.

## Location

Twelve (12) beaches, in the Region of Crete, from 2016 until 2019.

## Volume treated

It is estimated that more than 107.92 tons of waste treated from 2016 until 2018 at the twelve certified as Costa Nostrum – Sustainable Beaches.

The main aims of the implementation of the Costa nostrum – Sustainable Beaches Certification Standard are two: First of all to change the way people (inhabitants and tourists of Mediterranean coastline) and authorities perceive the Mediterranean beaches in order beaches to become a place where one can escape and relax, while also constituting an axis of economic development and environmental awareness for the coastal communities. Secondly, a healthy competitive environment to be created for each beach management body (public or private), focusing at the sustainable improvement of the beaches, favouring the beaches visitors, the beaches management bodies and the whole costal community around the awarded Costa Nostrum – Sustainable Beaches.

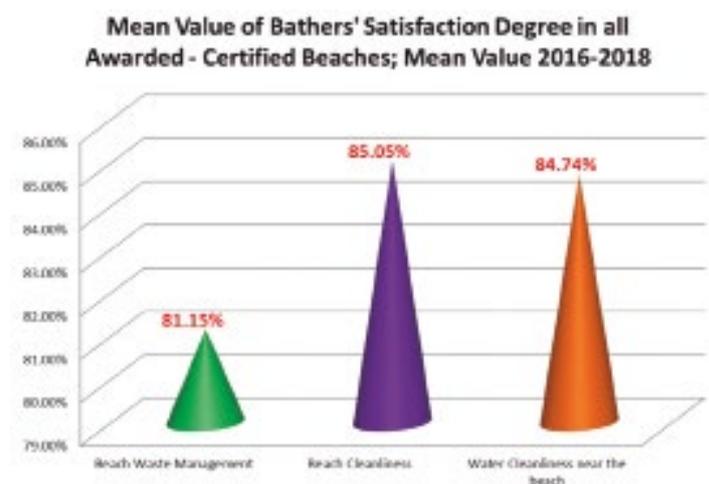
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Informing the bathers about the environmental significance of the coast line, the protected species of the coastal flora and fauna, how to protect and to preserve them, the local myths and traditions of the area, as well as, about the significance & uniqueness of the nearby wetland, a very powerful bond & a very

personalized tourist experience could be achieved with several beneficial results for the environment, the local community and economy and of course for the tourists. This kind of “two-way bond”; bather – beach, is unique & very pioneer & it is the first time worldwide that something like that is trying to be achieved.

Moreover, the beach management body is trying to improve annually the quality of the beach (such as cleanliness of the beach), as well as, of the services provided aiming a higher score & therefore a healthy competitive environment is created, resulting at the sustainable improvement of the beaches; favouring both the environment and the bather. Due to the annually questionnaire survey of each awarded beach, the beach management body knows at almost real time the probable problems that a beach may facing, plus, the things which must be upgraded, improved or change. He also knows what the bathers' needs are and therefore the next year action plan could be scheduled.

Through the statistical analysis of the questionnaire survey that took place to all the awarded – certified Costa Nostrum – Sustainable Beaches (more than 4200 completed questionnaires from the bathers of the certified beaches) from summer 2016 to summer 2018, the bathers' satisfaction concerning the waste management procedures, the cleanliness of the beach, as well as, the cleanliness of the sea waters near the beaches are in very high level, as it can be obtained from the graph below.



Therefore the implementation of the Costa Nostrum – Sustainable Beaches certification standard could be extremely helpful “tool” to every beach management body concerning the sustainable waste management of each awarded beach, as well as, the cleanliness of every awarded – certified beach.

## Further information

[www.costanostrum.org](http://www.costanostrum.org)