

Council creates conditions for essential improvements to hotel infrastructure in La Axarquía to encourage the tourism sector

Alonso meets with mayors and entrepreneurs from the district for the launch of a plan that will invest more than 40 million

The Andalusian Council member for Tourism, Commerce and Sport, Luciano Alonso, stated today that it is "essential and necessary" to improve hotel infrastructure in La Axarquía to encourage tourists to visit this district of Malaga. He also remarked that hotels with four or five stars and other unique establishments should be built alongside the three star facilities that currently exist. Alonso made this statement after holding a meeting today with around 50 political and business representatives from the district of La Axarquía to launch the Costa del Sol-Axarquía Sustainable Tourism Initiative (STI), towards which the Council will provide 24 million euros out of the 43.6 million to be invested.

The Andalusian Councillor for Tourism went on to say that "we are putting our heads together with everyone involved", and pointed out that 21st century tourists demand privileged surroundings. He also said that the combination of sun and sand makes for "spectacular" interior tourism.

31 municipalities will benefit from this plan in La Axarquía, a district that brings together coastline, heritage and nature. This makes it important to recuperate and enhance all of the area's products, as well as adding others to improve the potential of the destination. Alonso explained that among the ideas that came out of the meeting today were the importance of creating new golf courses, more berths for boats, with the construction of a marina at Torrox-Nerja and improvements at Caleta de Vélez, as well as boosting congress and convention tourism and promoting the gastronomy that is offered in all of these areas.

Similarly, equipment and signage will be improved, cultural itineraries will be created for historical centres and the natural surroundings will be developed by increasing the number of tourist offices, promoting new technologies and recuperating footpaths, green routes and lookout points. This definitely represents a "commitment to modernity" which has been needed "for a long time", according to José Domínguez Palma, the president of the Eastern Costa del Sol Commonwealth of Municipalities.

Municipalities and entrepreneurs have from today until the 28th of February to present their projects for this year, although the Council member clarified that the plan, whose agreement will be signed "as soon as possible", will last for four years. He also said that he considers public private partnerships to be a "fundamental aspect".

He stated that any proposals presented must be "solid" and explained that the autonomous administration will provide 70% of the budget for projects that are proposed by public organisations and 60% of the investment for those that are presented by the private sector.

This plan is one of 11 initiatives approved in 2008 as part of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy to improve tourist infrastructure in the district's interior and at its emerging coastal destinations. The other initiatives are being carried out are in the Granada Highlands, the Western coast of Huelva, the Jerez countryside, the Jaén Mining Basin, the Southern Sierra in Seville, the western part of Almería and the Pedroches Valley in Cordoba; along with the extra-provincial "Guadalquivir on Horseback", "Thermal Villages" and "Central Towns" projects.