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**EMAS**

VERIFIED  
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MANAGEMENT

# SUCCESS STORY

La Ballena Alegre

September 2024

Environment



# La Ballena Alegre

La Ballena Alegre is a renowned campsite in Sant Pere Pescador. Founded in 1976, the campsite has 810 pitches and 315 bungalows and extends over 24 hectares. It offers a unique holiday experience in a natural environment. La Ballena Alegre is known for its commitment to sustainability and attracts guests who value environmentally friendly practices, making it a model for sustainable tourism.

**Industry:** Tourism

**Size:** 25 employees

**Date:** EMAS registered since 2002



## What is your approach towards sustainability?

La Ballena Alegre's approach to sustainability is comprehensive and deeply integrated into every aspect of its operations. The campsite's strategy involves engaging all stakeholders—suppliers, employees, and clients—in creating an immersive sustainable experience. It is built on the principles of regenerative tourism, focusing on the economic, natural, social, and cultural aspects of sustainability in accordance with the European Inside Model and the Responsible Holidays Model. Social and cultural sustainability is particularly emphasized through the integration of social inclusion programs into its operations, ensuring that everyone, regardless of ability, feels welcome and included. Additionally, La Ballena Alegre actively supports local sports teams and social entities, contributing to the overall well-being of the local community.

This commitment is reflected in the adoption of EMAS certification in 2002, which has driven the campsite to continually improve its sustainability efforts. Over the years, the campsite has been recognized with several awards, including the European Solar Prize in 2020, the EMAS award in 2021, and the ADAC Most Sustainable European Camping site in 2022. These prizes emphasize the campsite's commitment to work for the planet instead of just consuming its resources.



## Why did your company join EMAS?

La Ballena Alegre sought a certification that would validate its commitment to sustainability. EMAS was chosen for its rigorous evaluation process, which not only highlights the current state of the organization but also continually challenges it to improve. With over 20 years of EMAS certification, La Ballena Alegre was one of the first campsites to achieve this milestone. The certification has driven the campsite to push for innovative solutions and to continuously seek ways to enhance its sustainability efforts.



## Main results so far?

In accordance with the EMAS guidelines the campsite's commitment to sustainability extends to its collaboration with local suppliers, supporting the regional economy and reducing the carbon footprint associated with transportation. For example, organic yogurt is sourced from a local farm just 20 kilometers away, and meat products are supplied by a farm that practices sustainable forestry and extensive livestock management.

Another major achievement is in the conservation of the dune ecosystem that surrounds the campsite. The dunes act as natural barriers against coastal erosion and provide a habitat for various species, some of which are endangered. La Ballena Alegre has implemented several protective actions, such as installing informative signage and restricting access to sensitive areas, to maintain and enhance this crucial natural environment.

The campsite has measured its CO2 footprint for 2022 and invested in tools to recalibrate this measurement annually. A comprehensive CO2 reduction action plan and other projects to compensate for the CO2 footprint are planned. The adoption of EMAS has provided La Ballena Alegre with various incentives, including tax reductions for environmental quality distinctions and the EU Ecolabel, fiscal deductions for special environmental taxes, and reduced fees for water usage. These incentives have contributed to overall cost savings and supported the campsite's sustainability initiatives.

Moreover, La Ballena Alegre offers the "Modelo Ballena Tour" a circular tour of the campsite supported by an app that allows visitors to experience firsthand the main sustainable services and the care taken for the environment. The tour offers detailed explanations at ten specific stops, covering crucial areas such as water management, energy systems, local suppliers, and biodiversity conservation. This interactive experience not only educates guests on the sustainability efforts of the campsite but also enhances their understanding of the importance of regenerative tourism.



## What do you have in mind for the future?

Looking ahead, La Ballena Alegre plans to continue its sustainability efforts by regularly monitoring and reporting its carbon footprint to ensure transparency and accountability. The campsite is planning to carry out further projects, including the development of a regenerative farm and the implementation of water accumulation projects to restore damp zones in the area.

The regenerative farm, a key component of La Ballena Alegre's broader vision for regenerative tourism, will be built on 30 hectares next to the campsite. This farm will feature a biointensive vegetable garden, an agroforestry system, and holistic livestock management practices. It will produce premium-grade ingredients for the campsite's restaurants and markets. Additionally, the farm will play a crucial role in offsetting the campsite's carbon emissions through carbon farming practices. The farm will also serve as a center for education and research in regenerative agriculture, offering training for local farmers, hosting school visits, and providing a venue for scientific research.



To further promote sustainability, La Ballena Alegre has launched several campaigns, including "Responsible Holidays," "Responsible Suppliers," "Responsible Staff," and "Responsible Customers," each targeting different aspects of sustainable practices. Starting in 2024, the "Conscious Holidays" campaign will further reinforce La Ballena Alegre's commitment to sustainable tourism. This initiative aims to transition from sustainability to regeneration by 2030, highlighting the significant role EMAS plays in enhancing sustainability within the tourism sector.

If you are in the tourism sector and want to make your hotel or restaurant more environmentally friendly, we offer [interesting resources on EMAS and sustainable tourism](#). Become a part of the community and the interactive map where EMAS-registered organizations with environmentally friendly services, accommodation, and activities are listed - accessible to prospective guests!

How to exchange on best practices:

<https://greenbestpractice.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>

How to join EMAS:

[https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/eco-management-and-audit-scheme-emas/join-emas\\_en#join-emas](https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/eco-management-and-audit-scheme-emas/join-emas_en#join-emas)

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