

# STRATEGIC DIAGNOSIS OF THE SITUATION OF THE TOURIST DESTINATION CASTLE – CALETA DE FUSTE.

*Date: December 2025*

We think canary,  
We are transforming the Canary Islands.

**INDEX**

1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	4
3. DETAILS ON THE METHODOLOGY USED .....	11
4. STRATEGIC DIAGNOSIS.....	12
4.1. Context and general description of the destination.....	12
4.1.1. Context and evolution.....	12
4.1.2. Population and housing dimension .....	17
4.2. Problems and challenges identified.....	21
4.2.1. Lack of public cleaning and waste collection services .....	23
4.2.2. Lack of greater public safety and surveillance.....	31
4.2.3. Lack of maintenance of urban space.....	35
4.2.4. Paralysis in the reception of urban areas.....	47
4.2.5. Misalignment between population and City Council .....	50
4.2.6. Destination Identity Problem .....	52
4.2.7. Gap between tourism brand and destination reality.....	54
4.2.8. Lack of strategic planning .....	56
4.2.9. Need for improved capacity of the City Council.....	60
4.2.10. Need for greater economic and commercial revitalization of the area.....	62
4.3. SWOT Analysis .....	63
5. RECOMMENDATIONS .....	67

# 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's global tourism competitiveness landscape, established destinations face the imperative challenge of evolving towards management models that harmonize economic profitability with the quality of life of their residents and the sustainability of their public environment. The *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste area*, a key economic driver for the municipality of Antigua and a cornerstone of tourism on the island of Fuerteventura, has reached a point of maturity that requires a thorough reflection on its current situation and its future development model.

This **strategic diagnosis** promoted by GESPROTUR arises as a response to the persistent complaints and demands conveyed by business and neighborhood associations and groups regarding a potential deterioration of the public space of this tourist destination, with consequences affecting the rest of the island.

Therefore, it was necessary to conduct a technical and impartial analysis that rigorously identifies the potential problems of the destination.

The validity of this diagnosis lies in its [REDACTED] as it has been built primarily on the perception of the main stakeholders of the destination who operate and live daily in the territory, systematizing their concerns and faithfully and neutrally reflecting the current climate of opinion and the challenges that the community identifies as priorities.

Furthermore, the diagnosis reveals that citizen discontent has extended to the destination's **identity**, with a symbolic divide existing between the tourist name 'Caleta de Fuste' and the deeply rooted name 'El Castillo,' used by its residents. This duality is not a minor issue, as it has led to formal demands for a change in name, a phenomenon that demonstrates the erosion of the local population's sense of belonging and connection to the current tourism development model.

In total, [REDACTED] have been identified that define the current situation of *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste*. These challenges range from critical and urgent issues, such as the **lack of cleaning services sized to meet actual demand** or the **perceived deficit in public safety**, to aspects such as the **disconnect between the brand image and the operational reality of the destination**.

This diagnostic study is not an end in itself, but rather aims to serve as the **necessary technical foundation upon which to build a strategic roadmap** that will enable the transformation and improvement of the destination. Its objective is to serve as a reference tool for all decision-making institutions (City Council, Island Council, and Government of the Canary Islands), facilitating a vision that will allow citizens' demands to be transformed into solutions. These solutions will not only lead to the success of *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste as a tourist destination*, but will also guarantee the quality of life and a sense of belonging for its residents.

Throughout this document, and given the "identity dimension", the destination will be referred to as *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste*.

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document constitutes a **strategic diagnosis** of the *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste area*, a location that combines tourism specialization with a growing residential function within the municipality of Antigua. The study arises from the need to analyze the gap identified between the destination's competitive positioning and the current state of its infrastructure and public services.

Its development involved a **participatory methodology** aimed at **collecting and analyzing the real needs of the destination**, based on the experience and perceptions of those who operate and they live together daily in the enclave.

This fieldwork involved **more than 20** key stakeholders from the public, private, and social sectors in the region. This qualitative approach allows the diagnosis to reflect the feelings of the local community, complemented by quantitative data on context and tourism volume to quantify the identified challenges.

The document does not constitute a tourism strategy or an action plan, but rather a knowledge base that allows for understanding the current situation of the destination and highlighting perceptions of local actors and guide future public and private decisions for the strengthening of the destination.

Based on the participatory process, 10 main challenges facing the destination have been identified, and these are briefly structured in the following table:

Main Challenges	
Challenge	Brief Description
<b>Lack of services public cleaning and waste collection services.</b>	This challenge encompasses all the problems related to cleaning and waste collection in a situation where the quality, frequency and coordination of waste collection and urban cleaning are not guaranteed, scaled to the needs of the destination, directly affecting its image.
<b>Lack of greater public safety and surveillance.</b>	It focuses on the growing sense of insecurity among those who live and work <i>in Castillo – Caleta de Fuste</i> , mainly due to crime hotspots and insufficient security personnel (Local Police and Civil Guard), which affects the tourist and residential experience, especially at night.
<b>Lack of maintenance of urban space.</b>	It focuses on the visible neglect and deterioration of key infrastructure such as sidewalks, gardens and street lighting, which deteriorates the quality of life of residents and the overall image of the tourist destination.
<b>Paralysis in the reception of areas urban planning.</b>	It refers to the legal stagnation in the acceptance of developed urban plots, preventing the City Council from assuming the provision and maintenance of public services essential in them.
<b>Misalignment between population and City Council.</b>	Agents and institutions perceive a misalignment of objectives, vision and priorities between the main agents of the destination and the City Council, which makes it difficult to coordinate and to establish medium and long-term objectives and actions.
<b>Problem of identity of destination.</b>	The core of the challenge is the absence of a differentiating narrative and a unique character that defines <i>Castillo-Caleta de Fuste</i> : on the one hand, the resident does not feel identified and the visitor perceives a diffuse identity.



Main Challenges	
Challenge	Brief Description
<b>Brand gap tourism and the reality of the destination.</b>	It focuses on the existing asymmetry between the desired image of quality (towards a higher-value tourist) and the market's actual perception of the destination.
<b>Lack of strategic planning.</b>	Many stakeholders perceive a lack of real medium and long-term planning (5-10 years), which prevents proactively addressing crucial issues such as the evolution of the tourism supply and the provision of resources and sizing of infrastructure and services.
<b>Need for a better capacity of City hall</b>	This challenge identifies the structural and administrative limitations that affect the City Council's ability to execute projects, focusing on the need to streamline bureaucratic processes and address the shortage of human and technical resources needed to manage the growing demand for projects and services in the destination.
<b>Need for a greater economic dynamism and commercial area.</b>	It encompasses challenges such as creating an attractive complementary commercial offer, organizing recreational and social activities, and integrating the island's product to enrich the visitor experience.

### Lack of public cleaning and waste collection services.

Street cleaning and waste management is the **most critical and urgent challenge** for *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste*, and the most widely agreed-upon negative point among all stakeholders consulted during the assessment. Citizens and businesses perceive a **persistent visual deterioration**, with constant accumulations of garbage in public areas, overflowing containers, and overflowing litter bins.

The business sector reports that efforts to modernize their establishments lose impact in the face of a degraded public environment, which **hinders the repositioning of the destination** towards higher value-added segments and acts as a **direct disincentive to private investment**.

As evidence of the seriousness of this deficiency, it has been noted that several hotel complexes are forced to clean the surrounding public sidewalks with their own staff to mitigate the bad image that the lack of municipal service generates at the entrances to their establishments.

Currently, the service is perceived as merely reactive, **operating only in the morning shift**, and lacking a plan that adapts to the high intensity of use of an enclave that has reached record occupancy figures.

This problem has a structural root linked to the situation of the current **cleaning and waste collection contracts** : originally designed in 2017, **they have been expired since August 2024** and operate under a regime of "administrative extension" or precarious provision that has been extended on successive occasions.

This legal instability blocks any possibility of investment in machinery or technology and **keeps the workforce understaffed**. In practice, while the municipality has 14 workers, the *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste* area typically has only about five, of whom only one or two seem capable of direct manual cleaning—insufficient technical and human resources for the demands of an international tourist destination.

In addition to the contractual limitations, there is an operational complexity arising from the **division of powers**, The City Council is responsible for cleaning and organic waste collection, while the Island Council manages selective waste collection. Within this management framework, stakeholders at the destination have expressed concern about the accumulation of waste outside the designated containers (known as 'rebozo'), noting that addressing this excess waste does not appear to be fully integrated into daily operations.

Added to this is a factor of shared responsibility linked to **antisocial behavior**: on the one hand, a segment of the commercial sector that **lacks authorized waste management companies** and overloads public containers with cardboard and packaging; and on the other hand, a **lack of awareness among citizens** and residents who do not always respect deposit rules and schedules, exacerbating the pressure on the system.

To reverse this situation, **the City Council is working on a new set** of specifications that will unify cleaning and waste collection services and increase the annual investment from €1 million to €2.3 million. This new contract includes plans to increase the workforce from 22 to 35 employees, upgrade machinery with GPS systems to monitor service compliance, and formally assume responsibility for cleaning up excess waste outside of containers.

Additionally, the installation of seven **surveillance cameras to penalize illegal dumping is being processed**. However, there is considerable **uncertainty regarding the implementation timeline**; although the administration estimates the start of the new service for spring 2026, previous administrative experience suggests that final implementation could be delayed until the end of that year or the beginning of 2027, making it necessary **to consider urgent reinforcement measures** during this transition period.

#### **Lack of greater public safety and surveillance.**

Public safety has become a growing concern for residents and business owners due to rising crime and a **perceived intermittent police presence**. Recurring **offenses** include drug trafficking in run-down areas, hotel robberies, and knife attacks.

This climate of impunity is reinforced by the detection of groups already identified by the community who **repeatedly act with** apparent impunity, **severely damaging the peaceful, family-friendly image** of the destination. The feeling of vulnerability is so profound that some sex workers have begun acquiring personal protection devices ("anti-rape") due to the perceived risk on their nighttime commutes, **exacerbated by the lack of lighting** in pedestrian areas and the neglected state of places like the local government office and shopping centers.

One of the identified causes is the **critical shortage of local police officers**, which, according to those interviewed, has lost ten officers in the last decade. Currently, of a theoretical staff of 19, only 15 are available for patrols throughout the municipality, making it impossible to cover night shifts. Furthermore, the location of the operations center in the town of Antigua creates a **"police presence gap" of up to three hours during shift changes** in the coastal area.

Given this, the officers consider a permanent operational base in *Castillo – Caleta de Fuste* necessary, along with an increase in staffing levels to reflect the actual residential and tourist activity. Official data

This urgency is underscored by an increase in crime in Fuerteventura, which has even led some officers to propose the use of private security in the town center as a measure alternative.

### Lack of maintenance of urban space.

The state of public spaces reflects a critical disconnect between institutional management and the reality perceived by the community. While the municipality highlights significant investments aimed at improving the environment, the private and residential sectors agree that these actions are insufficient. According to those interviewed, the improvements fail to compensate for a **widespread feeling of neglect** in much of the town center, where the lack of consistent maintenance degrades the image of the destination and the quality of life of its residents.

Regarding **lighting**, the deficiency is evident in areas that are left in total darkness, impacting both aesthetics and safety. This situation is largely due to a lack of resources, which makes it impossible to respond quickly to breakdowns such as replacing light bulbs.

Meanwhile, the **landscaping and gardening** show **clear signs of neglect**, with deteriorated palm trees and dry green areas. This deterioration is directly **linked to the precariousness of the current contract** (the pruning service is included in the waste management contract, which has expired and is operating at a bare minimum), resulting in **reactive and insufficient management** that only responds to complaints or specific incidents.

Regarding the **beach and the coastal environment**, the assessment reveals a similar dichotomy. Despite public sector investments in equipment and furnishings, a **negative perception** persists concerning the lack of accessibility and the overall condition of this key asset.

Criticism focuses on the **poor quality of the sand** and the **lack of maintenance of the coastal facilities**, which, together with the **loss of the Blue Flag distinction** for being incompatible with its quality standards (due to the presence of camels as a commercial activity on the beach), **damages the international image** and generates a feeling that the seafront is not up to the standard of excellence that the destination intends to project.

### Paralysis in the reception of urban planning areas.

Currently, the town of *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste* has several developed and occupied areas that have not been formally integrated into municipal management. **Because the legal process of transferring ownership has not been completed, the City Council does not hold title to these urban assets**, which defines the current framework for providing maintenance, cleaning, and conservation services. these areas.

This situation **significantly affects large developments associated with golf courses**, such as the Fuerteventura Golf Resort and the Salinas Golf Resort, as well as other areas such as the commercial buildings of Costa de Antigua and the third phase of Montaña.

Given this reality, two distinct positions are identified:

**From the municipal perspective**, it is explained that current urban planning legislation conditions the handover of developments on them having all their essential services fully operational and integrated into the public system. Under this premise, **it is not considered viable to partially assume the maintenance of infrastructure while elements of private management persist**, such as

This occurs with the supply of water in certain sectors or the legal status of wastewater treatment plants in areas under bankruptcy proceedings.

**From the private and residential sectors**, there is a perceived **need for public intervention** in response to the deterioration of urban spaces in areas that, while not municipally owned, are used by the public. Therefore, residents are requesting that the administration **explore options for partial transfer** of basic services. Residents of these areas emphasize that **they pay taxes** such as property tax (IBI) and garbage collection fees, and thus **expect that their surroundings will receive direct public maintenance** to ensure the quality of the area.

#### Misalignment between population and City Council.

This challenge highlights a trust gap between local stakeholders and the administration. Although **institutional dialogue is close and frequent**, there is **deep frustration with the low implementation rate**, where proposals do not translate into tangible results.

This disconnect is exacerbated by a feeling of **unequal treatment compared to the rest of the municipality**. Residents of *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste* perceive that, despite being the main economic engine, they do not receive proportional investment in maintenance and services compared to the "towns in the interior" of the municipality.

#### Destiny identity problem.

The diagnosis highlights the **absence of a shared identity narrative** that distinguishes *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste* from other communities on the island. During the participatory process, the **duality of names between "El Castillo"** (the traditional name and the one most closely associated with the residents) **and "Caleta de Fuste"** was discussed. (a well-established brand in the tourism market). This coexistence of names reflects **two distinct sensibilities regarding the territory**, the unification of which would help to project a more cohesive and aligned narrative between the local community and external promotion.

Beyond its sun and sand offerings, the interviews suggest that the destination could **explore greater diversification of its sporting offerings**. Although golf is already established as a key differentiator, opportunities have been identified to complement this positioning with other sports and active leisure activities, especially those linked to the surrounding environment.  
maritime.

Furthermore, the town center is **losing its historic visual character as a "green oasis"** due to the deterioration of its gardens and palm trees, which diminishes its scenic value against the arid backdrop of Fuerteventura. Restoring these elements and **activating currently underutilized resources, such as the San Buenaventura Tower**, is crucial to preventing the enclave from being perceived as a generic destination lacking its own unique character.

#### Gap between tourism brand and destination reality.

The diagnosis identifies a **lack of coherence between the "promotional promise" and the actual urban experience**. While the hotel sector has evolved towards 4- and 5-star standards, the public space has not kept pace with this level of quality. This dissonance leads to a worsening of the visitor's experience upon leaving the hotel, as they encounter **deteriorating infrastructure, a lack of maintenance**, and a **perceived decline in commercial offerings**.

This disconnect creates a **reputational risk** for *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste*'s positioning. Tourists attracted by the promotional narrative arrive with expectations that the surroundings don't meet, **negatively impacting online reviews and customer loyalty**. Industry experts warn that this gap compromises the destination's competitiveness compared to other locations that do offer comprehensive quality throughout their environment.

#### Lack of strategic planning.

The growth of *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste* has lacked a roadmap defining a long-term vision, with a reactive management model prevailing instead. Local stakeholders perceive that previous Modernization Plans have not had a real impact on the transformation of the town center, noting that the **lack of planned development** limits the City Council's ability to anticipate needs and compete for infrastructure investments.

This lack of planning translates into a shortage of public infrastructure (cultural, social and sports) that diversifies the offering beyond sun and beach, as well as a public transport system whose frequencies and bus shelters **have not kept pace with the growth of the town center**.

Furthermore, there is a demand for **more collaborative governance**: although dialogue exists, it is informal and lacks permanent forums to align the administration with the business and social sectors. **Without a common strategy, the destination projects a fragmented image** that generates uncertainty and hinders the consolidation of a cohesive tourism model.

#### Need for improved capacity from the City Council.

Destination management is hampered by **low operational and administrative capacity**, which slows down the response to the needs of the local community. The business and residential sectors indicate that **the City Council requires greater reinforcement of its technical resources** to manage tenders, licenses, and basic services with the agility demanded by a leading tourist destination.

Likewise, the **need for key instruments** is identified, such as the Anti-Fraud Measures Plan, whose implementation would strengthen the administration's capacity **to attract external financing** and allow access with full guarantees to the European fund programs necessary for the destination's investments.

To advance this modernization, a **digital transformation is considered a priority, one that simplifies bureaucracy** and expedites procedures. Local stakeholders view this administrative strengthening as an essential step to restore agility in project execution and ensure that public services respond effectively to the municipality's actual needs.

#### Need for greater economic and commercial revitalization of the area.

The diagnosis identifies a progressive **deterioration and aging of commercial spaces**, especially in the core areas, which **limits the complementary offering to accommodation**.

This **lack of dynamism** encourages tourists to remain in hotels, reducing spending in the surrounding area and reinforcing an uninspiring urban image. A "domino effect" is observed, where the lack of renovation of businesses **weakens the vitality of the destination and its local economic impact**.

On the other hand, there is a **demand for inclusive revitalization**, as residents perceive that current activities **are geared exclusively towards foreign tourists**. A **comprehensive agenda** is being called for.

**that integrates the local community** through cultural and social activities, allowing the enclave to function as a living center for all and not just as a product for tourist consumption.

*Castillo - Caleta de Fuste* boasts a number of structural **strengths that explain** its consolidation as one of Fuerteventura's main tourist hubs. These include its **strategic location** on the island's east coast, its proximity to the airport, and the **low seasonality** of tourist demand. The destination has historically positioned itself around a **family tourism model**, complemented by the **golf segment**, and plays a central role as an **economic engine** for the municipality of Antigua, with its stable and multicultural **residential base**.

However, these strengths coexist with **weaknesses that affect its current** competitiveness, including the **deterioration of public spaces**, limited **local security**, administrative difficulties related to the **acceptance** of certain housing developments, and a **gap between the destination's promotional image and the actual visitor experience**. Added to this are a **weakened complementary commercial offering** and a **poorly cohesive territorial identity**.

Externally, the destination has significant **opportunities to advance its modernization**, particularly through **access to financing** for infrastructure improvements, sustainability, and digitalization, as well as through the growth of **long-stay** and **active tourism**. However, **challenges** persist, including **dependence on the British market**, competition **from more modernized destinations**, pressure **on public space**, and **reputational risks** stemming from failure to address identified shortcomings.

To ensure the future of the enclave, **it is recommended to move** from the current assessment to a **local strategy** that serves as a medium- and long-term roadmap. As a necessary complementary measure, it is recommended **to implement an emergency plan** for cleaning and maintaining the town center while the new municipal service contracts are being finalized. Furthermore, the City Council should be provided with **external technical assistance** to expedite essential procedures, such as the approval of the Anti-Fraud Plan required to attract European investment.

It is also essential to strengthen operational capacity by **ensuring full staffing of the Local Police force** and the creation of a **technical working group to expedite the handover of pending housing developments**. All of this must be framed within a collaborative governance model, where the **City Council leads ongoing forums** with the business and social sectors, ensuring that strategic decisions are made with the consensus and participation of the residents of the area.

This document marks the starting point for a necessary renewal that guarantees that *Castillo – Caleta de Fuste* consolidates its position as a benchmark destination, balancing its competitive success with agile urban management and a quality experience that meets the expectations of those who live, invest and visit the enclave.

### 3. DETAILS ON THE METHODOLOGY USED

The development of this strategic diagnosis is primarily and essentially based on a This active  
listening forms the foundation upon which the analysis is structured, guiding the analysis and defining the hierarchy of the challenges identified.

This methodology places active listening to the main stakeholders of the destination as the starting point on which the rest of the diagnosis is built, allowing the local stakeholders themselves to guide the direction of the work by sharing their perceptions, realities and experience.

In total, more than 20 stakeholders participated in **13 interviews and working groups**, including associations and collectives, local and island institutional representatives, companies, and citizenship.

It is essential to clarify that the central objective of this work is to collect and systematize the perceptions of those who have participated, documenting the feelings of the actors who live and operate daily in the destination, without carrying out a technical audit of the comments received, since the task of this diagnosis is not to examine or verify the factual veracity of each individual perception, but to faithfully capture the current climate, identifying the **most relevant challenges and problems**.

Castillo - *Caleta de Fuste*.

Building upon this qualitative foundation, a complementary **quantitative analysis** is incorporated to assess the physical and socioeconomic realities of the destination. This integration of perspectives allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the scale of some of the identified challenges.

Ultimately, the articulation of both approaches ensures that the study's conclusions not only objectively describe the destination, but also prioritize those challenges whose urgency is felt and expressed by the community itself, thus laying the foundations for a future strategic roadmap that faithfully reflects the reality perceived in the territory.

## 4. STRATEGIC DIAGNOSIS

This chapter structures the analysis of the current situation of *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste* in two complementary sections, necessary to understand the integral reality of the destination.

First, the **context and general description of the destination** establishes the objective and descriptive reality of the enclave, covering aspects such as its historical evolution, its dual toponymic identity, its geographical reality, and the demographic and tourist dimension that defines the core. This section allows us to assess the "physical capacity" and the territorial framework within which the development takes place.  
activity.

Next, the analysis delves into the core of the diagnosis: **the problems and challenges identified**.

This section is the direct result of the participatory process and is built by prioritizing the voice of local actors, collecting, systematizing and prioritizing the problems as they are perceived and felt by citizens, the business fabric and social agents around **10 main challenges**.

It is, therefore, a snapshot of the current climate of opinion and the real concerns of those who live and work daily in the destination, complemented by the integration of other quantitative sources of information when they allow for a better understanding of the problems.  
identified.

### 4.1. CONTEXT AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE DESTINATION

The purpose of this section is to situate the **Castillo – Caleta de Fuste destination within its geographical, historical and functional reality**, offering a comprehensive view of its evolution and current characteristics.

First, its strategic location and the geographical conditions that have favored its consolidation as a tourist enclave are addressed, as well as the historical elements that have shaped its identity, marked by a particular toponymic duality.

The population and housing dimensions of the town center are then analyzed, examining how its urban morphology and mixed-use (residential and tourist) character impact the provision of public services and land management. Finally, the scale of tourist activity is explored, focusing on the strain it places on local infrastructure and its economic role within the island as a whole.

This contextualization allows us to understand the evolution of the destination, identify the factors that condition its present and lay the foundations for the analysis of the strategic challenges that are developed in the following chapters.

#### 4.1.1. Context and evolution

The *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste* area is one of the **main economic and tourist hubs of the island** of Fuerteventura. Strategically located on the central-eastern coast of the municipality of Antigua, its development has historically been linked to its **privileged topography**. The existence of a natural bay, sheltered from the prevailing winds, allowed, from its beginnings, the consolidation of a unique family-oriented tourism and nautical leisure model on the island.

This strategic role is framed within the island's tourism model, where Fuerteventura structures its activity around four large coastal centers: Corralejo - El Cotillo in the north, Costa Calma and Jandía in the south, and *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste* in the central area . These enclaves concentrate most of the accommodation and economic activity linked to tourism.

This prime location is further enhanced by **excellent connectivity** , reinforcing its competitive appeal. Proximity to Fuerteventura Airport (FUE) not only facilitates a massive and constant flow of visitors but also positions the town as a top choice for the international market by drastically reducing travel times and optimizing the arrival experience.

However, after decades of sustained growth under this sun and beach model, the destination is now in a phase of maturity that demands a transition from extensive growth towards a qualitative management of its public spaces, its infrastructure and excellence in its services.

The geographical and tourist identity of the town is defined by the uniqueness of its **double toponym**: "*Caleta de Fuste*" and "*Castillo*." This duality is not accidental, but rather reflects the overlap of two crucial historical moments: its function as a natural harbor and its defensive necessity against the maritime incursions.

**The original toponym, "Caleta de Fuste,"** refers to the natural harbor or bay that served for centuries as one of the main landing points and strategic anchorages on the eastern coast of Fuerteventura. The calm and convenient waters made it a frequent port for maritime traffic throughout the centuries.

Historical records document the existence of this enclave, which was known as a "fishing boat bay." Its presence has been documented on maps as old as that produced by Leonardo Torriani at the end of the 16th century, where it appears as *Caleta de fustas* .

Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, the spelling of the term showed remarkable variability, continually alternating between *Fuste* and *Fustes*.

There is an etymological hypothesis suggesting a possible Guanche origin for "*Fuste*," relating it to words meaning 'port,' 'landing place,' or 'coast.' If this theory is correct, the name "*Caleta de Fuste*" would represent a semantic redundancy, stemming from the confluence of terms from different languages. Furthermore, chronologically, the name *Fuste* or *Fustes* was initially given to the cove, and the subsequent military fortification would later take its name from it.

The **second name, "El Castillo" (The Castle)**, comes from the strategic military structure built specifically to protect this natural harbor: the Tower of San Buenaventura. This fortification was not the result of civilian planning, but rather of the urgent defensive need following the devastating English privateer invasions of 1740.

The defense of the island became a priority for the Spanish Crown and the mission of designing and overseeing the construction of these defenses was entrusted to the military engineer Claudio de Lisle<sup>3</sup> .

---

<sup>1</sup> Fuerteventura Tourism Board (2023/24). *Analysis and Diagnosis of the tourism situation*.

<sup>2</sup> ULPGC University Library. *Guanchismos: Fuste*. <https://hdl.handle.net/11730/guatc/1350>.

<sup>3</sup> Spanish Association of Friends of Castles. *Caleta de Fuste Tower*. <https://www.xn--castillosdeespa-lub.es/es/content/torre-de-caleta-de-fustes>.

After a thorough inspection of the island, De Lisle selected Caleta de Fuste as one of the two key points (along with El Cotillo) to build a defensive tower.

This fort, with its round floor plan and simple, functional design, stood as a central element of the landscape and eventually gave its name to the immediate surroundings. Over time, "El Castillo" (The Castle) became established as a popular name and a particularly strong symbol of identity among the local population.

This heritage value was officially recognized in 1949, when the tower was declared a Historical Artistic Monument, a designation that today corresponds to the category of Cultural Interest Asset (BIC).

Since then, the castle has served as a symbolic anchor of the place and as the main historical reference point of the town center.

Unlike other areas of Fuerteventura, *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste* was not a large, traditional population center. Until well into the 20th century, the area lacked a consolidated urban fabric, and its activity was sporadically linked to fishing, anchoring, and coastal surveillance.

The real transformation occurred with the **rise of tourism at the end of the 20th century**, when the territory was conceived as a planned residential and holiday space, taking advantage of both its

Central location as well as the favorable conditions of its bay. **The modern core is designed**

**practically from scratch**, integrating historical names into its identification and **guiding its development to tourism activity**.

It is at this moment, in order to give a recognizable destination "brand", that it seems that the decision was made to recover the name of *Caleta de Fuste*.

One of the most significant milestones of this period was the **creation of the *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste artificial beach***, approximately 800 meters long. It was one of Fuerteventura's first artificial beaches, designed to offer a calm and sheltered bathing area, especially **suitable for family tourism**. This infrastructure was **key to consolidating the destination's position** and differentiating it from other, more exposed coastal locations.

**The hotel expansion** in *Castillo – Caleta de Fuste* occurred rapidly and steadily during the early stages of the area's tourism development. One of the most representative examples of this evolution is the Barceló Fuerteventura Castillo complex, where the historic San Buenaventura Tower was visually and physically integrated into the hotel's design. From the 1980s onwards, this 18th-century fortification (declared a Site of Cultural Interest) became surrounded by the resort's swimming pools, an image that symbolizes the transformation of this coastal enclave into a tourist destination.

Subsequently, the 1990s and early 2000s were marked by the consolidation of *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste* as a comprehensive destination offering more than just sun and sand. Two infrastructures decisively shaped this period: the marina and the golf courses.

- **The marina** allowed for a diversification of offerings to include nautical activities, maritime excursions, and leisure activities linked to the sea. With over a hundred berths and capacity for vessels up to 15 meters in length, it became a complementary attraction to tourist accommodation.

**The introduction of golf** represented a significant leap forward in the destination's positioning, attracting a segment of sports tourists with greater purchasing power. Castillo – Caleta de Fuste became the island's main enclave with this type of infrastructure, reinforcing its visibility in international markets.

As a result of this process of consolidation and tourist expansion, the *Castillo – Caleta de Fuste* area gradually developed into a large urban area, divided into different zones with tourist, residential, and mixed uses. This structure does not correspond to a compact unit, but rather to a series of urban developments that were carried out in phases, resulting in a fragmented but functionally integrated morphology.

This consolidation as a comprehensive tourist destination brought with it rapid urban expansion, which structured the territory into distinct zones. The **resulting urban layout** follows a sector-based development model, **combining tourist, residential, commercial, and leisure uses.**

The following image presents an interpretive approach to the system of “functional areas” that currently make up *Castillo – Caleta de Fuste*. The main nuclei that comprise the urban fabric of the enclave are identified, classified according to their predominant uses and their role in shaping the area's character:

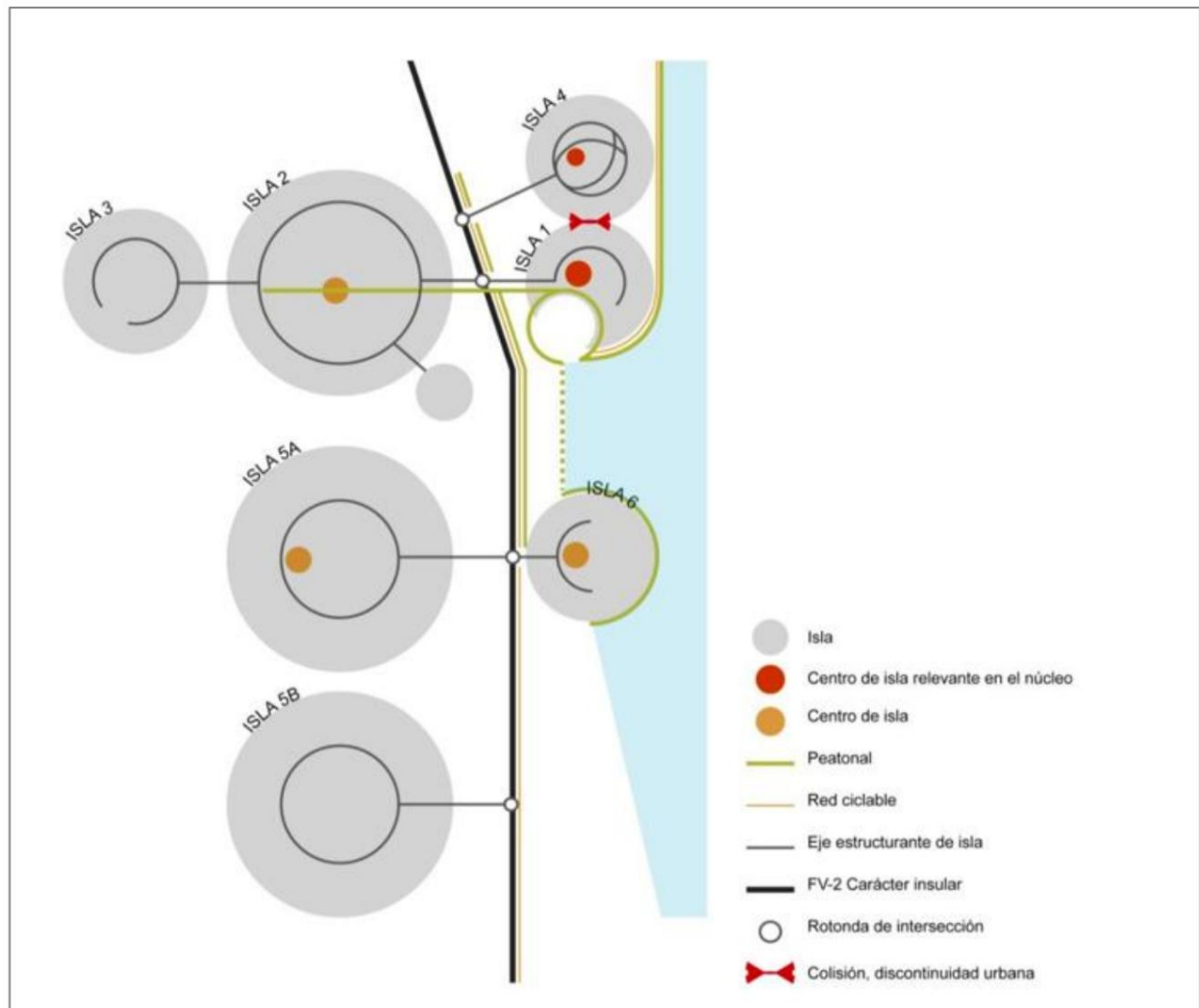


Figure 1. Internal zoning of the Castillo – Caleta de Fuste core.

Source: *Modernization, Improvement and Increase of Tourism Competitiveness Plan of Caleta de Fuste (II PPMIC)*.

- **Urban Centre:** The backbone of the town, structured around the Castle beach and the San Buenaventura Tower, with a high density of commercial, accommodation and services.
- **Montaña Blanca:** Elevated area with panoramic views, of emerging residential character, with potential for low-density tourist accommodation or green infrastructure.
- **FV-2 Road:** Main access road, connecting the town center with the rest of the island territory, but also creating an urban barrier between sectors.
- **Golf Course:** Sports and leisure area with associated urbanization, representing a commitment to quality tourism and product diversification.
- **Hotel zone:** Coastal strip where the main tourist resorts are concentrated, along with commercial areas.

Furthermore, the following image allows you to visualize in a schematic way the urban structure of the core of *Castillo – Caleta de Fuste*, represented by a system of “functional islands” that groups and organizes the urban space according to its uses, centralities and links with the main infrastructure.



In this scheme, each island represents a built-up area with its own identity, linked to a greater or lesser extent to the overall transportation system and tourism dynamics. The islands are connected by the FV-2 highway (which acts as a structuring axis of the island's character) and by a pedestrian and cycling network that links the different urban sectors.

The coastline, marked in blue, delimits the seafront where the main tourist functions are concentrated.

The figure also highlights the existence of activity centers within each island (orange circles), as well as the most relevant urban discontinuities (red arrows), which indicate points of spatial friction or rupture in the continuity of the urban fabric.

The image, therefore, not only allows the interpretation of the layout of the urban center from a territorial perspective, but also facilitates the identification of gaps, deficient connections and opportunities for improvement in the morphological structure of the destination.

After several decades of sustained growth, Castillo – Caleta de Fuste has reached a stage of **tourism maturity that brings with it a series of structural challenges**. The model that allowed its consolidation as a competitive enclave in the sun and beach market is beginning to show signs of exhaustion, both due to the deterioration of some of its accommodation facilities and the **growing strain on its public spaces and municipal services**.

Urban expansion has generated a fragmented morphology, with notable differences in the level of consolidation and maintenance between areas, and with areas still pending municipal acceptance.

This is compounded by a sustained strain on basic urban services. The combination of a significant number of residents with high tourist pressure tests infrastructure and administrative capacities that, in many cases, were designed for a much smaller population.

In economic terms, the destination continues to maintain a remarkable capacity to attract visitors and a well-established accommodation sector, but there are signs of weakening in the perceived quality of the urban environment, the cohesion of the commercial fabric, and the overall experience offered to visitors. At the same time, the destination's identity narrative appears diffuse and misaligned, with tensions between promotional positioning and the everyday realities of the urban space.

In this scenario, **the purpose of this document is to offer a strategic diagnosis of the current situation of the destination, with the aim of identifying its main challenges and guiding possible lines of improvement.**

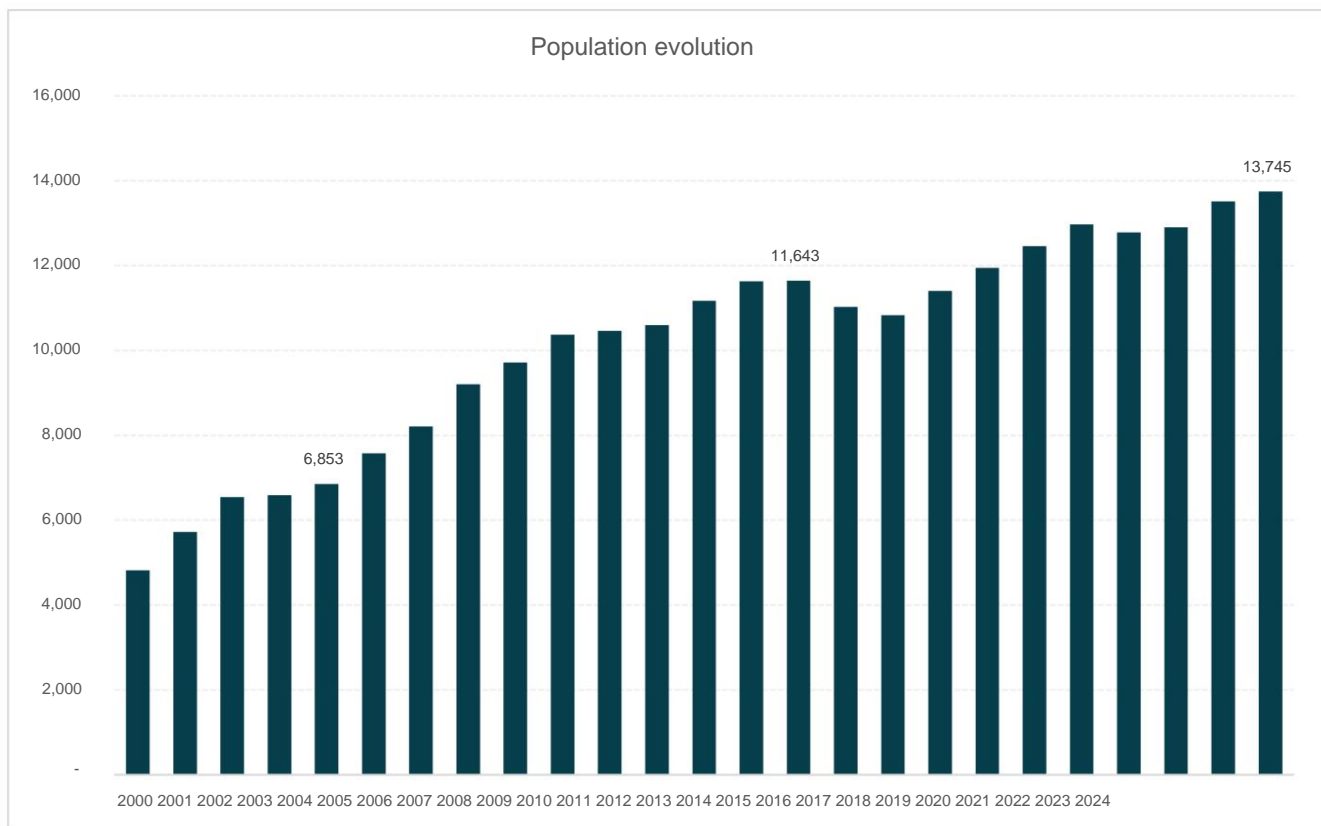
#### 4.1.2. Population and housing dimension

The structure of a destination is defined by the composition of its **accommodation and residential capacity, as well as by the magnitude of its tourist flow**. Understanding the evolution of the municipality of Antigua, under whose jurisdiction the *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste area is located*, is fundamental, since its demographic trends are intrinsically linked to the tourist and residential development of the area.  
locality.

Over the past two decades, the **municipality of Antigua** has experienced **sustained and significant population growth**. In 2000, the municipal population was approximately 4,800 inhabitants. This number more than doubled in just a decade, reaching a total of 11,643 residents in 2014. This trend continues to this day, with a projected population of [number missing] in 2024.

registered population of 13,745 people.

Overall, Antigua now represents about 11% of the total population of Fuerteventura, consolidating itself as one of the main demographic centers of the island.



Source: ISTAC (2024). Own elaboration.

Within the municipality, the *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste* area and its adjacent residential areas (such as Costa Antigua and the Fuerteventura Golf Club Urbanization) **account for 62% of the total population**; that is, **more than half of the people who live in Antigua reside in this tourist-residential hub**. This figure is even more significant considering that it far exceeds the population of the municipality's administrative capital, the town of Antigua, which has a population of 2,557.

This growth is directly linked to the consolidation of Castillo – Caleta de Fuste as

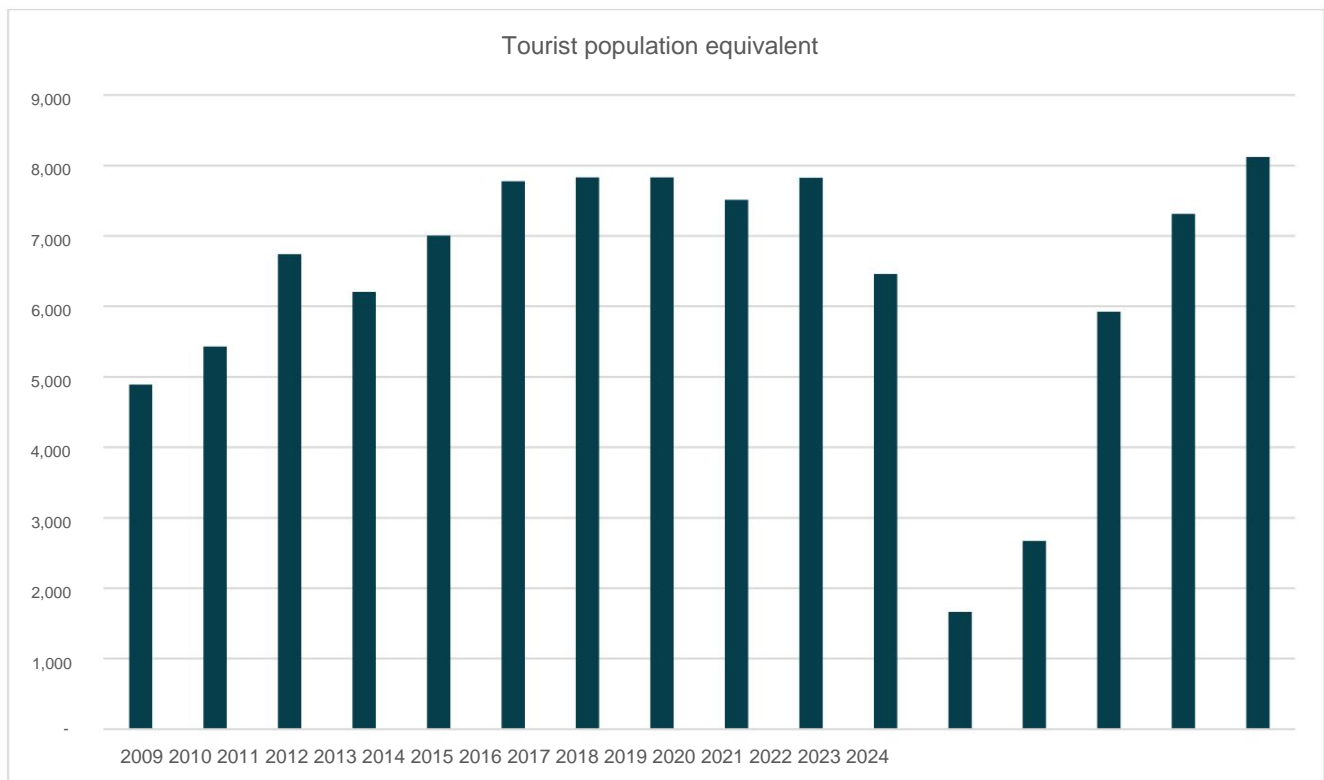
Antigua is an attractive area for permanent settlement by people of different nationalities. As of 2024, Antigua's population is balanced between Spanish residents (7,011 people, 51%) and foreign residents (6,734 people, 49%). This proportion is one of the most balanced in the archipelago and reflects the town's cosmopolitan character. By comparison, the island average for Fuerteventura in terms of foreign residents is around 38.4%.

This demographic profile not only adds cultural complexity to the social fabric of the destination, but also reinforces its characteristic as a space of coexistence between resident population and temporary visitors.

The **tourist presence in Castillo – Caleta de Fuste** is quantified using the **Tourist Equivalent Population (TEP)**, an **indicator that estimates the average number of daily visitors in the area**. This parameter allows us to understand the actual strain on infrastructure and services, considering both the resident and transient populations.

The historical data for the PTE shows **progressive growth** since 2009, the year in which 4,890 daily visitors were recorded. From that point on, the trend was positive and constant, reaching a pre-pandemic peak in 2015 with 7,832 daily visitors. Between 2015 and 2019, the

The volume remained stable at around 7,800 tourists per day. This trend was abruptly interrupted by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with sharp declines in 2020 and 2021. However, the destination has experienced a rapid recovery, and **in 2024 it reached its all-time high** with a daily average of 8,120 tourists.

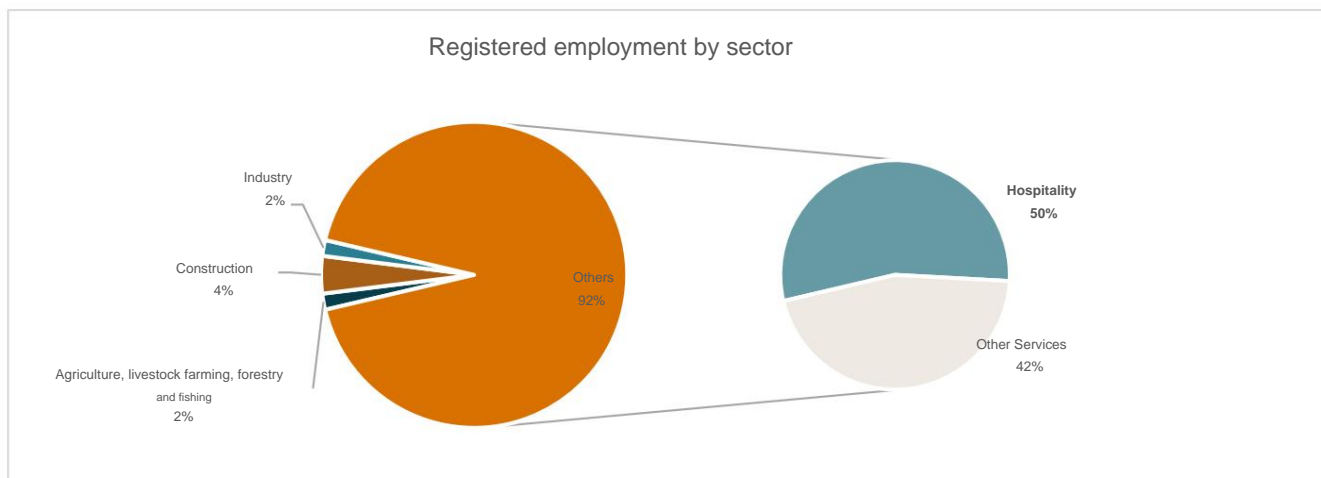


Source: ISTAC (2024). Own elaboration.

This figure places *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste* among the most intensively tourist-oriented destinations. The pressure on basic services, mobility, waste management, and daily life is intensified by the combined presence and coexistence of both populations: one permanent, the other transient. This phenomenon is key to understanding the urban and planning challenges of the destination, as it places a **constant structural load** on infrastructure originally designed for a much higher volume.

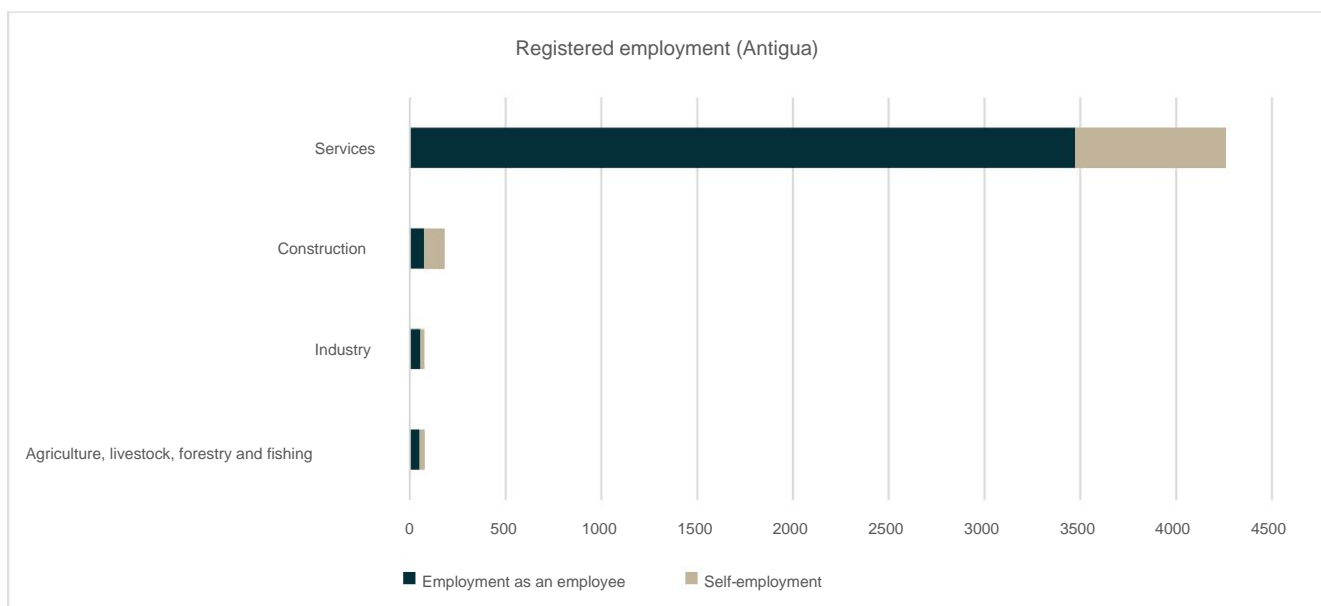
minor.

The **economic analysis of the municipality** reinforces the idea that tourism specialization is not just a vocation of the territory, but a structural reality. According to registered **employment data** from the third quarter of 2025, Antigua has a total of 4,595 jobs, of which 4,258 (93%) belong to the service sector. Within this group, **the hospitality industry** (which includes accommodation and restaurants) accounts for 2,322 jobs, equivalent to **51% of the total**. This proportion **far exceeds the island average (37%)** and reaffirms the central role of *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste* as the municipality's employment engine.



Source: Registered employment by economic activity sector (CNAE-09). Municipalities of the Canary Islands and quarters. ISTAC (2025 Third Quarter). Prepared by the author.

From a business perspective, the specialization is equally clear. Of the 361 companies registered in the municipality, 317 belong to the service sector (87.81%). The presence of other activities such as construction, industry, or agriculture is negligible, and their contribution to employment and the local economy is marginal.



Source: Registered employment by economic activity sector and employment status. Municipalities of the Canary Islands. ISTAC (2024). Prepared by the author.

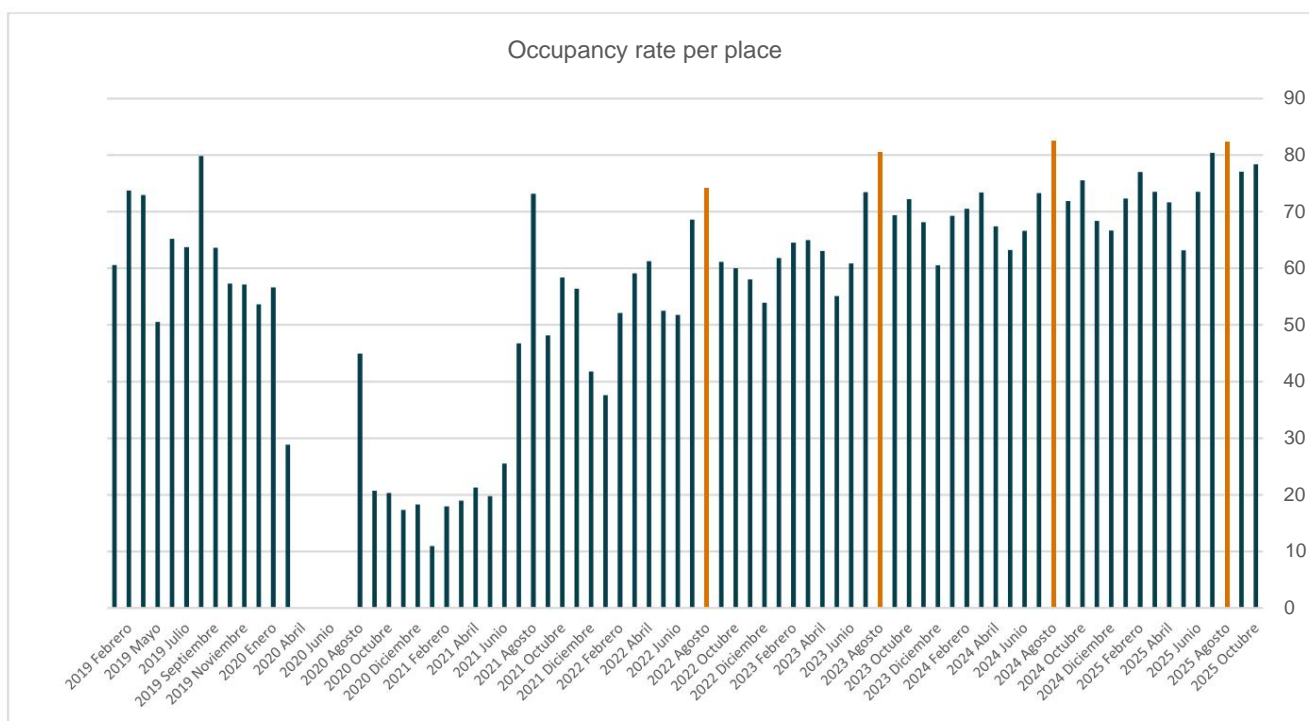
This level of structural dependence implies a high vulnerability to potential fluctuations in tourism demand. Any decline in occupancy or air connectivity can have immediate effects on employment and the economic stability of the resident population.

Another key element for understanding the scale of the destination is **accommodation options**.

**Caleta de Fuste** offers a diverse range of hotels, resorts, and holiday apartments. This variety allows it to cater to different market segments, from family tourism to sports tourism and extended stays.

The evolution of hotel occupancy in the municipality of Antigua shows a particularly favorable pattern: despite the expected summer peaks (marked in yellow in the historical data), **seasonality is low**. The **occupancy rate** remains consistently above [percentage missing].

**65%** for most of the year. This stability reinforces the destination's economic sustainability by generating a continuous flow of income and employment.



Source: *Occupancy rate per place*. ISTAC (2024). Own elaboration.

Operational continuity and low seasonality are strengths of *Castillo – Caleta de Fuste*, which has managed to position itself as a destination with activity practically all year round, unlike other enclaves with marked temporal fluctuations.

Based on the elements described—sustained population growth, the consolidation of a diverse resident community, high annual tourist occupancy, economic specialization in the service sector, and an urban structure in the process of maturing—a scenario emerges that combines consolidated strengths with aspects that invite deeper reflection on the

development model.

In this context, this diagnostic study aims to deepen our understanding of the current situation in the area, gathering perceptions, experiences, and assessments from various stakeholders. The following section presents, in a structured manner, the main challenges identified, with the purpose of guiding future decisions that will strengthen urban quality, community life, and tourism competitiveness in *Castillo – Caleta de Fuste*.

## 4.2. PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

The core of the diagnosis lies in **prioritizing and synthesizing the identified challenges** that affect the development and competitiveness of *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste*. The structure presented below summarizes the **main challenges** validated through the participatory process, where the perceptions of local stakeholders are integrated with quantitative evidence to offer a comprehensive view of the destination's reality.

Each challenge represents one or more problems and challenges related to the same theme, and a total of

ed:

Main challenges		
Code	Challenge Name	Challenge Description
4.2.1.	<b>Lack of services public cleaning and waste collection services.</b>	This challenge encompasses all the problems related to the cleaning and waste collection of the destination, in a situation where the quality, frequency and coordination of waste collection and urban cleaning, scaled to the needs of the destination, are not guaranteed. directly affecting their image.
4.2.2.	<b>Lack of greater public safety and surveillance.</b>	It focuses on the insufficient number of security personnel (Local Police), which generates greater insecurity and affects the tourist and residential experience, especially at night.
4.2.3.	<b>Lack of maintenance of urban space.</b>	It focuses on the visible neglect and deterioration of key infrastructure such as sidewalks, gardens and street lighting, which deteriorates the quality of life of residents and the overall image of the tourist destination.
4.2.4.	<b>Reception paralysis of urban planning areas.</b>	It refers to the legal stagnation in the acceptance of developed urban plots, preventing the City Council from assuming the provision and maintenance of essential public services in them.
4.2.5.	<b>Misalignment between population and City Council.</b>	Agents and institutions perceive a misalignment of objectives, vision and priorities between the main agents of the destination and the City Council, which makes it difficult to coordinate and to establish medium and long-term objectives and actions.
4.2.6.	<b>Identity problem of destiny.</b>	The core of the challenge is the absence of a differentiating narrative and a unique character that defines Castillo-Caleta de Fuste: on the one hand, the resident does not feel identified and the visitor perceives a diffuse identity, causing low visitor loyalty.
4.2.7.	<b>Brand gap tourism and the reality of the destination.</b>	It focuses on the existing asymmetry between the desired image of quality (towards a higher-value tourist) and the market's actual perception of the destination.
4.2.8.	<b>Lack of strategic planning.</b>	Many stakeholders perceive a lack of real medium and long-term planning (5-10 years), which prevents proactively addressing crucial issues such as the evolution of the tourism supply and the provision of resources and sizing of infrastructure and services.
4.2.9.	<b>Need for improved capacity of City hall</b>	This challenge identifies the structural and administrative limitations that affect the City Council's ability to execute projects, focusing on the need to streamline bureaucratic processes and address the shortage of human and technical resources needed to manage the growing demand for projects and services in the destination.
4.2.10.	<b>Need for a greater economic revitalization and commercial area.</b>	It encompasses challenges such as creating an attractive complementary commercial offer, organizing recreational and social activities, and integrating the island's product to enrich the visitor experience.

### 4.2.1. Lack of public cleaning and waste collection services

This challenge addresses one of the areas that seems to generate the most conflict in the destination (being the main complaint of business associations) and that has obtained the greatest consensus during the participatory process: street cleaning and waste management.

Based on the interviews conducted, this section is structured into four complementary aspects:

- 1) **Citizen perception** as the starting point for the diagnosis;
- 2) the **situation and scope of the cleaning and waste collection contracts**, identified as the main structural factor of the problem;
- 3) the **division of powers** in waste management between the City Council and the Island Council; and
- 4) the **institutional initiatives** that are proposed to reverse the situation.

This order follows a logic of progressive diagnosis: from what is perceived on the street, to the structural causes that explain it, the conditions that aggravate it and, finally, the responses that are being designed.

#### Citizen perception

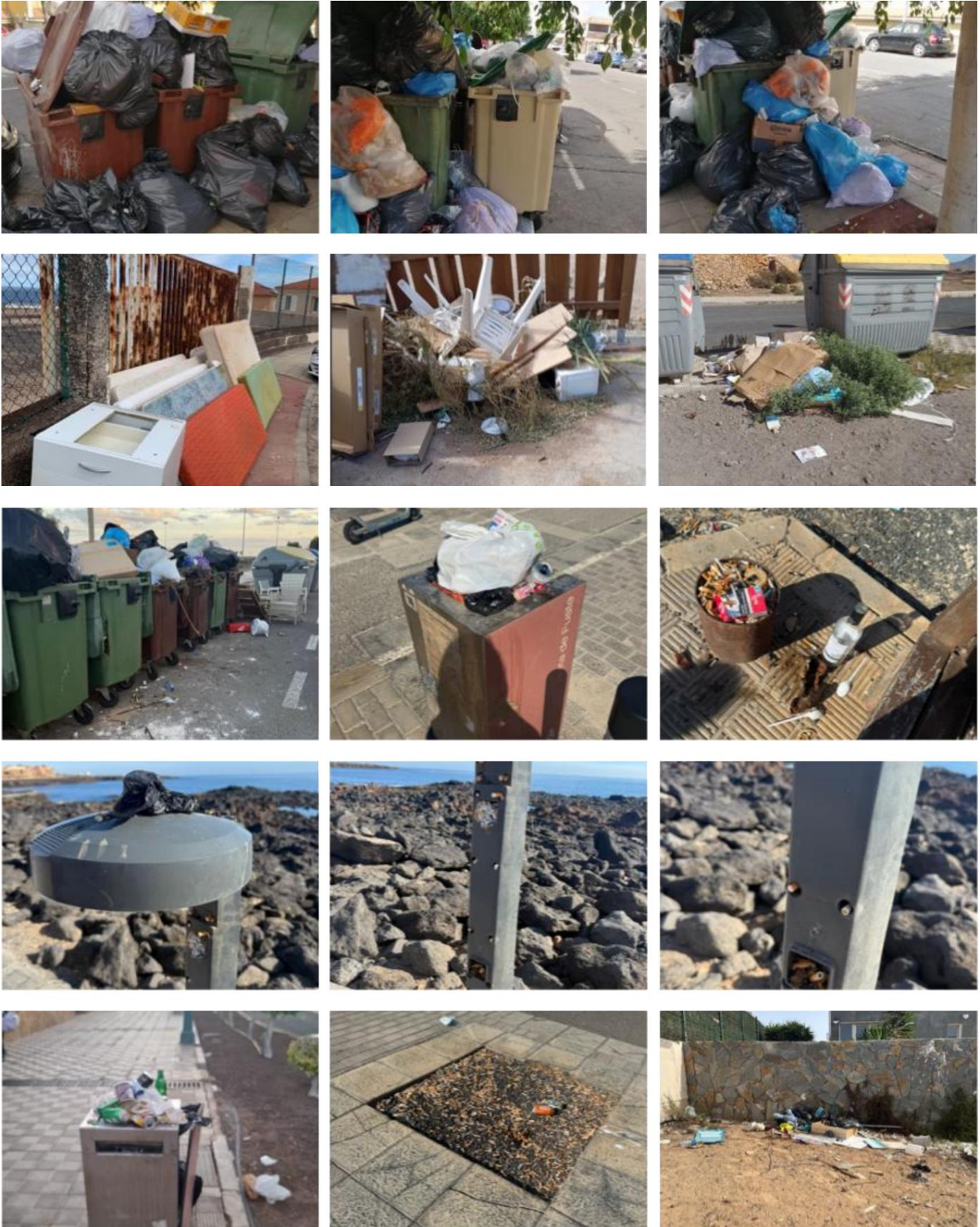
During the participatory process, **street cleaning and waste management** were repeatedly identified as the **most consensus** among participants in the assessment, emerging as the element that most impacts local residents, the everyday image of the destination, and the visitor experience from their first contact with the urban environment.

The interviews describe an environment where **accumulated dirt and waste** affect not only containers and litter bins, but also sidewalks, promenades, and green spaces. The accumulation of garbage in public areas, especially in the evenings and on weekends, is frequently mentioned, as is the overcrowding of designated collection points. This situation, exacerbated by street furniture showing visible signs of rust or lack of maintenance, projects (according to the interviewees) an **image of decay** that clashes with tourist expectations and the standards associated with a destination that aspires to be competitive.

Next, images provided by interviewees are included, which visually illustrate this collective perception about the accumulation of garbage in public spaces and reinforce the qualitative diagnosis carried out during the participatory process.

Figure 1 (Set). Evidence of deficiencies in waste management and urban cleaning.





From the business sector, it is suggested that this scenario acts as a **disincentive to investment**. The lack of a well-maintained and clean urban aesthetic is perceived as a factor that reduces the willingness to undertake renovation processes of the accommodation and commercial facilities, since the owners consider that their economic efforts to modernize establishments lose impact if the immediate public environment remains degraded.

This misalignment between private efforts and the quality of public space contributes to the stagnation of the destination's overall quality, **hindering its repositioning** towards higher value-added segments. For visitors, cleanliness is interpreted as a basic indicator of quality, so its absence tends to overshadow other positive attributes of the location.

There is also a widespread feeling of disaffection towards municipal management, based on the perception that *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste* is not receiving the attention it deserves as the municipality's main economic engine. Both the private sector and the public express that the coastline (understood as Antigua's most valuable territorial asset in economic terms) is vulnerable due to a **lack of institutional support**. Furthermore, there are references to a lack of active protection of the coastline in aesthetic, environmental, and operational terms.

This discontent is expressed daily through complaints from residents via various channels, both formal (through written submissions from community groups to the City Council) and on social media or through direct communication with local officials. Interviews repeatedly mention **overflowing trash cans, waste outside of containers**, and areas with irregular garbage collection, creating a persistent perception of neglect.

One of the most discussed issues is the **operational limitations of the** current service. It's reported that cleaning is only carried out during **a single morning shift**, with no service in the afternoon or evening, despite the area's dynamic nature and high volume of tourist activity. According to reports, the effectiveness of the morning cleaning diminishes within a few hours, leaving the tourist and residential area without adequate coverage for the volume of waste generated throughout the rest of the day.

This structure is described as **clearly insufficient** for an area with the characteristics of *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste*: few staff members are available, they operate within a short timeframe, and waste collection is very infrequent. In fact, they state that many hotels are forced to clean the surrounding public sidewalks with their own staff due to the unsanitary and dirty conditions (a claim corroborated by these same hotels).

Many cleaning actions are also perceived as **reactive maintenance** (based on complaints or incidents), and not based on preventive planning or technical criteria for proper sizing of cleaning and waste collection.

Additionally, and especially from an institutional perspective, the existence of **antisocial behavior** is mentioned (waste left outside containers, unauthorized dumping, and misuse of collection points). One of the main comments from the City Council is the existence of businesses (especially shops) that **do not have an Authorized Waste Management Company**, as required by *Law 7/2022 of April 8, on waste and contaminated soils for a circular economy, and local ordinances*; that is, they do not have an accredited private collection service for their non-domestic waste (especially cardboard and commercial packaging), which leads them to throw it into municipal containers, saturating the public system.

According to many of the officials interviewed, **the City Council is not applying the sanctions** that the law allows it to impose on these offending companies (both by being present on-site when they carry out unauthorized dumping and by inspecting the existence of contracts with their Authorized Waste Management Companies). For its part, the City Council states that it has initiated the

hiring surveillance cameras to identify these violating companies and be able to apply sanctions.

However, many agents emphasize that this factor is considered an aggravating factor, but not the main cause of the problem, pointing to the **existing structural limitations of the cleaning and waste collection service**, specifically its contracts, considered undersized from the beginning (it does not adapt to either the population volume or the demands of a highly exposed tourist environment) and precarious at present (since it has already expired).

This widespread critical perception constitutes the starting point for analyzing the structural factors that explain the current situation of the service, beginning with the contractual framework that regulates street cleaning.

### Status and scope of cleaning and waste collection contracts.

During the participatory process, it has been identified that the problem of cleaning and waste collection in *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste* is not only due to circumstantial factors, but responds to a **set of structural limitations linked to the service provision contracts** and their operational sizing.

The Antigua City Council has two contracts for cleaning and waste collection services, whose main characteristics are as follows:

- The contract for **"STREET CLEANING SERVICE AND CLEANING OF OWNED PREMISES MUNICIPAL"**, with file number 325/02-2017 on the State Procurement Platform (PLACE), which we will refer to simply as the "cleaning contract". The relevant milestones of this contract are as follows:

or Contract file of 28/09/2017 published with a Base Tender Budget (PBL) without taxes of 1,525,551.44 euros and an estimated value of 2,288,327.16 euros, awarded on 09/05/2018 for 1,449,270.96 euros to the company STV Gestión, SL and formalized on 07/09/2018 with a duration of 4 years and the possibility of extending for two more years.

or the 1st extension agreed in plenary session on 28/07/2022 and the 2nd extension agreed on 30/09/2023.

or In light of the termination of the contract, on 29/09/2024 the continuity of the service was agreed, as stated in decree no. 1532/2024 "for the period necessary until the formalization of the new contract, estimated to be four months (September to December) without prejudice to the fact that if the new contract is not awarded within said period, a new agreement for the continuity of the service may be agreed."

One particularity of this **continuity of service "on a precarious basis"** due to the termination of the contract includes, according to the City Council decree, that "the payment of expenses actually incurred and duly accredited to the Administration, which are essential for the proper performance of the contract. For this purpose, a report and technical assessment of the service actually provided will be required."

This extension of the service has been continued on up to five occasions, ending the last continuation approved in January 2026.

- The contract for **“URBAN WASTE, HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND PRUNING COLLECTION SERVICE IN THE TM “DE ANTIGUA”**, with file number in PLACE “325/03-2017” referred to in simplified terms as “waste collection contract”. \_\_\_\_\_

or Contract file of 28/09/2017 published with a Base Tender Budget (PBL) without taxes of 3,246,503.26 euros and an estimated value of 4,869,754.89 euros, awarded on 09/05/2018 for 3,084,178.12 euros to the company Urbaser SA and formalized on 07/09/2018 with a duration of 4 years and the possibility of extending for two more years.

or the 1st extension agreed in plenary session on 28/07/2022.

On 04/04/2023, a modification to the contract was approved to include the implementation of organic fraction for an amount of €288,624.10.

or 2nd extension agreed on 09/30/2023.

or In light of the termination of the contract, on 29/09/2024 the continuity of the service was agreed, as stated in decree no. 1532/2024 “for the period necessary until the formalization of the new contract, estimated to be four months (September to December) without prejudice to the fact that if the new contract is not awarded within said period, a new agreement for the continuity of the service may be agreed.”

One particularity of this **continuity of service "on a precarious basis"** due to the termination of the contract includes, according to the City Council decree, that "the payment of expenses actually incurred and duly accredited to the Administration, which are essential for the proper performance of the contract. For this purpose, a report and technical assessment of the service actually provided will be required."

This extension of the service has been continued on up to five occasions, ending the last continuation approved in January 2026.

First, the participatory process indicates that the current cleaning service schedule is clearly insufficient for the characteristics of the town center. \_\_\_\_\_ morning, with no

service during the afternoons or evenings. This limited schedule prevents adequate coverage of public spaces, especially in an area with high tourist, commercial, and residential activity throughout the day. According to the interviews, the effect of the cleaning efforts is neutralized a few hours after they are carried out, leaving the area unmaintained during peak usage times.

This **operational gap** generates a rapid accumulation of waste, overflowing bins and a proliferation of critical dirt points, especially in the evenings and on weekends.

It is described that cleaning and waste collection is perceived as a reactive system, based on complaints or specific incidents, instead of being carried out normally according to the actual demand of the territory.

These limitations are exacerbated by the \_\_\_\_\_ of available human resources . Currently, the cleaning service has a total staff of **14 employees**.

**For the entire municipality of Antigua**, they are responsible for both street cleaning and the maintenance of public buildings, schools, and sports facilities. In practical terms, this means that the *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste* area typically has only five staff members, of whom only one or two can dedicate themselves to direct manual cleaning, as the rest must perform complementary tasks such as washing streets or emptying trash cans.

**This allocation is described as insufficient** for a center with sustained population and tourist growth, and becomes especially critical during exceptional events or situations, as there are no additional checkpoints or reinforcement capacity.

The participatory process revealed three main reasons for this current insufficient allocation: (1) a contract whose design from the outset in 2018 had **insufficient resources and over-provisioned functions**; (2) the **high population** and tourism growth of *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste*; and (3) the impossibility of updating the characteristics of the contracts to the current reality.

In this context, it is mentioned that the cleaning service company had submitted **proposals for extended shifts and additional staff that had not received a response** from the City Council.

Adding to this situation is the precarious legal and administrative status of the existing contracts. Both contracts are in a state of "precariousness" because they ended in August 2024 and have since been subject to extra-contractual "continuities" that also cause administrative difficulties. As specified in the contractual characteristics described at the beginning of this section, payment of the contractor's invoices "will require a report and technical assessment of the service actually provided," complicating the processing by the City Council's technical staff.

This **contract status prevents any** short- or medium-term planning. Both institutional and operational sources indicate that legal and budgetary instability eliminates the possibility of investing in machinery, technology, or expanding human resources, keeping the destination stuck in an outdated management model.

The inability to adapt shifts and resources to the reality of the destination (where activity does not stop at midday) reinforces the persistence of the dirt, consolidating an inertia of **visual deterioration that compromises the tourist competitiveness of the enclave**.

#### Division of powers in waste management.

On the other hand, waste management is conditioned by a scenario of shared responsibilities: while the **City Council is responsible for the collection of organic waste** and street cleaning, **selective collection (cardboard, glass and packaging) corresponds to the Island Council**.

This separation of responsibilities means that **collection is handled by two different institutions**, which requires **constant coordination** that, according to feedback from some stakeholders in the participatory process, does not always translate into smooth operations.

Among the contributions gathered is a **controversy about the compatibility between existing containers and the renewal of the collection fleet**, especially in the case of glass.

---

On the one hand, it is reported that the renewal of the fleet with **side-loading trucks**, promoted by the Cabildo, may have generated **compatibility difficulties with current container models**.

From this perspective, it is described that the lack of synchronization between technical decisions and installed street furniture hinders the effectiveness of the service and delays waste removal in certain areas.

points.

Other contributions argue that side loading represents a **significant improvement in terms of efficiency and collection speed**, provided there is a progressive adaptation of the container system and effective collaboration to harmonize technical criteria.

This lack of synchronization is positioned as a factor that erodes the final effectiveness of the global system, without necessarily being a failure in the technology or the means employed, but in the coordination of the deployment.

Both the **Island Council and the City Council acknowledge the need to implement improvements** in their respective services:

- On the one hand, the Island Council hopes to implement improvements in its area of responsibility with the **new contract for the selective waste collection service, which they expect to be active in March-April 2026**. In addition, in response to the needs and complaints conveyed by business associations, resources have been activated in advance to increase the number of selective waste **containers in the Castillo area as soon as possible**.

*Caleta de Fuste.*

The City Council, for its part, also states that it already has a new tender document, with which it expects to have more and better resources for cleaning the municipality from March-April 2026, as detailed in the following section.

However, **other participants indicate that this document is still in draft form**, and more time than estimated will be needed for the approval of the file and the tendering process.

Another point identified in the interviews is the **of the “rebozo”, that is, the waste that is** They accumulate outside of containers when these become saturated or are used incorrectly. In this

In this respect, a gray area of responsibility is evident, as the island contract does not appear to explicitly address the removal of these surplus materials, and municipal staff lack sufficient operational capacity to handle it systematically. This ambiguity regarding who should act in these cases leads to accumulations that, according to reports, ultimately become chronic sources of filth.

This administrative inefficiency is compounded by a shared responsibility related to **commercial and residential civic behavior**. It has been identified that part of the problem stems from the **improper management of cardboard waste** by some businesses, where the lack of specific management protocols and the (such as **authorized agents** per establishment) exacerbates the **strain on the system**. Contributions gathered also mention the lack of oversight, coupled with limited supervisory capacity, as an additional factor contributing to the deterioration of public spaces.

Finally, one aspect that both institutions highlight is that the division of powers is clear, and **each corporation cannot exceed its area of action, for which it is necessary to continue exercising coordination and communication that they mutually describe as fluid.**

## Institutional initiatives

Faced with this problem, and as mentioned in the previous section, given the precarious nature of the cleaning and waste collection contracts, the Antigua Town Council began **drafting a** **of specifications to consolidate the two existing contracts**, designed to **address the accumulated** shortcomings. This document, currently under development, aims to reverse the current model, which is considered outdated, and implement a service aligned with the actual characteristics and needs of *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste* and the municipality as a whole.

One of the main proposed changes is budgetary. The new tender will include a **substantial increase in the annual budget**, rising from an estimated investment of €1 million (between the two current contracts) to €2.3 million. This financial commitment from the City Council aims to bring the service up to the standards already applied by other municipalities of similar population size and tourism volume, such as Puerto del Rosario, allowing for a more ambitious quality standard in street cleaning, waste collection, and the maintenance of public facilities.

The new contract would include a significant increase in staff, **from 22 to 35 employees**, allowing for coverage of the entire municipality and public buildings without diverting resources from the tourist center. The staffing plan also includes the hiring of at least two street sweepers specifically for *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste*.

It also plans a comprehensive renewal of the vehicle fleet, including the **incorporation of new trucks** and support machinery, as well as an increase in the frequency of routes and an **increase in the number of containers** (for organic waste) available on public roads, with the aim of improving territorial distribution and avoiding saturations, especially in areas of high tourist or residential density.

Another key element of the new contract is the **inclusion of the collection of "rebozo"** (waste accumulated outside of containers). This will allow the winning company to formally assume responsibility for this part of the service, which until now has lacked clear coverage and is considered one of the main sources of litter in public spaces.

The new model is not limited to improvements in resources and personnel, but also incorporates control and oversight tools geared towards professional management based on measurable results. On the one hand, the tender specifications include the installation of **GPS systems in service vehicles**, which will allow for real-time monitoring of routes, schedules, and completion of assigned tasks. This measure addresses one of the shortcomings of the current contract, where there appears to have been no traceability or systematic verification of execution.

Regarding this new cleaning and waste collection contract, the Antigua City Council has stated that it already has the tender specifications and that the new company will be able to provide the service in March-April 2026. However, several sources indicate that **the specifications are still in "draft" form, without final approval**, so there are still a few months to go before the contract file is approved.

---

Furthermore, if the processing times of the previous contracts are extrapolated, as described in the section "*Situation and scope of cleaning and waste collection contracts*", the **time elapsed between the approval of the contract file and the formalization of the contracts**

**It was longer than 11 months**, which could place the start of the new contract service at the end of 2026 or the beginning of 2027, generating significant uncertainty, so **activities or initiatives that reinforce cleaning during this time may be necessary**.

On the other hand, an **additional surveillance contract** is being processed in parallel, the objective of which is **to reduce uncivil behavior** related to the misuse of containers, illegal dumping or abandonment of waste outside of opening hours.

This monitoring system includes the **installation of seven fixed and mobile cameras** at strategic points throughout the municipality, especially in areas with recurring waste accumulation or where inappropriate behavior has been detected on the part of private individuals or businesses. The project has received a favorable report from the Local Police and municipal approval, and is currently awaiting authorization from the Island Government Directorate.

Once implemented, **this system will allow for the activation of sanctions** in cases where, despite information campaigns, practices that damage the urban environment persist. It has been noted that this approach is not intended to replace awareness campaigns, but rather to complement them in cases where information has not been sufficient to generate lasting change.

As part of the new approach, plans also include strengthening communication and environmental education efforts through local media campaigns (radio, social media, billboards) to promote compliance with basic rules of coexistence and environmental care. This initiative aims to consolidate a culture of shared responsibility among citizens, businesses, and the local government, in which all stakeholders take an active role in improving public spaces.

#### 4.2.2. Lack of greater public safety and surveillance

During the participatory process, citizen security was identified as another of the main urban challenges, both from the perspective of residents and actors from the private and public sectors.

Although this tourist hub has historically been perceived as a quiet and family-friendly place, the interviews reveal a **due to rising crime, intermittent police presence,** lack of nighttime surveillance, and the consolidation of hotspots that affect urban coexistence and the image of the destination.

The officers interviewed mention that the perceived insecurity in *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste* is fueled by a series of recurring crimes and criminal behaviors, such as the irregular occupation of abandoned or degraded sites that serve as hubs for drug trafficking and sales, constant assaults (fights and attacks with knives), intimidation, risk of sexual assault (workers in the area acquire "anti-rape" systems), thefts, robberies and assaults on hotel establishments for the theft of materials and belongings, generating a climate of impunity, frustration and vulnerability that affects both residents and tourists.

Throughout the interviews, a shared diagnosis is consistently observed: the current structure of the public safety service presents clear operational and organizational limitations that prevent it from adequately responding to the population volume and tourist intensity of the area.

According to the testimonies gathered, this challenge is structured around three main aspects:

##### 1) Current operational capacity;

**2) Critical areas and factors that fuel perceived insecurity;****3) Proposals to improve security** and restore public peace.

Also included are updated data from institutional sources and media outlets that allow for a quantitative contextualization of the situation.

**Current operational capacity.**

Within the framework of the participatory process, social agents, business and citizens have expressed an **almost unanimous concern regarding public safety** in *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste*.

One of the main weaknesses identified by those consulted is the current staffing of the Local Police. It is estimated that **in the last ten years the force has experienced a net reduction of up to ten officers**, leaving the staff below the levels needed to respond to the evolving needs of the area.

Although an **estimated 19 officers are assigned to the municipality, only 15 would actually be available for patrol**, given that the rest are on leave or intended for administrative tasks.

This reality directly impacts the design of the service, since, currently, the operational coverage would only reach the morning and afternoon shifts, leaving **the night hours without police presence**, precisely when many local actors point to a **greater risk of conflicts** and uncivil activities.

This deficit is compounded by an additional organizational problem: the **Local Police's operational center is located in the town of Antigua**, so **shift changes involve travel** outside the town of Castillo.

According to various reports, this centralization means that during shift changes, **up to three hours can pass without a police presence in the tourist area**, creating an "*operational gap*" that occurs daily and leaves a **window of vulnerability**. For local stakeholders, this situation not only impacts the perception of safety but also represents a **structural flaw in the design of the security service** in a destination that, due to its high volume of activity, requires a continuous and readily accessible police presence.

Regarding the Civil Guard, which has jurisdiction over serious crimes, they appear to be highly dedicated and professional, according to many officers interviewed, but they **lack sufficient personnel** to handle current crime rates. Furthermore, it seems that when these types of crimes occur, due to their proximity to their station, they tend to respond first to those committed in Puerto del Rosary.

**Critical areas and factors that fuel perceived insecurity.**

Beyond the general diagnosis of insufficient surveillance, the interviews conducted during the participatory process identified several **specific areas where citizen and business concerns about security are concentrated**. These areas, described as "critical zones," are characterized by high-risk situations that affect both community life and the destination's image.

One of the most frequently mentioned areas is the **vicinity of the Deputy Mayor's Office**, a space that, paradoxically, houses municipal offices but is perceived by residents and business owners as a **run-down area**. According to reports, this area has become a haven for groups involved in drug use and even sales, sometimes openly. This situation, in addition to creating a sense of insecurity, is concerning due to its visual impact in a central location, visible to both residents and tourists.

Another point mentioned is an **abandoned shopping center** that is also reportedly being used as a gathering place, a hub for consumption, and a source of conflict, especially at night. This situation not only generates discomfort and fear among residents and nearby business owners, but also contributes to the decay of an area that was originally intended to revitalize the commercial and social life of the town center.

On the other hand, another critical point with similar characteristics has been identified: the Hotel La Pirámide. This location is identified by residents and community members as a **hotspot for illegal occupation**, generating a perception of impunity and deterioration that affects residents of the upper part of the municipality.

Another key element highlighted in reports from the private sector is the repeated presence of **groups illegally accessing hotel complexes for criminal purposes**. These intrusions are not perceived as isolated incidents, but rather as **organized and systematic acts** that pose a direct threat to both the safety of guests and the operations of the establishments.

A key point raised by several interviewees is that the perpetrators of these acts are known locally. They are reportedly young people identified through their repeated involvement in thefts and break-ins, which reinforces the sense of impunity. The lack of a timely response, coupled with the limited presence of municipal authorities at night, fuels an atmosphere of frustration and vulnerability, especially among private security personnel at hotels and businesses.

shops.

Adding to this insecurity is another factor that exacerbates the perception of vulnerability: **the lack of lighting** in various parts of the town center. Although this deficiency is addressed in detail in the urban maintenance challenge, it becomes relevant here as local stakeholders have identified it as a **direct facilitator of theft, break-ins, and other risky situations**, especially in pedestrian areas and near hotels.

The lack of adequate lighting discourages the use of public spaces at night, especially among older residents, families, and tourism workers. This unplanned darkness amplifies the fear of walking along certain stretches of road and contributes to a **climate of insecurity**.

which exceeds the objective reality of the reported crimes, directly affecting the experience of habitability and the positioning of the destination as a safe enclave.

In this context, **nighttime surveillance falls solely to the Civil Guard**, a force that, while ensuring a response to serious crimes, does not fulfill the community policing functions necessary for daily preventative, civic, and public order management. Municipal ordinances (control of business hours, noise inspections, regulations on public order, etc.) go unenforced for much of the day and throughout the night, weakening the City Council's ability to maintain order.

public space.

In summary, those interviewed agree in describing a progressive loss of the feeling of security, especially during nights and shift changes. The lack of nighttime inspections allows many situations to be repeated without consequence, fueling a sense of lack of authority and vulnerability. It is warned that this situation, if not corrected, could undermine *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste*'s reputation as a high-quality family destination.

### Proposals to improve security.

The proposals gathered during the participatory process clearly coincide in one direction: **to strengthen the proximity, permanence and operational capacity of the municipal security force and the Civil Guard** in the town of *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste*.

The most widely supported measure is the creation of a **Local Police operational base within the tourist area itself**. This change would eliminate travel times and gaps in service during shift changes, as service management (shifts, procedures, coordination) would be handled from the *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste center*. Furthermore, this base would allow for broader coverage hours, including the reinstatement of the night shift, which is currently unavailable.

In parallel, **expanding the local police force** is being considered an urgent measure. According to interviews, **the current number of officers does not meet the actual needs of the town**, since the size of the force cannot be calculated solely based on the municipal register. Some officers interviewed even suggested that the City Council should fill all the local police positions, given that they have the means to do so.

Tourist pressure and the volume of economic activity significantly increase the demand for security, surveillance, and control. Therefore, **the staffing ratio must be adjusted to the standards** of high-intensity tourist destinations, where the aim is not only to guarantee a response to incidents but also the effective enforcement of municipal ordinances related to public order, the use of public space, business hours, and the noise control.

This requirement to update ratios is demanded for both the Local Police and the Civil Guard.

In this regard, it is emphasized that any expansion strategy must be **supported by a technical analysis** that considers the resident population, the number of accommodation spaces, the seasonal flow of visitors, and the critical points already identified. Only under this approach will it be possible to reinstate a stable nighttime security shift, key to strengthening the institutional presence, deterring criminal activity, and consolidating *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste* as a safe destination.  
reliable.

The report also highlights the need to **incorporate complementary resources**, such as surveillance technology (cameras, sensors, alert systems) that allow for **monitoring critical points** even when no personnel are physically present. These resources should be seen as support for, not a substitute for, the deployment of officers in the field.

To contextualize the scenario described, following data published by the Ministry of the Interior that reflects the evolution of crime in the Canary Islands during the first quarter of 2025:



“According to the report published this Wednesday by the Ministry of the Interior, all the islands ended the quarter with decreases in crime figures, except Fuerteventura, which saw a rise of 19.6 percent, going from 1,744 to 2,085 criminal offenses.”

Although this data is not broken down to the level of municipalities with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants, the condition Castillo - *Caleta de Fuste* as one of the most important tourist centers in Fuerteventura

This suggests that this pressure is also present in the analyzed territory.

Although the Antigua City Council publicly announced in August 2025 the **deployment of a contingent of the Canary Islands Police to reinforce security** in El Castillo, in coordination with the Local Police, this resource has not been mentioned by any of the key stakeholders consulted during the participatory process. This absence in the participants' accounts suggests a disconnect between the official announcement and public perception, indicating that it has not actually been implemented, at least not yet.

Consequently, the perception of staff shortages remains prevalent among social and business stakeholders in the tourist hub, who continue to demand visible and permanent solutions. Beyond temporary reinforcements, **those interviewed are calling for a constant physical presence to guarantee coverage throughout the day, attention to critical areas, and the restoration of security as a defining characteristic of the destination.**

Given the possibility that these measures may not succeed, voices have emerged **proposing the establishment of private security teams** in *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste*, as deterrents and support for local security forces.

### 4.2.3. Lack of maintenance of urban space

This challenge compiles a set of observations and perceptions shared during the participatory process regarding the state of public space: in general, there is a recurring concern about the progressive deterioration of the urban environment and about a maintenance management perceived as insufficient.

The contributions of the participants allow us to organize this challenge into four main aspects:

- 1) **Public lighting:** lighting deficits and contrasts between recent investments and areas in gloom.
- 2) **Road infrastructure:** differences between renovated areas and streets with deteriorated pavements, affecting the accessibility and beauty of the environment.
- 3) **Landscaping and gardening:** perception of neglect of green areas, lack of irrigation in lawns and pruning palm trees.
- 4) **Beaches and coastal environment:** issues related to sand quality, accessibility, furniture and management of coastal space.

Throughout the document, images provided by the participants themselves (broken sidewalks, streetlights out, neglected gardens, and other deteriorated elements) are referenced as visual support for the statements. Each point is then elaborated upon.

#### Public lighting

Public lighting was identified by all the stakeholders interviewed as a **visible and persistent deficiency in several key areas of the destination**. This deficiency is not merely an aesthetic issue; it **directly impacts the use of the urban environment and the perception of safety**.

Various profiles within the private sector agree that there are **areas of "total darkness"** (particularly near the seafront and in areas close to the Elba and Sheraton hotels) where large-capacity streetlights, even those with several spotlights, have been inoperative for some time, apparently not due to breakdowns, but due to a lack of bulb replacement.

---

According to reports, this lack of lighting directly affects the functionality of the coastal promenade during the evenings and nights, reducing its recreational use and creating a sense of insecurity. While a direct causal link between the lack of light and criminal activity is not established, it is noted that **the dimness "facilitates" risky situations and reduces the perception of safety** among residents and visitors.

The municipal administration states that, contrary to this perception, significant investments have been made in street lighting renovation, incorporating new technologies and high-quality materials. Some of the actions mentioned are:

- Marcial Sánchez Street: comprehensive renovation with 4 million euros, including lighting with new technologies for roadway and sidewalk, higher quality sidewalks and underground integration of services (fiber, drinking water and irrigation network).
- Integral Ring (Virgen de la Peña and Pablo Picasso): the completion of a second phase is indicated, with the renewal of the ring's lighting through the installation of 700 new lights and the creation of a bike lane.
- Zábila, Pitera and Verón streets: the addition of new streetlights is mentioned.
- Other areas: complete renewal of the lighting is noted in Calle Juan Ramón Soto Morales and Calle del Cardón Turnero.
- Pedestrian zone: it is indicated that Orchilla Street was provided with new lighting and sidewalks, improving traffic.
- It is mentioned that there are other streets that have been intervened (without full details in the interviews).

Contributions from other stakeholders indicate that the latest investments made by the City Council are good and appropriate, but that there are still major investments to be made, because apparently, once you leave the renovated streets and avenues, the situation you find is described as "gloom and neglect".

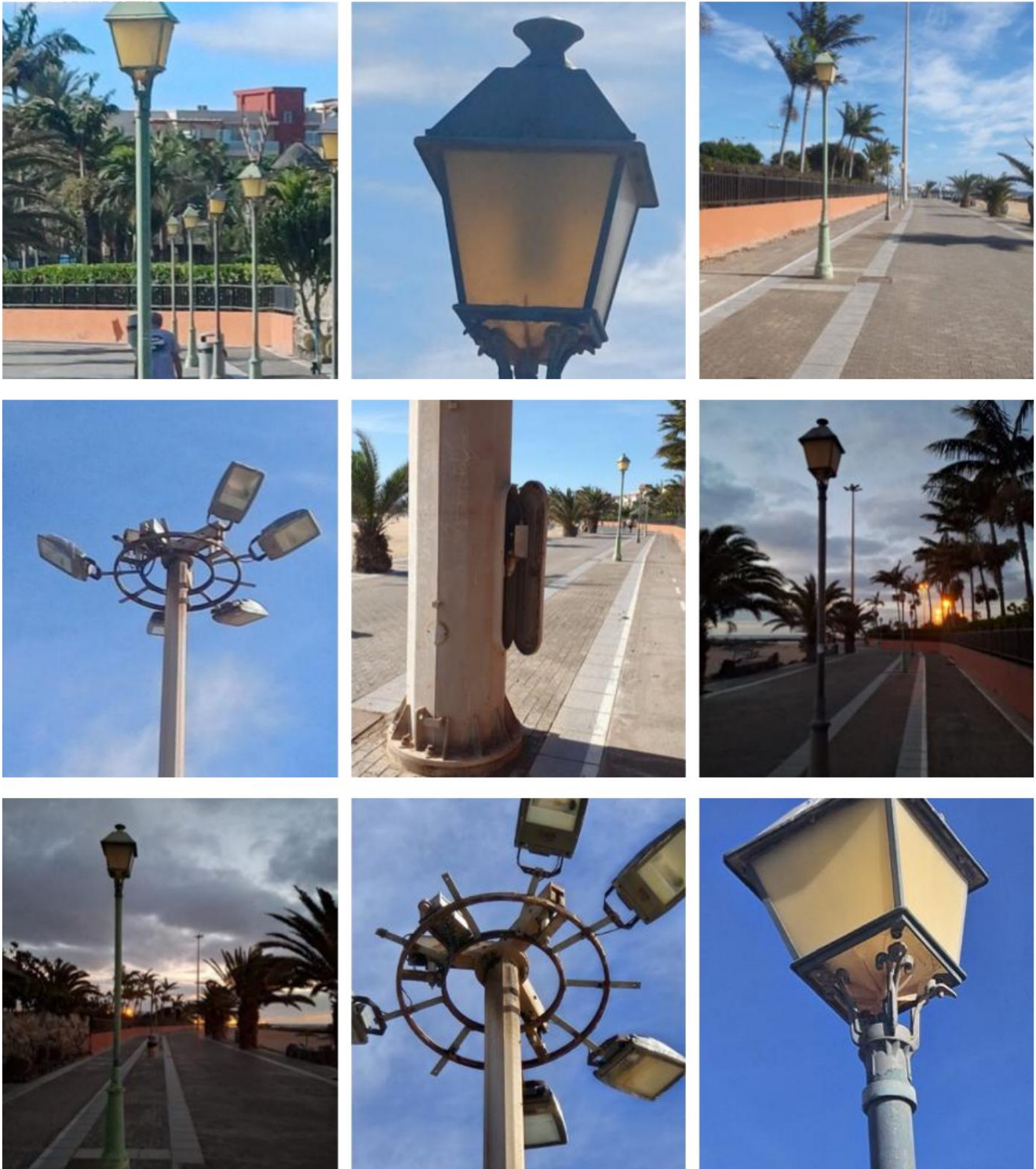
---

Regarding the maintenance of public lighting, a **very limited staff is acknowledged**, which seriously hinders the ability to respond to breakdowns. According to reports, there is only **one technician assigned to this task for the entire municipality**, who must also handle other duties (not just lighting maintenance) that take up their time. Despite this, the City Council states that it identifies incidents relatively quickly and resolves them successfully within a reasonable timeframe.

Faced with this structural weakness, the need to outsource street lighting maintenance has been raised. To this end, **a new maintenance contract will be drawn up and put out to tender.** Specifically, the aim is for a specialized company to formally assume responsibility for the maintenance of the lighting network. This measure seeks to ensure continuity, professional technical expertise, and faster incident resolution.

The following images, provided by interviewees, document the lack of lighting in various areas and the visible deterioration of part of the street lighting system.

*Figure 2 (Overall). State of public lighting and lack of lighting on roads in localized areas.*



During the interview process, the overall condition of the road infrastructure (especially sidewalks, pavements, and pedestrian areas) was mentioned as a key component in the perception of the quality of the urban environment. The responses gathered consistently describe a heterogeneous situation, in which sections with recent improvements and a sense of enhancement coexist with other areas where accumulated wear and tear is evident, primarily due to a lack of maintenance. continued and an overall image of neglect.

From different profiles in the private and associative sectors, a pattern of improvement "in stages" is being conveyed. As an example of visible improvement, the area known as the "urban ring" (Virgen de la Peña – Pablo Picasso) is mentioned, which has been recently renovated and presents better conditions of accessibility, cleanliness and pedestrian comfort.

However, this positive scenario contrasts sharply with the situation in the less-traveled, interior streets, where **deteriorated pavements, loose tiles, uneven sections, and a general sense of urban neglect are evident.** Those interviewed emphasize that this **discontinuity in the urban space** affects both the image of the destination and its daily use by residents and visitors.

The municipal administration, for its part, is implementing a progressive modernization approach to the urban space, aimed at achieving high quality standards in all areas. As part of this strategy, recent projects include the transformation of Orchilla Street (which underwent improvements with new paving and enhanced pedestrian accessibility), as well as the addition of a bike lane to the renovated ring road. It is acknowledged that the process has not yet reached all streets, but it is emphasized that the implementation is based on planned phases, subject to budgetary constraints.

---

However, other sources consulted insist that, while the specific improvements are appreciated, they do not compensate for the **volume of streets that remain in poor condition**, generating a perception of disorder, lack of homogeneity, and general deterioration in key areas of the city center.

Some voices even comment that sections renovated with significant budgetary investment are beginning to show signs of deterioration due to lack of maintenance, this being one of the main factors claimed by many agents: that beyond the need to renovate urban spaces, **the fundamental deficiency is that proper maintenance of infrastructure and spaces is not carried out**, which causes their premature deterioration.

Beyond aesthetics, the issue of accessibility is a major concern. The interviews reveal numerous mentions of difficulties in moving around smoothly and safely, especially in areas with uneven pavement, abrupt changes in level, or obstacles.

Among the situations mentioned, the case of elderly people, families with strollers, people with reduced mobility or wheelchair users stands out, who encounter **obstacles in their movement.**

The report also mentions visitors traveling with wheeled suitcases, especially on routes between accommodations and shopping areas or transport stops. It describes how, in several parts of the city center, the uneven pavement makes it difficult to pull luggage smoothly, causing discomfort, noise, wear and tear on suitcases, and a negative experience of the public space.

The following images, provided by interviewees, document the current state of several streets: sections with deteriorated pavement, broken or loose tiles, sidewalks with obstacles, and street furniture in poor condition. This visual evidence reinforces the perception of partial deterioration and discontinuity in the quality of the urban environment.

Figure 3 (Overall). Condition of pavements and conservation of street furniture at specific points.



### Landscaping and gardening

The management of the urban landscape and the conservation of green areas have been identified during the participatory process as one of the critical points not only of the maintenance of public space, but also of its cleanliness.

Many contributions have been collected that convey a **widespread concern about the progressive deterioration** of gardens, palm trees, lawns and other plant elements, which until recently were considered part of the visual and environmental identity of the destination.

According to these accounts, the green spaces and gardens show **clear signs of neglect in many areas**. The perception is that adequate and consistent maintenance is not being carried out.

Cases of dead or dying palm trees, yellowing and unkempt lawns, unpruned shrubs, and overgrown weeds are mentioned. Furthermore, the lack of an efficient irrigation system is highlighted as one of the causes of the deterioration.

This situation is exacerbated by a management style perceived as reactive: action is only taken when there is an upcoming event, a complaint, or an official visit, instead of implementing regular gardening maintenance. This lack of continuity in upkeep affects both the appearance of the area and the ease of use of the public space.

The following images, provided by interviewees, visually document the current state of several green areas, including deteriorated palm trees, lack of irrigation, and dry gardens.

*Figure 4 (Set). Visual evidence of the lack of pruning and care of landscaped areas.*





The actions of pruning and collection of plant waste and pruning remains are included in the contract of the **“SERVICE OF COLLECTION OF URBAN WASTE, HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND PRUNING IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ANTIGUA”**, with file number in PLACE “325/03-2017” described in the section *“Situation and scope of the cleaning and waste collection contracts”* of the challenge *“3.2.1. Lack of public cleaning and waste collection services sized to the needs of the destination”*.

Therefore, all the considerations of this contract that applied to waste collection work also affect, in this case analyzed, pruning work: a contract considered by the agents as undersized for the needs of the urban center both in personnel and resources and in a situation of "precariousness" with extra-contractual extensions, which would only enable the performance of essential actions and for whose payment their effective performance must be verified and accredited.

As an example of the situation generated by the state of the green areas, the Association of Businessmen and Merchants of Antigua (AECA) sent a letter<sup>4</sup> in 2023 to the mayor of the municipality to, among other things, request the pruning, cleaning and maintenance of palm trees and green areas.

According to input received from agents, this situation has not improved.

Beyond its functional aspect, the landscape also appears in the testimonies as a symbol of the destination. Several interviewees agree that the palm trees, manicured lawns, and landscaped areas gave Castillo - *Caleta de Fuste* **its own distinctive character**, setting it apart from other, more arid environments on the island. They refer to the "oasis effect," a feeling of freshness and lush vegetation that was part of the visitor experience and the daily lives of residents.

In this sense, the loss of green spaces not only affects aesthetics but also the emotional and sensory perception of the environment. The deterioration of these spaces reduces the quality of walks, the possibility of resting in shaded areas, and breaks the visual contrast that previously existed between the urban environment and the volcanic landscape.

The information gathered also points to a **lack of adequate technical and human resources** to ensure the upkeep of these spaces. It is noted that the municipal staff responsible for maintenance lack specialized training in urban gardening or landscaping, which limits their ability to act. Furthermore, there is no clear information available on the actual condition of the irrigation system, nor on any leaks, outages, or inoperative sections.

The combination of these factors (limited resources, lack of qualified technical staff, "precarious" pruning contract) explains the current situation of many green areas in the town center.

---

<sup>4</sup> AECA-Mayor's Written Statement 2023.

## Beaches and coastal environment

The *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste* coastline appears in all interviews as a **central component of the destination experience**. Unlike other urban assets, the beach is not interpreted solely as a natural space, but as a tourism product directly associated with the destination's positioning, perceived quality, and image.

This beach is considered the best on the island in an urban area, and is also naturally protected from the prevailing wind on the island, ideal for tourism seeking tranquility (family).

During the participatory process, a number of elements were identified that directly affect the perceived quality of the coastal environment, both from the perspective of residents and visitors. Throughout the interviews, **specific concerns** arose related to **sand replenishment**, the **condition of furniture and facilities and accessibility**, the **fragmentation of the management model**, **regulatory contradictions**, and the **environmental impacts of actions taken** that, according to participants, damage the destination's image and create dissonance in the use of the space.

- Quality of the aggregate** One of the aspects that has attracted the most attention among stakeholders in the tourism sector and residents is the replenishment of sand on the main beach of *Castillo – Caleta de Fuste*. In various interviews, it is expressed that the sand used in the latest replenishments is not perceived as adequate, being **described as "gravel"** or "low quality sediments", with little similarity to the fine and homogeneous aggregates that are traditionally associated with high comfort destinations.

The impact is mainly expressed on two levels: on the one hand, a reduction in user comfort; on the other, a **loss of functionality of the beach to host sports** or tourist entertainment activities that require regular surface conditions.

In this regard, examples such as beach volleyball and beach soccer are frequently mentioned, the practice of which is **hampered by the uneven and hard sand**. From the business and institutional sectors, there is regret that these conditions diminish the destination's competitiveness compared to other areas that do have beaches ideal for higher-level events, tournaments, or recreational activities, which directly impacts the diversification of offerings and the ability to attract visitors with sporting interests.

- Condition of facilities and accessibility:** Along with the condition of the sand, several contributions indicate that the condition of beach facilities and amenities is not perceived as aligned with the level of quality associated with the desired positioning of the destination. Interviews reveal a **perception of deterioration or neglect in the elements that make up the functional infrastructure of the beaches:** showers in poor condition, broken or nonexistent walkways, lack of shade, inadequate access, and unclear signage.

However, in response to these observations, institutional representatives have indicated that the Antigua City Council has recently secured a **significant investment using European funds**. Specifically, they report the implementation of a project involving approximately €500,000.

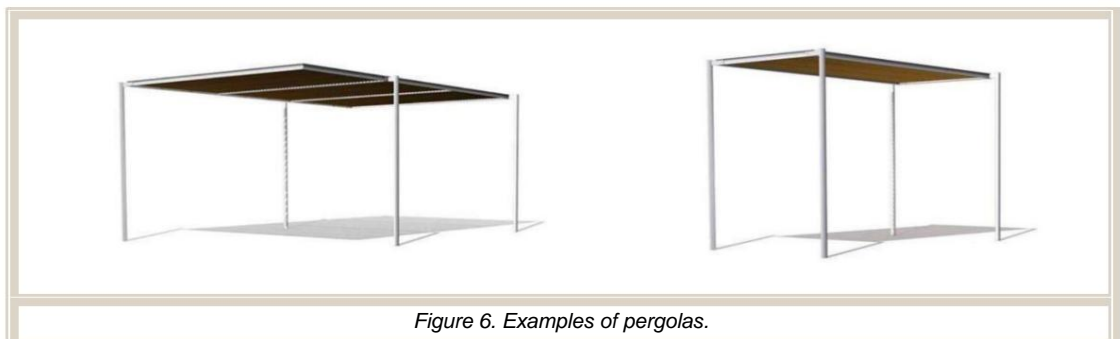
€ within the framework of the Tourism Sustainability Plan in Destination "Strong by Nature" of the Fuerteventura Island Council, financed through the NextGenerationEU mechanism.

According to the project's technical documentation, this investment has enabled the acquisition of equipment designed to improve the functionality, accessibility, and safety of the coastal environment. This includes:

or Ecological Islands: Supply of 3 clean points manufactured in a pine wood kit wild for waste management in the coastal environment.



o Shade Infrastructure: Installation of various self-supporting steel pergolas galvanized steel and wood intended to create rest and shade areas.



or Sustainable Mobility: Canopy for 10 bicycles and canopy for 5 bicycles with photovoltaic roof and two charging module ports for mobile devices.



or Solar Safety: Supply of "traffic lights" ultraviolet radiation detectors that provide real-time information, using a 5-color code, on protection levels necessary.



Figure 8. "Traffic light" with indication by ultraviolet radiation code.

o Service and changing room modules: Multipurpose kiosks that integrate lockers, outdoor showers, individual and adapted changing rooms, as well as toilets equipped with timed taps.

or Adapted beach equipment: Supply of reinforced articulated walkway and supply of folding amphibious chairs, amphibious crutch kit with flotation support and "walker city" type amphibious walkers to guarantee total accessibility to the water.



Figure 9. Folding amphibious chair.



Figure 10. Amphibious crutch kit with flotation support.



Figure 11. "Walker City" type amphibious walker.

In parallel, the installation of the **new access ramp on the main beach** is confirmed , overcoming the architectural barriers previously mentioned in the participatory process and effectively connecting the promenade with the bathing area.



- **Beach management:** The operation of the *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste* coastal front is characterized by a coexistence of management models that condition the provision of its services.

During the participatory process, a distinction has been highlighted regarding the ownership of the obligations in the two sections that make up the main beach in the center of the tourist center.

**Playa del Castillo** (El Muellito): This corresponds to the section located between the "La Frasquita" bar and the port. The operation of services such as sunbeds, umbrellas, and kiosks in this area has historically been contracted out to a private company.

**Guirra Beach:** Located opposite the large hotel complexes and the shopping center, this stretch has been described by some interviewees as an artificially created beach, established through an administrative process by the Directorate General of Coasts. Under this authorization, **the responsibilities for surveillance, lifeguarding, and daily maintenance fall to the private operator of the concession**, the Anjoca Group.

However, different contributions from the participatory process are collected on this matter: from those who propose a review of this model to those who consider it coherent.

Although in the participatory process the interviewees have focused on the two main beaches of the tourist center, there have also been spontaneous mentions of other areas of the Castillo – Caleta de Fuste coastline which, although they have not been described in technical detail, were referred to as spaces with untapped potential or obvious maintenance problems.

One of the beaches mentioned is Valle de la Cueva beach, located south of the established town center. Several participants describe it as an attractive setting from a scenic point of view, alluding to its more natural character and the image of a "charming little coastal town." However, it is reported that the lack of surveillance and the persistent accumulation of garbage are progressively deteriorating its environmental and social value.

- **Regulatory consistency:** Finally, the interviews highlight a specific case that has generated concern due to its impact on the destination's reputation: the coexistence of **contradictory regulations regarding the use of coastal space**. In particular, it is noted that while regulations strictly prohibit dogs from entering the bathing area, they allow...

simultaneously the **presence of camels used for commercial purposes** on the sand of the main beach itself.

According to some voices from the private and associative sectors, this situation would affect the perceived image of the main coastal resource, mentioning annoyances associated with the smell and dirt derived from the activity, as well as concern for the welfare of the animals.

This contrast is interpreted by various stakeholders as a regulatory inconsistency that **affects the destination's international image** and has had concrete consequences. According to reports, this situation was one of the reasons for the **loss of the Blue Flag award**, barely a week after it had been granted. The inspection that led to the revocation of the award reportedly confirmed the presence of these animals in the bathing area, a fact incompatible with the environmental quality and management standards required by [the relevant authorities/organization].

the certifying entity.

Some voices suggest that this authorization is a political decision aimed at preserving jobs in this sector, while others interpret it as a case where a specific measure conflicts with the overall strategy for improving the destination.

- **Environmental impacts:** Beyond the visible facilities, the impact of the port's breakwater on water circulation is noted. According to interviews, **the construction of the breakwater has altered the current dynamics in the bay**, necessitating interventions in the beach's shape or width **to prevent water stagnation**.

This issue is framed as a coastal management challenge of some complexity, in which past engineering decisions condition the current activity and situation.

In addition to issues related to aggregates, facilities, and the management model, the participatory process has allowed for the collection of a series of **proposals and initiatives mentioned** by various local actors, from both the social and business sectors, which point to complementary interventions considered necessary to improve the quality, use, and image of the environment.  
coast.

These contributions lie at the intersection of several challenges identified in the diagnostic assessment: urban maintenance, cleanliness and waste management, the international perception of the destination, and the adaptation of coastal public spaces to the standards expected of a top-tier tourist enclave. Although many of these demands could be extrapolated to the entire urban area, the interviews reflect a particular emphasis on the fact that the waterfront (due to its high level of exposure and its centrality to the visitor experience) requires priority and specific attention.

Among the **most recurring proposals**, the following stand out:

- **Expansion of the seafront promenade:** This project would incorporate new green spaces, benches, and more pedestrian-friendly sections, enhancing both the promenade's livability and its scenic value. The existence of a possible project underway is mentioned, although the technical details and implementation timelines have not been made public.
- **Functional amenities:** Across all areas, the urgent need to install adequate waste bins along the promenade and beach access areas is highlighted. The need for

These waste bins must have suitable closures to prevent overflowing, wind damage, or access by animals. Although aspects related to cleanliness and waste management are addressed as a separate challenge, this need arises here specifically due to its relevance in the coastal area, as an amenity that, beyond its functionality, directly contributes to the perception of order and care in the coastal environment.

- **Vegetation and landscape quality of the promenade:** There is also a clear demand for improved maintenance of the coastal vegetation, especially regarding palm trees. Interviews indicate the need to prune and replace palm trees that may pose a safety risk or visually detract from the promenade.

These proposals, repeatedly raised in the interviews, reinforce the idea that improving the coastal environment cannot be approached solely from the perspective of recreational beach use, but must be part of a comprehensive vision for coastal public space. This implies considering facilities, environmental quality, pedestrian connectivity, aesthetic appeal, and cleanliness as interrelated components.

#### 4.2.4. Paralysis in the reception of urban areas

During the participatory process, a challenge has been identified that affects the City Council's ability to act on various areas of the tourist center of *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste*: the existence of multiple **urban areas that have not been** formally received by the City Council, despite being urbanized and in use.

This situation, which in some cases has lasted for more than fifteen years, limits the municipal capacity to act on spaces that, although used daily by residents and visitors, have not been legally assumed by the local administration.

The analysis of the interviews reveals three aspects that help to understand this challenge:

- 1) **General diagnosis of the non-reception situation** and its implications;
- 2) **Critical cases in urban developments associated with golf courses;**
- 3) **Other areas not received** and their territorial impact.

##### General diagnosis of the non-reception situation.

This urban planning and administrative challenge, as conveyed by various interviewees, limits the ability to act on certain public spaces: **the non-acceptance (or pending acceptance) of specific areas** by the City Council. It is mentioned that, in some cases, this situation has persisted for a considerable period, with some alluding to timeframes of fifteen or twenty years.

In short, "acceptance" is the act by which the City Council takes over a development and, from that moment on, is authorized to manage and maintain elements of the public space such as street lighting, sidewalks, roads, and paving, among others. In this regard, public officials emphasize that **applicable urban planning legislation requires that this acceptance take place when the development is fully delivered and operational** with all its essential services.

Other agents point out that the regulations do allow partial acceptances based on services or areas of the plots not yet accepted.

In the absence of the corresponding handover, representatives from the private sector linked to the management of these areas convey that the lack of handover generates a scenario of operational uncertainty: **they express that there are needs for conservation and replacement in the urban space** (lighting, pavements, garbage, sidewalks, etc.).

The agents interviewed agree that the non-reception translates into a limitation of the capacity to intervene: on the one hand, it is pointed out that the City Council would not act as it does not have full legal coverage over these assets (since they are not publicly owned); on the other hand, it is described that the promoters or responsible entities would not have completed the transfer/delivery process in the required terms, which keeps the situation at a standstill.

This is very relevant because it directly impacts the main challenges (and problems and complaints conveyed almost unanimously during the participatory process), such as the cleaning and maintenance of the urban environment: **if the City Council does not take over these areas, it could not provide public services in them** (since it would be like providing services to a private entity), and this results in an increase in waste and a feeling of neglect and abandonment of the destination as a whole, since although the areas that have not been taken over are used and traveled by the general public (residents and tourists).

In fact, as some contributions indicate, **the City Council is indeed collecting the Property Tax (IBI), the garbage collection fee and even the driveway access fee in these areas that have not yet been officially accepted**, which is considered inconsistent.

In short, the two perspectives on this key aspect are as follows:

- From the public sector, it is argued that current urban planning legislation requires that housing developments be fully completed and have all essential services operational before being officially accepted. Under this criterion, the City Council would not accept certain elements partially (for example, sidewalks without streetlights, or streets without a public water supply) without risking potential legal irregularities or assuming services in a disjointed manner.
- From the private sector, however, it is argued that the City Council should be able to progressively assume some basic urban services through partial takeovers, especially in areas where public use is already effective and where deterioration negatively affects the image and quality of life.

#### **Critical cases in urban developments associated with golf courses.**

Among the affected areas, two large-scale urban developments linked to golf courses stand out. These are high-value residential and tourist areas that, nevertheless, face operational problems stemming from their lack of formal approval.

#### **Fuerteventura Golf Resort (ANJOCA):**

The case of the residential and tourist area associated with the Fuerteventura Golf Resort, promoted by the Anjoca group, is one of the most cited in the interviews of the participatory process due to its technical and legal complexity.

The municipal administration indicates that the **main obstacle** to the formal handover of the area **is the management of the water service**. Currently, **the developer operates its own desalination plant, distributing water privately**.

According to the City Council's technical and legal criteria, this situation prevents compliance with the principle of comprehensiveness required by current urban planning legislation, which stipulates **that all essential services** (water, electricity, roads, and street lighting) must be fully operational and **integrated into the public system before formal acceptance can take place**. Under this interpretation, accepting only certain elements, such as street lighting or sidewalks, without water being connected to the public network, would constitute an administrative irregularity.

Meanwhile, the private sector holds a different view. The developer and other voices in the industry believe that, even if the water continues to be privately managed, it should be possible to move towards a partial solution that allows the City Council to take charge of basic maintenance of the surrounding area: cleaning and waste disposal, paving, sidewalks, streetlights, and common areas. This proposal stems from **concerns about the visible deterioration of the urban space**, the decline in the residential and tourist experience, and the negative effects this situation has on the destination's image.

This disagreement between the parties reflects an unresolved point of friction, where the regulations seem not to facilitate intermediate solutions and where room for maneuver is perceived as scarce.

Furthermore, as reported in several interviews, many properties were sold before there was a clear fit in the planning to allow for acceptance by the City Council.

This means that, for years, residents and owners have inhabited and managed a space that, for legal and administrative purposes, has not been fully assumed by the public administration, generating a situation of legal ambiguity that directly impacts the daily management of the around.

### **Salinas Golf Resort (Ramiterra real estate):**

The second case identified in the participatory process concerns the urban development surrounding the Salinas Golf Resort, promoted by the real estate company Ramiterra. Unlike the previous case (Fuerteventura Golf Club), this area has a different nature, as it is currently involved in **insolvency proceedings**.

According to what is conveyed in the interviews, this legal context has generated a **prolonged paralysis of key decisions**, affecting both the management of basic services and the possibility of advancing in the administrative regularization of the area.

Those interviewed explained that, with the developer in bankruptcy proceedings, many essential infrastructure projects have been left in limbo, **with no real possibility of intervention from either the company or the government**. This situation would have

prevented for years from resolving issues necessary for the acceptance of the urbanization, keeping the environment in a **state of operational blockage**.

One of the most critical factors is the wastewater treatment plant associated with the golf course, which is excluded from the bankruptcy proceedings. Reportedly, until the ownership and management of this infrastructure are resolved, it is not possible to regularize all the basic services, which in turn blocks any progress in the handover process.

From the municipal level, it is noted that this impasse has been reinforced by a recent **court ruling**, which **supports the local administration's position**. According to the ruling, the decision establishes that the development cannot be officially accepted unless it expressly incorporates its own water service as part of the essential services package. This legal interpretation reaffirms that the City Council cannot assume partial maintenance of the area while the water management remains undefined.

According to this account, the only identified way to resolve the situation is through the effective resolution of the bankruptcy proceedings, so that the necessary legal maneuver can be carried out to integrate the water service into the public sector. Only from that point, and once the requirements stipulated by urban planning regulations have been met, would the possibility arise for the City Council to proceed with the full transfer of the area and assume its day-to-day management.

infrastructures.

#### Other areas not received.

In addition to the golf courses, other areas that are also not yet officially accepted were identified during the participatory process.

#### Commercial Ships of Antigua's Coast:

This is a commercial area that has not yet been officially accepted by the City Council. While few technical details are provided, it is mentioned that this situation limits the possibilities for improvements to sidewalks, access, cleaning, and lighting, creating an image of neglect in a space that is strategic for the local economy.

#### Third phase of the Mountain:

The interviews also mention this area as pending handover, although the specific reasons for the impasse and the current distribution of responsibilities are not detailed. It is interpreted as another example of an urbanized area not fully integrated into public management.

### 4.2.5. Misalignment between population and City Council

One of the issues that stands out in the participatory process is the existence of a gap between citizens, the business sector and the local administration, which does not manifest itself as a conflict, but rather as a disconnection or misalignment of objectives, priorities and feelings, apparently produced by a feeling of limited effectiveness of the current coordination and response mechanisms.

According to the participants, this challenge is broken down into three aspects that will be developed below:

- 1) **Gap between communication and execution**, where openness to dialogue is valued, but a low capacity for effective response is noted;
- 2) **Perception of unequal treatment between populations** where the interior of the municipality and its main tourist hub, which fosters a feeling of disconnection;
- 3) **Coordination between institutional levels**, especially between the City Council and the Island Council, which adds complexity to daily management.

#### Gap between communication and execution.

One of the aspects that appears repeatedly from the consulted stakeholders is the coexistence of **high institutional accessibility with a low capacity for effective response**. As they express -

Representatives of the private sector and associations have a close relationship with the City Council and a direct communication channel with political and technical officials.

However, this openness to dialogue does not always translate into tangible results. Those interviewed describe a dynamic in which informal meetings and exchanges (albeit frequent) fail to overcome a clear and fundamental barrier: a lack of implementation. There is a perception that the commitments made do not materialize into solutions, leading to **frustration and a erosion of institutional trust**.

This situation contributes to a perception of inefficiency, not due to any lack of willingness on the part of municipal officials. The result is a feeling of a "dead-end mailbox," where proposals or complaints are received and addressed, but do not translate into visible improvements or solutions, either due to a lack of will or resources, according to feedback received.

#### Perception of unequal treatment between populations.

A sensitive issue that emerges strongly in the interviews is the **perception of unequal treatment between the inland population centers of the municipality (Antigua) and its coastal area (Castillo - Caleta de Fuste)**. While it is acknowledged that the coast is the main economic driver, it is described that **structural investments and preventative maintenance seem to be proportionally concentrated inland**, while improvements on the coast arrive in a fragmented or belated manner.

This interpretation is amplified by the fact that, along the coast, many of the visible developments are primarily geared towards tourists, not residents. Parks, shaded areas, social services, and cultural infrastructure are scarce or difficult for the local community to access, fostering a sense of symbolic and functional exclusion.

This issue is accentuated by the main challenges identified, such as the problems of dirt and waste, with many voices alluding to a better cleanliness situation in the interior of Antigua than in the *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste area*, a repeated perception that could not be due to a voluntary issue but indirectly, but beyond its cause it accentuates the disaffection and perception of unequal treatment.

Some participants express that the tourist center is managed "like a product" rather than as a community, which erodes the sense of belonging and weakens the neighborhood fabric. This disconnection

It also impacts citizen participation: if the resident does not see himself reflected in the institutional priorities, his involvement in the improvement processes of his area is reduced.

The social actors consulted are calling for a more balanced and participatory approach, one that recognizes the **role of residents in building a tourist destination with "soul," a place to live together and not just consume**. To this end, they emphasize the importance of reconnecting investment decisions with the daily needs of the resident.

#### Coordination between institutional levels.

During the participatory process, some interviewees mentioned coordination difficulties between the Antigua Town Council and the Fuerteventura Island Council in managing certain responsibilities that directly impact daily life and the overall experience of the destination. These comments were not made as personal criticisms, but rather as a **perceived mismatch** in the mechanisms of inter-administrative cooperation.

According to what has been conveyed, there are areas in which responsibilities are divided between both administrations (such as public transport, waste management, certain infrastructures or supra-municipal services) and where this distribution of powers generates, in practice, difficulties in identifying clear interlocutors or defined response times.

In this context, some stakeholders point out that **the actions are perceived as fragmented**, with processes requiring multiple procedures or authorizations and, consequently, taking longer than expected. In some cases, interventions are perceived as depending on ad hoc agreements rather than ongoing cooperation frameworks.

For the main stakeholders, the problem lies with the institutions, because, summarizing different contributions: "taxes are paid, it doesn't matter which institution is responsible, the problems should already be solved."

It is also mentioned that this situation can lead to planning disruptions, especially when investments or services depend on decisions made at different levels.  
administrative staff.

#### 4.2.6. Destination Identity Problem

During the participatory process, both tourism sector stakeholders and institutional representatives and associations have highlighted a **challenge** that transcends the physical realm of public space:

for Castillo - **Caleta de**

Fuste as a tourist destination.

Based on the analysis of the collected testimonies, this challenge manifests itself in three aspects complementary elements that, although distinct, are closely related to each other:

- 1) Persistent **nominal duality** between the names "El Castillo" and "Caleta de Fuste", one normally used by residents, and the other by tourists, without a clear unification strategy;
- 2) **Lack of distinctive attributes** that makes it impossible to clearly identify what type of experience tourist offerings are comparable to other island centers;

- 3) **Weakening of the distinctive landscape values**, especially the loss of its identity as a “green oasis” in the face of the arid environment of the island, perceived as a visual hallmark of the core.

#### Nominal duality.

During the participatory process, different profiles have alluded to a situation that generates certain limitations when analyzing the projected identity of the core: the **persistent coexistence between two names** (“*El Castillo*” and “*Caleta de Fuste*”) that coexist in parallel in social, institutional and promotional use.

According to those interviewed, this duality has historical and emotional roots. The term “*El Castillo*” (*The Castle*) remains the name by which most residents identify, especially those with deeper roots there. It is considered a traditional toponym, linked to the Tower of San Buenaventura, and with symbolic value associated with the history of the place.

In parallel, “*Caleta de Fuste*” has been progressively adopted as the predominant name in the tourism sector. It is the name that appears on most digital travel platforms, in promotional material, and in the institutional image projected abroad.

Its use is linked to the positioning strategy of a coastal destination and also responds to criteria of recognition and differentiation in the tourism market. Furthermore, for some stakeholders in the tourism sector, it conveys a more “elegant” and distinctive image.

This discrepancy between everyday use and promotional use is interpreted by several participants as a **lack of alignment between the resident's reality and the projected image of the destination**. In this sense, it is noted that this duality can weaken the enclave's **identity** narrative, dispersing communication efforts and hindering the construction of a common and cohesive story, both at the institutional and business levels.

From some parts of the private sector and some neighborhood associations, there has been a desire to officially recover the name “*El Castillo*” as a way to promote it with a clear historical narrative, and as a sign of identity for its residents.

Another part of the private sector does not look favorably upon a name change at this time, especially due to the costs it could entail, given the history of investment in positioning and branding around “*Caleta de Fuste*”.

According to various profiles interviewed, having an official name that is aligned between citizens, administration and the tourism sector would not only contribute to strengthening the external projection of the destination, but would also help to consolidate a shared identity narrative among those who live in it, manage it and promote it.

#### Absence of distinctive attributes.

The interviews revealed that the destination lacks distinctive attributes beyond its sun and beach offerings. Participants indicated that the current differentiating factors are limited to the **San Buenaventura Tower** (“*The Castle*”), which gives the enclave its name but **has no active tourist use**, and the artificial beach.

The tower, declared a Site of Cultural Interest (BIC), is reduced to a symbolic presence in the landscape, surrounded by hotels, with no organized tours or access. Some interviewees indicate that work is currently underway to activate it as a historical center, from which guided tours and routes can be organized, connecting heritage and the surrounding area.

Even so, those interviewed mentioned other proposals, such as creating a "historic center" with pedestrian plazas, signage, and cultural spaces. This vision seeks to counter the perception that **the destination is mostly "artificial"** (built from scratch in recent decades) and lacks an organic or traditional character that distinguishes it from other similar tourist developments on the island.

Additionally, the importance of **advancing the positioning of the destination** through distinctive attributes and infrastructures in the tourism verticals in which the enclave could excel is emphasized. For example, promoting nautical tourism linked to the marina, the golf segment as a premium leisure offering, or the family and green approach, integrating them into a unified narrative that highlight values different from other destinations on the island.

#### Weakening of distinctive landscape values.

The interviews conducted reveal that the destination is **losing its identity as a "green oasis,"** a distinguishing feature compared to the arid environment of Fuerteventura. Participants point out that this visual hallmark, based on gardens and green spaces that contrast with the generally dry landscape, is being weakened by a lack of cleaning, maintenance, and care of the area's vegetation (as has been observed in previous challenges).

Specifically, it is mentioned that areas like Montaña Blanca had potential for green infrastructure, but current deterioration diminishes this appeal. Some interviewees indicate that the town center is increasingly perceived as an artificial development lacking landscape cohesion, which erodes its unique character.

Even so, they believe that progress must be made on proposals to recover this value, such as green regeneration plans that integrate gardens, pedestrian routes and priority maintenance of spaces natural.

#### 4.2.7. Gap between tourism brand and destination reality

The participatory process has also revealed a concern among tourism sector agents about the existence of a palpable difference between the projected image of the destination and the real experience offered in its urban environment.

Based on the testimonies gathered, this challenge is expressed in three main aspects:

- 1) **Dissonance between promotional positioning and the urban environment;**
- 2) **Degradation of the complementary commercial offer** and its impact on the overall experience of visitor;
- 3) **Reputational and perceived positioning risk**, as a consequence of these disconnections.

#### Dissonance between promotional positioning and the urban environment.

Several interviewees highlighted the positioning and promotion of *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste*. The perception of the city as a *tourist destination with accommodation options based on 4- and 5-star hotels, golf courses, and high-quality relaxation experiences* **does not fully reflect the current state of its basic infrastructure** or the overall quality of its offerings. It is noted that, while the hotel sector has undergone a continuous process of renovation and adaptation to international standards, and some establishments are capable of meeting those standards, the urban environment surrounding these hotels does not always match the perceived quality.

In this regard, it is noted that the visitor experience, once they leave the hotel premises, is affected by factors such as deteriorated sidewalks and street furniture, inadequate lighting, and a general lack of maintenance of public spaces. These contrasts create a perception of neglect that, according to these stakeholders, can negatively impact the perception of the destination, affecting both customer loyalty and future recommendations.

This contrast between the "promotional promise" and the everyday use of the "urban environment" is not presented merely as an aesthetic or functional problem, but as an element that undermines the coherence of the destination's positioning. The interviews reiterate that a well-maintained environment, aligned with the quality of the accommodation offerings, not only improves the tourist experience but also reinforces the destination's perceived value in the market.

#### Degradation of the complementary commercial offer.

Although this aspect will be addressed in greater depth in challenge 3.2.10 (linked to economic revitalization), in this section it is considered relevant to highlight the direct impact that the **deterioration of commercial spaces** has on the **perception of the overall quality of the destination**.

The everyday urban experience, as lived by the resident or the tourist outside the hotel, is key to the consolidation of a competitive tourist destination, and the degradation of these spaces generates a feeling of mismatch with respect to the standards expected of an enclave that aspires to be positioned in the mid-to-high-end segment.

#### Reputational and perceived positioning risk.

One idea that emerges clearly, as a consequence of the two previous aspects, is the concern (especially from the business sector) about the possible deterioration of the destination's image as a result of the mismatches between the projected tourism brand and the conditions of the real urban environment.

Although the actors interviewed value positively the positioning achieved by Caleta de Fuste as a tourist enclave with a quality hotel offer, they warn that this **positioning comes into tension with the shortcomings observed** outside the perimeter of the resorts.

It is mentioned that the visitor experience changes drastically the moment they leave the hotel and encounter deteriorated sidewalks, degraded commercial spaces, little urban activity, or problems with cleanliness and maintenance. This gap between what was promised in the promotion and what was found during the actual visit is interpreted as a **reputational risk**. Several stakeholders

They allude to the negative effect that this type of experience can have on ratings on digital platforms, personal recommendations, and customer loyalty.

Furthermore, some participants in the process express that this “broken promise” particularly affects certain market segments. They cite the case of visitors who, attracted by the narrative of exclusivity associated with four- and five-star hotels or the surrounding golf courses, arrive with high expectations that are not met by either the urban environment or its complementary tourist and commercial offerings.

#### 4.2.8. Lack of strategic planning

Numerous institutional, business and social actors have conveyed the need to move towards a clearer, more solid strategic and operational planning with "common" objectives (between public administration and business agents) for *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste*.

While the dynamism of the city center is recognized as the economic engine of the municipality, the contributions gathered indicate that **the growth of the destination has not been accompanied by a defined roadmap**, with vision, objectives and medium and long-term plans.

According to the participants, this challenge manifests itself in three main aspects:

- 1) **Reactive management model and lack of** medium and long-term planning;
- 2) **Lack of adequate public infrastructure** for a competitive tourist destination;
- 3) **Lack of collaborative governance mechanisms** that allow for the articulation of priorities and alignment efforts among the different actors in the territory.

##### Reactive management model and lack of planning.

The **lack of a clear and shared roadmap** for the future of *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste* is an issue raised by various stakeholders (both public and private) during the participatory process. It is noted that municipal actions tend to respond to specific emergencies or circumstances, without being integrated into a long-term plan that defines the desired model for the area's tourism and urban development. wishes to build.

The business sector is calling for a strategy that combines urban sustainability, an improved tourist experience, diversification of offerings, and harmonious coexistence. Without clear direction, decisions risk being perceived as arbitrary or disconnected, negatively impacting both daily operations and the destination's competitiveness.

However, there have been plans for modernization and improvement of tourism competitiveness in this tourist center:

- **First Modernization, Improvement and Competitiveness Increase Plan for Caleta de Fuste.**

Approved definitively in 2016 (Decree 44/2016, of May 5). Its objective was to regulate the requalification and renewal of the tourist center through public and private actions, adapting it to new tourist demands.

• **Second Modernization, Improvement and Competitiveness Enhancement Plan for Caleta de Fuste<sup>5</sup>.**

Approved definitively in 2022 (Decree 157/2022, of June 30). It represents the update and expansion of the first plan, incorporating additional actions not contemplated in the 2016 plan. It includes improvements in infrastructure, public spaces, shops and road connections (such as new squares, shopping centers and renovations in El Castillo).

However, the agents comment that these plans have had almost no real impact on the destination, beyond some isolated actions, **without becoming a clear roadmap for the destination.**

Another aspect highlighted is the local corporation's tendency to resolve day-to-day problems as they arise, without any planning—according to the participants—to anticipate needs, prioritize investments, or design interventions in a programmed manner.

This management model, which some actors describe as "reactive", is characterized by responding to specific incidents, but without generating a strategic framework to guide the future development of the core, probably, in the opinion of the agents, due to a lack of technical resources of the City Council.

The private sector and associations interpret this way of operating as hindering the consolidation of a comprehensive vision. Lacking a shared strategic agenda, they say, decisions are made based on urgent needs or external pressures, making it difficult to establish a coherent and sustainable urban identity.

This dynamic would also limit, according to some interviewees, the municipality's ability to compete for external funds or to put forward solid investment proposals to other administrations.

It is noted, for example, that without structured planning, it is difficult to develop projects eligible for European grants or funding instruments, which could represent a loss of opportunities for the destination.

Furthermore, according to the comments received, **the City Council does not have an Anti-Fraud Measures Plan**, an essential document for directly attracting European funding, making it the only local entity in the Canary Islands without one.

Another aspect is the perception that *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste* has grown driven by the tourism market and private initiative, rather than by a strategic direction driven by the public sector. The urban and demographic expansion of the town, along with its consolidation as a significant tourist destination on the island, has not been accompanied—according to those interviewed—by a comprehensive reflection on what kind of destination they wish to create.

The lack of an explicit reference model, as participants indicate, has resulted in an image that some describe as “fragmented” or “diffuse.” While some sectors promote a family-oriented approach, others allude to the sporting potential or the appeal of golf and high-end tourism. Without a common strategy to guide decisions regarding public space, the

<sup>5</sup> Government of the Canary Islands. *Second Plan for Modernization, Improvement and Increased Competitiveness of the tourism sector of Caleta Antigua*. of Shank, TM of Fuerteventura.

In areas such as facilities, mobility, or external promotion, a disconnect arises between individual efforts and collective objectives.

This situation would also have effects on private investment: the lack of a defined destination model - as expressed by various representatives of the business sector - introduces a degree of uncertainty that can hinder strategic decision-making or the diversification of tourism products.

#### **Lack of adequate public infrastructure.**

Throughout the participatory process, the **lack of adequate public facilities** to support the tourism development of *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste* was also discussed. Despite being the main economic hub of the municipality and one of the most important tourist destinations on the island, the area lacks the infrastructure necessary to consolidate a diversified, cohesive offering aligned with tourism competitiveness standards.

According to interview participants, the **lack of quality public spaces is one of the most structural deficiencies in the town center**. They noted the absence of publicly owned cultural or social infrastructure capable of revitalizing the destination beyond the traditional "sun and beach" leisure activities.

Specifically, the report mentions the **lack of auditoriums, cultural centers, multipurpose halls, or conference spaces**, which significantly limits the development of a stable cultural agenda or the attraction of events that would diversify demand. This deficiency has a particular impact in two areas: firstly, it reduces the options for visitors to enjoy activities outside the beach; secondly, it restricts opportunities for the resident community to meet and participate, affecting the social fabric of the area.

Another aspect mentioned is the **lack of modern and accessible sports infrastructure**.

The current facilities are reported to be scarce, unattractive, and do not meet contemporary standards of inclusion or comfort. In particular, the **playgrounds are deemed insufficient** due to their **outdated design and lack of shade**, making them inadequate spaces for families to spend time.

Beyond the specific types of infrastructure, what underlies the diagnosis is a sense of **a lack of spaces that articulate the identity of the town center**. There is a lack of vibrant plazas, landmarks, and community spaces or areas that can serve as meeting points for both residents and tourists.

The lack of public infrastructure has a direct impact on the perception of the destination. According to the interviews, the absence of modern and well-maintained facilities projects an **image of insufficient public investment** and leaves the impression that the town center is **geared exclusively towards tourism** without any return on investment for the community.

In short, the lack of facilities is not only a supply problem for residents, but a structural factor that conditions the evolution of the tourism model, the diversification of the local economy and the quality of coexistence.

Another element that generates greater consensus among the key stakeholders consulted is the **insufficient adaptation of the intercity public transport network** to the real needs of

The tourist hub of *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste*. Although direct responsibility for this network lies with the Island Council of Fuerteventura, the general perception is that the current infrastructure has not kept pace with the urban, residential, and tourist growth of the area.

It is described that, while the city center has experienced a progressive expansion of its residential and hotel areas, bus routes, frequencies, and stops have not been adapted or reinforced proportionally. As a result, a feeling of functional isolation is generated, especially among those without private transportation.

Beyond the frequency of service, the interviews revealed a **recurring complaint regarding the condition of the bus stops**. It was noted that a significant number of **shelters are in poor condition, or simply missing**, forcing users to wait without protection from the sun, wind, or rain. This lack of basic street furniture not only reduces user comfort but also projects an image of institutional neglect incompatible with a destination that aspires to quality standards.

According to the information provided, the current number of bus shelters does not meet the actual needs of the area: many stops lack shade, seating, or lighting, and do not have clear signage indicating schedules, routes, or waiting times. This lack of information and comfort particularly affects the elderly, families with children, and people with reduced mobility—groups that require accessible and safe waiting conditions.

For a destination that welcomes thousands of visitors each year, the lack of efficient, dignified, and modern public transportation weakens its position as a sustainable, accessible, and well-connected destination. The lack of investment in this area translates, in practice, into greater dependence on private vehicles, with the resulting consequences: congestion, parking problems, environmental impact, and a decline in the quality of public space.

Although intercity transport is not the direct responsibility of the City Council, those consulted consider it **a priority for the institution to assume a more proactive and assertive role with the Island Council**. They demand that the local administration foster a firm dialogue that requires:

- The modernization of urban equipment related to transport, with modern, accessible canopies equipped with user information systems.
- The review and optimization of routes, with the aim of improving the reach of the lines and their adaptation to the points of interest of the destination and the reinforcement of frequencies, especially in critical time slots for work shifts and tourist enjoyment.

The Island Council, for its part, has stated its intention to implement improvements in frequency and bus shelters, as well as the renewal of the bus fleet, incorporating electric buses that should be operational throughout the island by the first quarter of 2026.

In short, it is considered that the transport network must evolve to match the strategic role that *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste* plays within the island's tourism ecosystem.

#### **Lack of collaborative governance mechanisms.**

Finally, the lack of governance spaces that allow the various actors (institutions, companies, associations and citizens) to debate, reach consensus and agree on a joint roadmap is highlighted.

Although the local and island administrations are acknowledged as willing to engage in dialogue, this exchange is currently considered more informal than organized and formal. According to the interviews, there is no permanent forum, technical committee, or participatory planning instrument to channel the various perspectives and proposals toward a common goal.

In this regard, several stakeholders point to the **need to activate or consolidate an organizational and planning body** capable of translating territorial consensus into concrete and measurable actions. This lack of governance structure is also linked to the fragmentation of efforts, the duplication of tasks, and the difficulty in aligning actions for promotion, maintenance, and territorial development.

In summary, the participatory process reflects a clear demand to **move towards more collaborative management**.

#### 4.2.9. Need for improved capacity of the City Council

Another frequently mentioned challenge is the perception that the City Council's operational capacity has operational and administrative limitations that affect its response to the demands of *Castle - Caleta de Fuste*.

The agents consulted point to deficiencies in economic resources, staffing and agility in processes, which generates blockages in the provision of basic services, the processing of files and the execution of key projects for the destination.

This challenge is structured around four aspects highlighted during the interviews:

- 1) **Limitations in the allocation of economic resources;**
- 2) **Insufficient technical and qualified personnel;**
- 3) **Need to streamline administrative processes;** and
- 4) **Absence of collaborative management mechanisms.**

##### Limitations in the allocation of economic resources

Participants in the participatory process emphasize that the City Council **lacks sufficient funds to undertake the necessary investments in infrastructure, services, and maintenance of the destination**, or at least those required for a leading tourist destination. This deficiency is perceived as exacerbating other challenges, such as street cleaning and urban maintenance, where current contracts do not reflect the actual volume of tourism.

To overcome this limitation, and to further improve economic management, a **proactive strategy for attracting external funding** at the regional, national, and/or European levels is needed. Accessing these resources requires compliance with regulatory requirements, such as developing an anti-fraud plan that guarantees transparency in fund management and prevents the risk of non-compliance. Without this tool, the City Council misses out on funding opportunities.

In the interviews, various actors insist that this collection of resources would not only allow for better public services, but would also facilitate the execution of pending investment projects, which require the availability of budgets.

### Insufficient technical and qualified personnel

One of the most frequently cited weaknesses is the **lack of technical staff at the City Hall**, which affects both the provision of daily services and the administrative processing of files. Those interviewed mentioned that this shortage extends from maintenance workers (such as those in green areas, as detailed in section 3.2.3) to technicians responsible for processing files, tenders, and licenses.

Specifically, **there is a strong emphasis on the complete replacement of all positions in the Local Police force**, whose current staffing is estimated at around 15 officers for patrolling the entire municipality. This results in insufficient ratios for a tourist center with a high population equivalent (up to 20,000-25,000 equivalent inhabitants during peak season). Those consulted are demanding a complete replacement, noting that 100% replacement of the police force is permitted.

Furthermore, this deficiency extends to other areas, such as staff for the control of service contracts (cleaning, pruning) and infrastructure, which delays urgent interventions and fuels the misalignment with the citizens.

### Need to streamline administrative processes

The City Council's administrative processes are perceived as slow and bureaucratic, generating frustration among residents and business owners by delaying project implementation and the resolution of issues. This slowness is particularly evident in the processing of tenders and licenses.

fundamentally.

To address this challenge, it is proposed to **support the streamlining of processes** in two ways: **digitization** of processes (incorporation of technology) and a **digital transformation** of the entity (changing the ways of carrying out the processes, thanks to technology).

The first step involves incorporating technology that facilitates and streamlines the processing of files, reducing resolution and processing times. Digital transformation goes further, changing the way we work to leverage technology to reduce administrative time.

Those interviewed point out that streamlining City Hall processes would not only speed up responses, but would also facilitate the economic development of the tourist center by facilitating investment and providing access to quality public services.

### Absence of a collaborative management mechanism

Finally, the **creation of formal collaboration mechanisms** is called for to overcome the current informal exchange, which does not translate into tangible results. Participants perceive a disconnect between the City Council and key social, business, and institutional stakeholders, hindering joint efforts and synergies.

Among the proposals, the most notable are sectoral roundtables or permanent technical committees, where associations, groups, and representatives can be heard in order to prioritize actions, accelerate projects, and improve coordination. These mechanisms would allow, for example, the alignment of priorities in security or maintenance, fostering shared management that restores trust.

#### 4.2.10. Need for greater economic and commercial revitalization of the area.

The last relevant challenge identified is the perception that the *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste* area

It requires greater economic and commercial revitalization to boost its vitality, both in terms of tourist appeal and integration with the local community.

On the one hand, the comments received highlight the deterioration of some commercial spaces, especially the shopping centers in the tourist area. Multiple interviews refer to the state of neglect or aging of shops and arcades, with closed shutters, outdated signage, and a scarce presence of brands or services that offer distinctive appeal. This situation is interpreted as weakening one of the key pillars of the tourism model: the possibility of offering experiences that complement accommodation, such as strolling, shopping, or enjoying local cuisine.

According to the stakeholders consulted, this lack of commercial dynamism directly impacts tourist behavior: their stay is increasingly concentrated within accommodation establishments, reducing the time spent in public spaces and limiting the economic impact visitors generate in the surrounding area. This phenomenon has not only economic but also symbolic implications, as it **reinforces the perception of a fragmented destination that has little to offer beyond hotels**, lacking a vibrant center or a consolidated urban identity.

Furthermore, some participants mention a domino effect: less pedestrian traffic means less incentive for new businesses to open or for existing ones to renovate, which in turn deepens the feeling of decay. This uninspiring and stagnant urban image contrasts sharply with the promise of quality projected by the destination's tourism brand, creating what several stakeholders describe as a dissonance between what is communicated and what visitors actually encounter when walking through the commercial areas.

A recurring complaint among residents is that the revitalization efforts undertaken by the City Council focus solely on tourists, ignoring the needs and preferences of the local population. Those interviewed expressed frustration at the lack of activities specifically designed for them, which creates a sense of exclusion and weakens the sense of community in an area that is, above all, a mixed residential space.

For example, it is frequently cited that when the City Council organizes events or activities, promotional posters appear only in English, without a Spanish version. This hinders access for Spanish-speaking residents and projects an image of absolute priority given to foreign visitors. This practice not only limits local participation but is also perceived as an imbalance that erodes the destination's identity and exacerbates the misalignment between the population and the administration. Residents are calling for inclusive initiatives, such as cultural workshops, local markets, or sporting events that foster interaction between tourists and the community, contributing to a more harmonious coexistence and a greater sense of belonging.

### 4.3. SWOT

The **SWOT** analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) represents a useful tool for **synthesizing the strategic diagnosis described** regarding the current situation of *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste* as a tourist destination.

This analysis is based on the **information gathered during the participatory process**, the geographical, historical and socioeconomic context described in section 3.1, and the challenges identified in section 3.2.

Its objective is **to provide a balanced view** that identifies internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats), serving as a basis for defining a future strategic roadmap.

The SWOT analysis is structured in two main parts: the **internal analysis**, which evaluates aspects controllable by local stakeholders, and the **external analysis**, which considers the broader environment in which the destination is situated. For each category, the key elements are detailed, supported by evidence from the diagnostic analysis, and preliminary recommendations for addressing them are included.

INTERNAL ANALYSIS
STRENGTHS
<p>The strengths represent the positive internal attributes that position <i>Castillo - Caleta de Fuste</i> as a competitive enclave. These stem primarily from its privileged geographic location, its established tourism infrastructure, and its economic role on the island.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p>• <b>Strategic and privileged geographical location:</b> Situated on the central-eastern coast of Fuerteventura, the destination boasts a natural bay sheltered from prevailing winds, making it ideal for family tourism and nautical leisure activities. Its proximity to Fuerteventura Airport (FUE) reduces travel times and optimizes the arrival experience, attracting international markets. This is complemented by excellent road connectivity via the FV-2, positioning it as a central hub in the island's tourism model alongside Corralejo, Costa Calma, and Jandía.</p> </li> <li> <p>• <b>Low seasonality and stable occupancy:</b> The average hotel occupancy rate remains stable for most of the year, with peaks in summer, but without marked fluctuations. This stability guarantees a continuous flow of income and employment, differentiating the destination from other locations with greater seasonal dependence, and reinforces its economic sustainability.</p> </li> <li> <p>• <b>Diverse and well-established accommodation options:</b> With a mix of hotels, resorts, and holiday apartments, the destination attracts a variety of segments, from family tourism to sports tourism. Infrastructure such as the marina (with over 100 berths) and golf courses attract visitors with higher purchasing power, consolidating a comprehensive positioning that goes beyond sun and sand.</p> </li> <li> <p>• <b>Artificial beach adapted for families:</b> The approximately 800-meter-long, sheltered, and tranquil beach represents a key feature in differentiating the destination. Designed for safe swimming, it is ideal for family tourism and is complemented by recent investments in accessibility (ramps, amphibious chairs) and amenities (pergolas, eco-islands).</p> </li> </ul>

- **Diverse and cosmopolitan resident population:** With sustained population growth (from 6,000 to more than 10,000 inhabitants in two decades) and a high proportion of foreign residents, the core generates a multilingual base that enriches coexistence and supports the demand for services throughout the year, avoiding the feeling of a "ghost town" in the off-season.
- **Historical and heritage elements:** The Tower of San Buenaventura (a listed building since 1949) acts as a symbolic anchor, offering potential for tourism narratives based on the defensive history of the site. Its integration into the urban landscape adds a distinctive value compared to more recent tourism developments.
- **Economic role as a municipal engine:** As the main economic engine of the municipality of Antigua and one of the tourist pillars of Fuerteventura, it generates employment in services (more than 80% of the activity) and contributes to the island's GDP, with a critical mass that ensures social and commercial vitality.

## WEAKNESSES

Weaknesses correspond to negative internal factors that limit the competitiveness of the destination.

- **Deficiencies in cleaning and waste collection services:** The perception of accumulated dirt on public roads, overflowing containers, and deteriorated street furniture directly affects the destination's image. Current contracts are understaffed, with coverage limited to morning shifts and precarious working conditions, leading to inefficiencies and reliance on reactive measures.
- **Lack of public safety and surveillance:** The insufficient number of local police officers (around 15 for the entire municipality) leaves no nighttime coverage, generating a perceived insecurity due to thefts, squatting, and antisocial behavior. Critical areas such as the Deputy Mayor's office or abandoned shopping centers amplify this weakness, negatively impacting the tourist and residential experience.
- **Deterioration in the maintenance of urban spaces:** Broken sidewalks, inadequate lighting (dark areas), neglected gardens (dried palm trees, unwatered lawns), and deteriorated street furniture project an image of neglect. Although there are occasional investments, maintenance is reactive and limited by insufficient staff (e.g., only one operator for street lighting).
- **Stalled handover of urban developments:** Areas such as Fuerteventura Golf Resort and Salinas Golf Resort have not been officially handed over, blocking the provision of public services in developed areas. This creates legal and operational ambiguities, exacerbating cleaning and maintenance problems in areas used by the public.
- **Misalignment between the population and the City Council:** There is a perceptual gap between residents/business owners and the administration, with open informal communication, but slow implementation. There is a perception of unequal treatment between the interior and the coast, and insufficient coordination with the Island Council. This erodes trust and limits citizen participation.
- **Destination identity problem:** The nominal duality ("El Castillo" vs. "Caleta de Fuste") dilutes the cohesion, coupled with the absence of distinctive attributes beyond sun and beach.
- **Gap between tourism brand and reality:** Promotion as a premium destination contrasts sharply with the deteriorating urban environment, impacting its reputation. The decline of complementary commercial offerings (empty premises, abandoned centers) limits experiences outside of hotels, reducing customer loyalty.

- **Lack of strategic planning:** Management is reactive, without a medium- to long-term roadmap. Existing modernization plans (2016 and 2022) have had limited impact, and collaborative governance mechanisms to align stakeholders are lacking.
- **Limited capacity of the City Council:** Insufficient economic resources, scarce technical staff (e.g., no complete replacement of the Local Police) and slow administrative processes block implementations. The absence of an Anti-Fraud Plan limits access to external funds.
- **Insufficient economic and commercial revitalization:** Deteriorated shopping centers and a lack of complementary offerings (gastronomy, leisure) concentrate spending in hotels, reducing local impact. Events prioritize tourists, excluding residents and eroding community life.

## EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

### OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities represent positive external factors that the destination can leverage to strengthen its position. These stem from global tourism trends, available funds, and island dynamics.

- **Sustained growth in tourist demand:** Fuerteventura is registering record figures, with a competitive advantage over Mediterranean destinations due to its low seasonality. *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste* can attract more visitors through diversification (nautical, golf, family activities), appealing to higher-value segments.
- **Funds for modernization and sustainability:** Access to European and regional funding for infrastructure renewal, digitalization and sustainability.
- **Trends towards active and responsible tourism:** Global growth of sustainable, nautical and sports tourism offers opportunities to enhance the port, golf and bay activities.
- **Increased long-stay tourism:** Digital nomads and extended stays favor destinations with air connectivity, stable climate, and residential options. Developing digital infrastructure and coworking spaces can attract this segment.
- **Improved mobility and connectivity:** Possibility of reinforcing public transport (new electric buses from the Cabildo in 2026) to break the hotel "bubble effect", connecting with the interior and excursions, and improving accessibility for residents and tourists.
- **Integration with island products:** Collaborate with other enclaves on the island for tourist packages that include nature, culture and gastronomy, expanding the offer and attracting higher-spending visitors.
- **Demand for differentiated experiences:** The trend towards seeking destinations with "soul" allows for the recovery of historical identity (Tower) and "green oasis" through cultural events and landscape regeneration.

### THREATS

Threats are negative external factors that can impact the destination. These include economic, competitive, and regulatory risks.

- **Instability in key source markets:** Dependence on the United Kingdom (vulnerable to geopolitical conflicts as it is no longer part of the European Union) may reduce tourist flows, affecting occupancy and employment.
- **Competition from emerging or recovered destinations:** Reopening of Mediterranean or Asian markets with high seasonality but competitive prices may divert visitors, if *Castillo - Caleta de Fuste* does not renew its offer.
- **Climate risks and resource scarcity:** Climate change (droughts, storms) and pressure on water/energy from a high population equivalent threaten sustainability, especially in an enclave arid.
- **Operating cost inflation:** Increased prices (energy, supplies) reduce company profitability, potentially lowering quality to maintain margins and affecting premium positioning.
- **Regulatory restrictions on development:** Urban planning moratoriums or island regulations on carrying capacity may limit expansions if the current saturation is not managed.
- **Saturation of public space:** Increased traffic generates congestion, degrading the experience and perception of overcrowding, if there is no investment in infrastructure.
- **Technological obsolescence:** Delays in the digitization of municipal systems limit efficiency administrative and competitiveness compared to advanced destinations.
- **Loss of certifications and reputation:** Incidents such as the revocation of Blue Flag status due to regulatory inconsistencies (e.g., camels on the beach) can damage international image.
- **Dependence on the accommodation value chain:** If spending is concentrated on hotels, it weakens local commerce; current tourism seeks authentic experiences, so it can be a threat to the destination if it is not diversified.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

This strategic diagnosis represents a comprehensive, participatory overview of the current state of *Castillo – Caleta de Fuste*, based on input from institutional, business, and social stakeholders. From this snapshot of the destination, a **series of recommendations** emerge.

which could serve as support for reflection and for considering **possible improvement actions** that can be incorporated into an operational strategy.

Therefore, these recommendations should not be understood as a defined roadmap or action plan. They are presented as **actions that encourage further** exploration of some key aspects and that could be taken into account in future planning.

*In this regard, it is recommended that any future intervention based on these recommendations be preceded by more in-depth technical analyses that allow them to be dimensioned, compared and validated, thus guaranteeing their technical, economic and regulatory viability.*

The recommendations put forward are the following, categorized according to the estimated priority level for each one (from “very high”, “high” or “medium”).

CATEGORIZED RECOMMENDATIONS		
No.	Recommendation	Priority
1	Moving towards a local strategy.	HIGH
2	Activate a crash plan while the new cleaning contract is being formalized.	VERY HIGH
3	Provide external technical assistance to strengthen local management.	HIGH
4	Strengthen institutional coordination and joint work with local stakeholders.	AVERAGE
5	Prioritize full coverage of local police positions.	VERY HIGH
6	Restore the permanent operational base of the Local Police in the tourist center.	HIGH
7	Request more Civil Guard officers.	HIGH
8	Study formulas to facilitate the acceptance of housing developments.	AVERAGE
9	Outsourcing of the maintenance of street lighting and green areas.	HIGH
10	Move towards a single destination name.	AVERAGE
11	Promote the use of historical heritage (Tower of San Buenaventura).	AVERAGE
12	Promote greater care for public space "among everyone".	AVERAGE
13	Diversification of the tourism offer.	AVERAGE

Each of the recommendations is briefly described below:

### 1. Move towards a local strategy.

This document constitutes a strategic diagnosis, built upon an analysis of the context and a participatory process that gathered perceptions, experiences, and proposals from key stakeholders in the destination. This exercise allows for a better understanding of the current challenges facing *Castillo – Caleta de Fuste* and provide elements for reflection to guide its future development.

However, it would be beneficial for this diagnosis to serve as the starting point for a **comprehensive local strategy**, specifically designed to address the evolution of the town center as both a tourist destination and a residential area. Unlike the present document, such a strategy would require **more in-depth technical development**, including specific studies, a defined destination vision and objectives, and the creation of a realistic action plan with indicators and defined responsibilities.

**Having a clear and shared roadmap among all stakeholders** would allow for the alignment of institutional, business, and social efforts around a common development model.

This would contribute to improving the planning of future actions and to more effectively guiding the investments and projects promoted in the territory, respecting the values and characteristics of *Castillo – Caleta de Fuste*.

This framework would allow the municipality to move from a reactive management model to a proactive one, with stable and consensual planning in the medium and long term.

## 2. Activate a crash plan while the new municipal cleaning contract is being formalized.

Currently, the City Council is in the process of drafting the new tender specifications for the urban cleaning service (both street cleaning and organic waste collection).

Although this future contract will undoubtedly represent a positive turning point in the improvement of public spaces once it is finalized and implemented, the necessary timeframe for its formalization remains. **This timeframe seems "extensive" given the critical nature of the situation and the entity's historical timelines for contracting processes**, specifically with the previous cleaning contracts analyzed in the diagnostic report, which took **11 months** from the approval of the contract file to their formalization.

Given this timeframe, it is advisable **to consider implementing a targeted action plan**. This plan would allow for an immediate response to the most urgent needs regarding the cleaning, conservation, and maintenance of public spaces, thus mitigating the impact that their deterioration can have on the perception of the destination and the experience of residents and visitors.

Activating these types of measures could help maintain minimum standards of urban quality while the administrative procedure for the main contract is completed.

## 3. Facilitate external technical assistance to strengthen local management.

Various stakeholders agree that one of the factors limiting the City Council's capacity to act is the **scarcity of** available human and technical resources. This situation hinders the advancement of certain projects and slows down the processing of key initiatives for the development of the area.

destination.

In this regard, the **incorporation of external technical support** to complement the municipal team could be considered, especially in areas requiring specialization or temporary reinforcement. This technical assistance would allow, for example, progress in the development of documents such as the Anti-Fraud Plan (necessary to access certain European funding programs), streamline procedures, support strategic initiatives or projects, assistance in securing funding, or strengthen administrative digitization, for example.

#### 4. Strengthen institutional coordination and joint work with local stakeholders.

Currently, regular meetings are held between economic and social agents of the territory, such as the "Local Development Committee" promoted by AECA, which have made it possible to generate a channel of dialogue on the needs of the destination.

However, it would be advisable for the **City Council itself** to promote and **assume a greater leadership role in formalizing these spaces**, providing them with a stable structure and granting them leadership.

This leading role, along with an operational approach spearheaded by the city council (drafting minutes, setting regular schedules, monitoring agreements, etc.), could help **transform these forums into effective tools for institutional coordination**. A space organized and promoted by the administration would allow for a clearer identification of action plans, improve the traceability of proposals, and facilitate the implementation of specific initiatives for the benefit of all.

of destiny.

#### 5. Prioritize full coverage of local police positions.

The assessment reveals the importance of having a sufficient operational staff of local police in an area that combines high tourist traffic, established residential areas, and spaces requiring a continuous preventative presence in public areas. According to the assessment, increased patrol capacity would contribute both to improving the response to everyday incidents and to reinforcing the perception of safety and order, especially in high-traffic areas.

The participatory process revealed that, although the municipal police force has approximately 19 officers, only about 15 are currently available for active patrol duties due to medical leave or assignment to administrative tasks. It was also noted that the Local Police force's staffing structure includes a larger number of positions (approximately 35) that are not fully filled.

Based on these contributions, it is proposed as a priority recommendation **to progressively advance in the full coverage of the Local Police positions** already planned in the municipal structure.

According to those interviewed, **reinforcing the existing staff would allow for increased presence on the street, recovery of currently uncovered time slots, and strengthening preventive surveillance in the tourist center**, without needing to depend exclusively on external reinforcements.

#### 6. Restore the permanent operational base of the Local Police in the tourist center.

With the aim of reducing the operational gaps that, according to reports, occur during shift changes - currently centralized in the Antigua hub - it is suggested **to recover and enable a permanent operational base in Castillo - Caleta de Fuste**.

This facility would not entail replacing the existing headquarters, but rather creating a decentralized operational point that would allow for shift changes, coordinated patrols, and a continuous police presence in the municipality's main tourist hub. According to the stakeholders consulted, having their own operational space within the destination, as existed previously, would be beneficial.

At this time, it could help optimize response times and avoid prolonged interruptions. in surveillance and reinforcing the perception of proximity and control in public space.

### 7. Request more Civil Guard officers.

During the participatory process, it became clear that security in *Castillo-Caleta de Fuste* depends not only on the operational capacity of the Local Police, but also on the presence and actions of agencies with different and complementary responsibilities, such as the Civil Guard. Participants emphasized that there are areas of intervention (related to certain crimes, investigations, control of organized groups, or more complex operations) that exceed the powers of the local police and necessarily require the involvement of state-level agencies.

In this regard, while acknowledging the current role of the Civil Guard in the municipality, there is a perception that the intensity of tourism, the residential nature of the town, and the complexity of some emerging problems would justify a greater deployment or operational presence adapted to this specific reality. This need is not solely related to nighttime coverage—where shortcomings have also been identified—but rather to the overall capacity to respond to situations requiring specialized skills and continuous surveillance.

Based on these contributions, it is recommended **to strengthen dialogue and institutional coordination with the competent administrative levels in matters of citizen security**, so that the suitability of existing resources to the characteristics can be evaluated. of destiny.

According to reports, improving coordination between the Local Police and the Civil Guard, along with **staffing levels adjusted to the actual pressure on the tourist area**, would contribute to improving the overall effectiveness of the security system and reinforcing the perception of control and coexistence in public spaces.

### 8. Study formulas to facilitate the acceptance of urbanizations.

Regarding urban developments not yet formally accepted by the City Council, differing positions have emerged among the stakeholders (administration, developers, and homeowners' associations) concerning the procedures, responsibilities, and requirements necessary to move forward with these processes. This diversity of approaches has created a situation that limits the potential for improvement in some areas of the destination.

Given this reality, it could be useful **to establish spaces for technical and legal dialogue** that allow the parties to sit down together, with the aim of **identifying common ground** and moving, progressively and consensually, **towards effective solutions**. This would facilitate understanding between stakeholders and resolve situations that, due to their duration, directly impact the quality of the urban environment.

Consideration could be given to creating a multidisciplinary task force *specifically* focused on streamlining the handover processes for pending areas. This team would seek technical and legal solutions to unify urban quality standards across the country. core.

## 9. Outsourcing of the maintenance of lighting and green areas.

The diagnostic study reveals that two of the areas with the greatest impact on the everyday perception of public space—street lighting and landscaping—are also those with the most limited resources. This situation has direct effects on both the destination's image and the sense of comfort and safety for residents and visitors.

Regarding **public lighting**, the testimonies gathered indicate that the shortcomings are related to difficulties in corrective maintenance and replacement. It is reported that the City Council plans to promote the outsourcing of the service through a new maintenance contract, which is considered a positive step towards providing greater continuity and technical capacity to this function.

In this context, it is recommended **to proceed diligently with the formalization and implementation of this service**, so that response times to incidents can be reduced and adequate lighting can be ensured throughout the city center, especially in pedestrian areas and surrounding areas.  
sensitive.

Additionally, the report underscores that **the management of green spaces and the urban landscape requires** similar reflection. Interviews indicate a **progressive deterioration** of trees, gardens, and palm trees, linked to a lack of ongoing maintenance and a shortage of technical and human resources.

In this regard, it is considered advisable that **the City Council clearly define the desired landscape model** for *Castillo – Caleta de Fuste*. This includes recovering and reinforcing the concept of a “green oasis,” which has historically been identified as one of the destination's defining characteristics.

(and claimed by practically all of the contributions received), it will be necessary to accompany that decision with a **sufficient allocation of resources**, both in budgetary terms and in terms of specialized personnel and irrigation and conservation systems.

## 10. Move towards a single destination name.

The diagnosis reveals a **perceived "fragmented" identity**, marked by the coexistence of different names. While this diversity is part of the enclave's history and social reality, it also highlights the need for **greater clarity and coherence** in how the destination is presented and explained.

Without making any firm or immediate decisions, it might be appropriate **to initiate a process of institutional and social reflection** to reach a consensus on basic criteria regarding the destination's identity. This process should respect the symbolic values deeply rooted in the resident population while also taking into account the existing tourism positioning. Such an exercise could help strengthen the sense of belonging and improve the consistency between the projected image and the actual experience of the place.

## 11. Promote the use of historical heritage (Tower of San Buenaventura).

The historical heritage, with the Tower of San Buenaventura as its main landmark, appears in the assessment as an **asset with untapped potential**. Without proposing major interventions, greater integration of this element into the daily life of the destination could be considered, both from an urban and symbolic perspective.

**Small actions such as enhancement**, signage, interpretation or integration into routes could help strengthen the link between history, public space and tourist experience, improving the uniqueness of the destination.

## 12. Promote greater care for public space “among everyone”

Various sectors point out that the condition of public spaces depends not only on municipal management but also on the daily behavior of residents, visitors, and economic activity. In this regard, it would be worthwhile to consider **strengthening initiatives aimed at fostering shared responsibility in the use and care of the urban environment**.

These initiatives could combine **information campaigns, awareness-raising activities**, and reinforcement of existing regulations, contributing to improved civic responsibility and a reduction in practices that worsen the deterioration of public spaces. All of this would complement service improvements with **greater community involvement**.

## 13. Diversification of the tourism offer.

The destination is in a mature phase that requires a shift from an extensive growth model to a qualitative management approach that diversifies its attractions to **capture higher-value segments**. Currently, the offering is heavily concentrated on the "sun and beach" product, creating a structural dependence and vulnerability to market fluctuations.

Continue to develop the golf segment and increase nautical activities linked to the marina to attract visitors with higher purchasing power. It is also necessary to improve the quality of the sand on the beaches, as its current state makes it difficult to play sports such as volleyball or beach soccer.

This requires **clear planning**, a firm commitment, not only with "will" but also with **economic resources to finance transformative investments and actions**.

## 14. Attracting long-stay tourist profiles.

There is an opportunity to **attract digital nomads and temporary residents from a more affluent demographic**, leveraging the stable climate and airport connectivity. To solidify this profile, **investment in digital infrastructure** and coworking spaces is essential.

This type of profile has a high economic impact on the destination and could help to transition the perception of its positioning.

These suggestions should be understood as an **initial contribution to a broader process**. They do not replace formal strategic planning, nor do they exhaust all possible courses of action. Their value lies in **offering a useful starting point** for the administrations and stakeholders involved to initiate (or strengthen) a joint reflection on the steps necessary to improve the destination.

El contenido del presente documento ha sido elaborado por Cumbre 8 Islas S.L. en el marco del encargo profesional que nos vincula con la entidad destinataria, y atendiendo a la información, criterios, directrices e indicaciones facilitadas por dicha entidad.

Cumbre 8 Islas S.L. mantiene en todo caso la autoría del documento y el control sobre su resultado final, sin perjuicio de que determinados contenidos respondan a requerimientos o instrucciones expresas del cliente.

No se han introducido datos personales ni información especialmente protegida, de conformidad con el artículo 9 del Reglamento (UE) 2016/679 (RGPD) y el artículo 9 de la Ley Orgánica 3/2018, de Protección de Datos Personales y garantía de los derechos digitales.

Los derechos de autor del presente documento corresponden a Cumbre 8 Islas S.L., salvo que en los términos del encargo profesional o en el correspondiente contrato se haya establecido expresamente un régimen distinto de titularidad de la propiedad intelectual. En todo caso, el documento se ha elaborado exclusivamente para los fines pactados con la entidad destinataria.

Este documento no podrá ser reproducido, almacenado ni transmitido, total o parcialmente, por ningún medio ni en ninguna forma, sin autorización previa, expresa y por escrito de la titular de los derechos, salvo que así se disponga en los términos del encargo profesional o contrato que vincula a las partes.

Cumbre 8 Islas S.L. no asume responsabilidad por el uso que terceros hagan del documento, ni por interpretaciones, aplicaciones o decisiones adoptadas a partir de su contenido fuera del marco profesional, contractual y metodológico originalmente acordado, ni por desviaciones derivadas de instrucciones o información facilitadas por la entidad destinataria.

En la elaboración del presente documento se han podido emplear herramientas de inteligencia artificial (IA), incluidos modelos de lenguaje de gran escala (LLM), utilizadas exclusivamente como apoyo técnico puntual y bajo supervisión humana, dentro de un entorno de trabajo cerrado, garantizando la seguridad de la información y la confidencialidad de los contenidos.

