



This morning tourism and land secretary Alejandra Ferrer and environment secretary Daisee Aguilera unveiled the two winning projects in the first Save Posidonia Project (SPP). Council officials and engineers of the winning proposals were joined at the ceremony by advisory board panelists, supporting firms and other associations involved in the initiative.

The 16-person advisory board that winnowed 14 proposals down to two number ones was made up of representatives of the Govern balear, the Formentera Council, scientific and academic quarters, fishing and nautical industries, scuba divers and members of environmental NGOs and the island's neighbourhood association. In the end proposals from IMEDEA and GEN-GOB were named this year's winners.

All told, participants in the initiative raised enough money to sponsor more than 132,000 square metres (m<sup>2</sup>) of seagrass meadows. The top contributors were Puleva (11,000m<sup>2</sup>), Trasmapi (10,000m<sup>2</sup>), Insotel (10,000m<sup>2</sup>), Beso Beach (6,250m<sup>2</sup>), Red Elèctrica (6,000m<sup>2</sup>), Ibifor (5,000m<sup>2</sup>), Estrella Galícia (5,000m<sup>2</sup>), Es Bàsic (5,000m<sup>2</sup>) and Ferrovial (4,000m<sup>2</sup>).

### **Selected projects**

The Mediterranean Institute of Advanced Studies (IMEDEA in Catalan) named their effort to study human's direct effect on posidonia meadows "Antroposi". The researchers, whose 18-month study will receive a grant of €83,822, say they will focus on shallow areas when considering the impact of ferries and pleasure craft, not to mention how effluent from treatment plants' underwater drain pipes and sewage offloaded from ships can effect posidonia and its ability to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>.

Researchers at environmental group GEN-GOB proposed an ecological study on anchoring points along the island's coast. They aim both to pinpoint the areas of serious environmental impact and develop maps based on the information, and to gauge the health of those posidonia meadows under pressure by anchoring watercraft. Selected to receive €48,836, the GEN-GOB study is forecast to take shape over the next two years.

### **Deepening the Save Posidonia Project commitment**

Environment secretary Daisee Aguilera announced plans moving forward to extend the Save Posidonia Project, saying “this summer we'll continue the same course” and describing plans for “educational campaigns and a local and international mobilising effort”. For Aguilera, the ultimate goal is for posidonia to become a kind of shorthand for Formentera. She cited the importance of conservation if Formentera is to hold on to its “sustainable destination” status and described the island's tourism model as “key to our ability to differentiate and continue offering something for all those seeking natural surroundings”.

The Council wishes to thank the private companies and individuals who contributed money and educational resources to the Save Posidonia Project. Said Aguilera: “It's the way to raise awareness and get all the stakeholders involved in conservation and showcasing these beautiful waters of ours”.