

SITS-OTB Results report - 2025

Executive summary

1106/2025

The OTB has presented the updated results for 27 out of the 30 indicators from the Sustainable Tourism Indicator System (SITS–OTB), a task that is carried out periodically based on data availability*. This update includes the latest figures for 10 environmental, 7 economic, and 10 sociocultural indicators across the three usual geographic areas of work: Barcelona city, Barcelona region, and Destination Barcelona. Most of the results remain fairly stable compared to the previous year, although in some cases, significant changes have been observed.

Environmental impact of tourism activity

The average distance travelled by tourists from their place of origin to the destination (I01), which serves as an approximation of tourism's contribution to the carbon footprint, increased once again across all geographical areas analysed due to the growth of international tourism, particularly intercontinental tourism. Although the year-on-year increase in this indicator is not significant, it has maintained an upward trend since the end of the COVID-19 crisis and, in the case of Barcelona city, it has already surpassed the levels recorded in 2018–2019.

The percentage of tourists arriving by sustainable collective transport modes (I09)—including ferries, ships, trams, metro, trains, buses, and coaches—remained largely unchanged, reaching 13.47% in Destination Barcelona as a whole. As a result, energy efficiency in terms of mobility to reach the destination remained stable.

Regarding internal transportation within the destination municipality, the proportion of tourists using active mobility (I10)—walking, cycling, non-electric scooters, etc.—in Barcelona region increased significantly (68.59%, +1.60pp compared with 2024). This proportion remained higher than in Barcelona City (46.21%), where, by contrast, the use of public transport as internal transportation (I11) continued to be more significant than in Barcelona region (34.20% versus 8.82%). Overall, however, the evolution of this indicator remained relatively stable compared with the previous year.

A particularly notable increase was observed in the percentage of tourism destinations and businesses committed to or certified in sustainability (I12) within Barcelona region. In 2025, 45.61% of tourism businesses in this area held a sustainability certification (+3.96pp compared with 2024), whereas in Barcelona city the figure stood at 27.40% (-2.12pp compared with 2024).

As for other environmental indicators that are not exclusive to tourism activity but help contextualize it, no environmental pollution episodes were recorded in the province of Barcelona during 2025 (I03), and the percentage of wastewater treated at secondary level or higher remained excellent (I04).

However, water consumption per capita (I06) experienced a slight increase, probably due to the lifting of most of the restrictive measures introduced to mitigate the effects of the drought experienced between 2022 and 2024. Finally, the percentage of energy generated from

renewable sources in Catalonia declined to 18.06% (-1.03pp compared with 2024), indicating no clear improvement in this indicator over time.

Impact of Tourism Activity on the Economy and the Labour Market

In economic terms, average expenditure per tourist per day during their stay (I15) continued to grow significantly. For the first time, spending exceeded €100 per person per night in Barcelona city (€106.27, +6.57% compared with 2024), while in Barcelona region it approached €50 per person per night (€49.33, +4.60% compared with 2024). These increases should be considered in the context of a period of high inflation, with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in the province of Barcelona rising by 2.4% in 2025.

The indicator measuring tourism tax revenue per resident (I16) also continued to increase. Considering only the revenue collected by the Government of Catalonia, €11.02 per resident was collected across Destination Barcelona (+1.38% compared with 2024). In Barcelona region, where €3.30 per resident was collected, the increase was particularly significant (+7.53%), while in Barcelona city this revenue remained close to €30 per resident (-0.41%).

In the labour market, 11.70% of all employed people in Destination Barcelona worked in tourism-related activities, a proportion (I17) that remained relatively stable compared with the previous year. According to 2024 data (the latest available), the wage ratio between tourism and non-tourism activities (I18) decreased slightly across all geographical areas analysed. In Destination Barcelona as a whole, tourism workers earned €0.70 for every €1 earned by workers in other economic sectors, indicating that the wage gap between tourism and other activities remained substantial.

In terms of gender equality, and also based on 2024 data, the gender pay ratio (I23) remained below 1 across the destination, meaning that women continued to earn lower gross salaries than men within tourism activities. Specifically, women earned €0.80 for every €1 earned by men, one more cent than the previous year. This suggests that the gender pay gap continued to narrow and returned to pre-pandemic levels, although it remains far from the ideal value of 1.

Finally, the economic area also includes indicators that measure tourism demand behaviour, such as seasonality (I14), which can affect both job quality and the social costs of tourism. This indicator, calculated as the ratio between the maximum and minimum monthly overnight stays, decreased across all geographical areas analysed, particularly in Barcelona region, where it fell from 6.22 to 3.99 (-35.93% compared with 2024).

The average length of stay (I19), another indicator linked to tourism demand patterns, recorded a slight decrease across Destination Barcelona, continuing the downward trend observed since the end of the pandemic. This indicator is important because longer stays generally contribute to a broader territorial distribution of tourism activity, allowing visitors to access a more diverse range of experiences and generating economic benefits for a wider variety of local stakeholders. At the same time, longer stays can encourage the consumption of complementary cultural activities and resources, thereby reinforcing diversification and enhancing the value of destination assets.

Effects on the Community and Public Management of Tourism Activity

Regarding residents' perceptions, the percentage of Barcelona city residents who considered tourism to be generally beneficial for the municipality (I25) remained at 59.6%, the same proportion as the previous year, when the lowest value in the historical series was recorded. As a result, the downward trend observed in this indicator in previous years appears to have stabilized after the significant decline registered in 2024.

Concerning whether more tourists should continue to be attracted to the destination (I26), 21.5% of Barcelona city residents supported further tourism growth, representing a slight decrease compared with the previous year (-2.3pp). In Barcelona region, the proportion of residents who believed their county should attract more tourists stood at 48.2% (-7.1pp).

Nevertheless, the tourism pressure indicator (I21) decreased slightly in 2025. Barcelona city recorded 9.51 tourists per 100 residents (-0.26 tourists compared with 2024), while Barcelona region, which generally has a lower ratio, recorded 2.39 tourists per 100 residents (-0.26 tourists).

In addition, Destination Barcelona continued to have specific sustainable tourism plans and strategies in place (I13). Both the Barcelona City Council and the Consortium Turisme de Barcelona carried out their actions in accordance with the Tourism Management Government Measure 2024–2027. Furthermore, the Barcelona City Council and the Barcelona Provincial Council, with the support of the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, the Consortium Barcelona Tourism, and county tourism bodies throughout the province, continued working on the Destination Barcelona Tourism Sustainability Commitment. This programme is open not only to businesses and services that meet certain requirements but also to tourism destinations themselves.

Regarding tourism governance, all the organizations mentioned above once again complied with 100% of the good governance principles established by the United Nations (I22): participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision.

Tourist Satisfaction

Meanwhile, tourist satisfaction, measured through the overall evaluation of the municipality where visitors stayed (I27), reached the highest value in the series (which began in 2018), scoring 8.67 out of 10 across Destination Barcelona as a whole (+0.07 points compared with 2024).

Similarly, the destination accessibility indicator (I20), based on tourists' opinions regarding accessibility for people with reduced mobility, achieved its highest score on record in 2025, reaching 7.92 out of 10 (+0.06 points compared with 2024).

Finally, tourists' assessment of noise levels (I02), traditionally one of the lower-rated aspects of the destination experience, improved across Destination Barcelona. This positive evolution was mainly driven by Barcelona city, where the indicator reached 6.93 out of 10 (+0.12 points compared with 2024). Despite this improvement, there is still room for further progress. Lower noise pollution not only enhances the visitor experience but also improves the well-being and health of local residents.

Public Safety

Regarding safety, the various indicators analysed showed no major changes compared with the previous year. Across Destination Barcelona, tourists rated public safety (I28) at 8.23 out of 10 (+0.07 points compared with 2024), the percentage of tourists who were victims of a crime or attempted crime (I29) stood at 1.62% (-0.27pp), and Spain's national terrorism alert level (I30) remained at 4 out of 5.

* Without new available data: I05, I06, and I24

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