



TRANSFER OF EU BEST PRACTICES

IN THE FIELD OF TOURISM
FOR THE COUNTRIES OF
CENTRAL ASIA

switchasia
GRANTS PROGRAMME

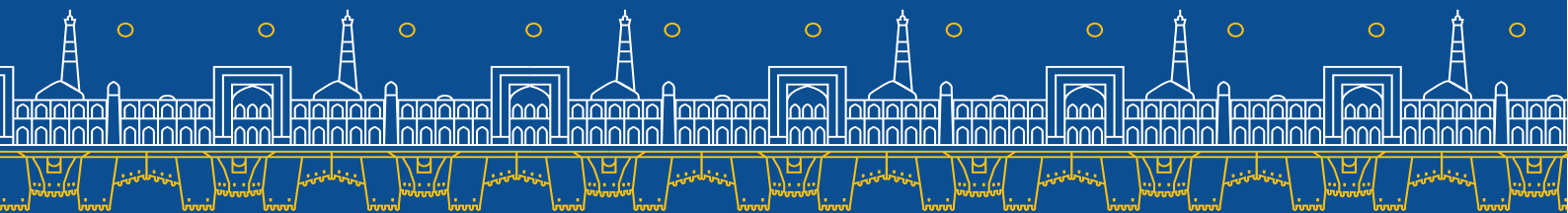


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most
Model for
Sustainable Tourism
in Central Asia

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PARTNERSHIP

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Project Partners

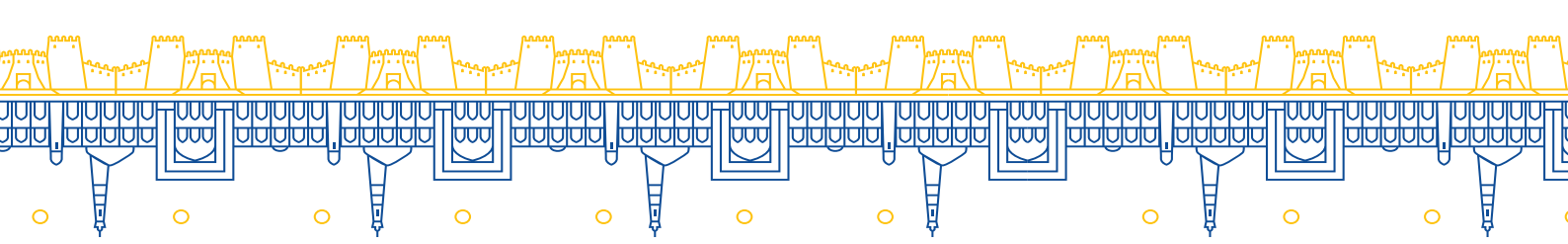


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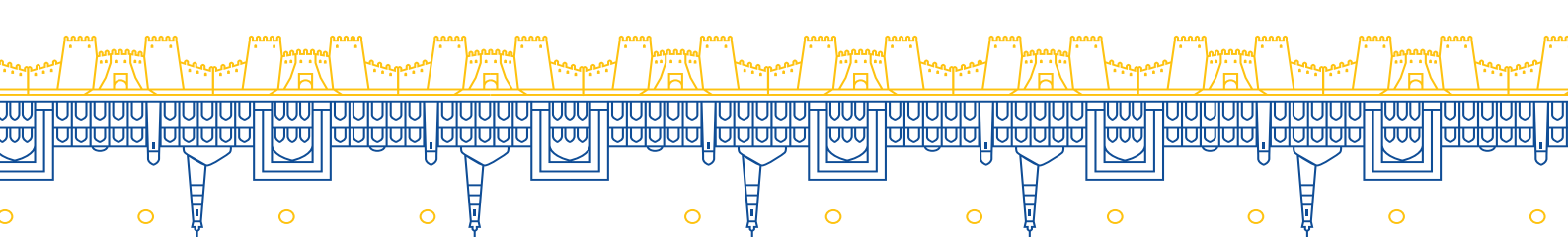
TRANSFER OF EU BEST/GOOD PRACTICES

IN THE FIELD OF SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
IN TOURISM FOR THE COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL ASIA

“A study produced for the SWITCH-ASIA Programme
by Lead Partner Heraklion Development Agency
under sub-contractor PLOIGOS

Heraklion, August 2021

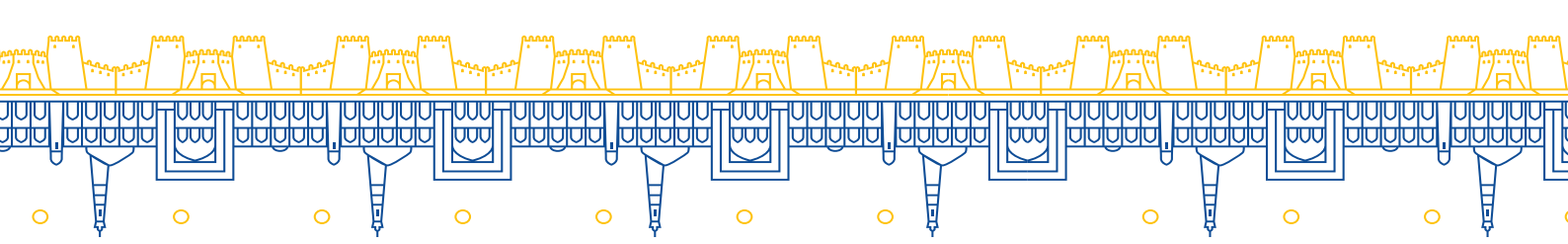




DISCLAIMER

“This publication was created and maintained with the financial support of the European Union, under SWITCH-Asia Programme. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Heraklion Development Agency and MOST project partners and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union”.





FOREWORD

In literature, the concept of good practice is used to describe the results, the strengths and weaknesses, as well as the processes of any project or initiative, in relation to its operating lines, the effectiveness of its development and its methods of realization on the one hand, and to the possibility of replicating it in another similar context, on the other.

Good practices are useful to share and disseminate to the extent that these experiences are able to feed new ones in contexts other than the original one, or represent an effective reference for drawing ideas, information and useful solutions to provide innovative developments or implementations to one's own initiatives by careful adaptation to local context and internal needs.

Best practices represent a fundamental tool for the correct and effective implementation of MOST, considering that the model or the models for sustainable tourism that the Consortium will adopt can largely benefit from EU success stories, in order for Local Partners and final Beneficiaries to become active members of the SCP family.

Gian Andrea Garancini
MOST General Coordinator





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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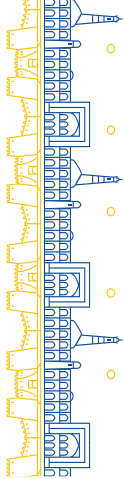
The content of this Guide is based on extensive online research and developed with inputs from:

Areti Alexopoulou
Emmanuela Papamattheaki &
Aikaterini Tsoukala

Editing by Areti Alexopoulou

Design & Layout: Patricia Lopez Rodriguez
from Office Louka Petraki 1

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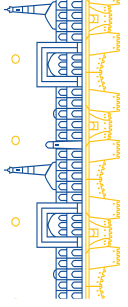
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INTRODUCTION

This study has been the deliverable of an extensive online research conducted throughout the months of April to August 2021. The reason for this study is the transfer of good and best practices that take place in the European Union in the tourism sector and promote the concept of sustainability and responsibility. As such, the material that has been selected to be included in this study deserves – according to the authors' views- to be studied in further detail and depth by all interested stakeholders. Each case study presented gives great insight to one or more aspects of sustainable tourism, showcasing significant issues that have been addressed and resolved by the parties involved.

Methodologically, the strategy chosen to be followed in this study serves the purpose of presenting the subject of sustainable tourism in its progression first, with the intention of creating a historical awareness to the reader. Hence, after presenting in **Section 1** the basic facts about the MOST Project, **Section 2** unfolds the series of events that has led to the current need for considering and implementing policies and actions on all levels – global, national and local – that are sustainable and responsible towards our natural environment and society.. It includes the most relevant and most important global initiatives that support and promote Sustainable Development Goal 12 for responsible production and consumption and the concept of sustainable tourism.

Goal 12 petitions for global and local responsible measures to be adopted on both pillars of the economy, that is production and consumption. In the following part of this paper, the focus is on highlighting the pathway that will develop higher levels of sustainable consumption.

Section 3 is devoted to the notion of consumer awareness and how this is communicated to reach wider audiences and raised to a greater degree. The idea is to understand how consumers learn about an issue, how they get educated to pay attention to a problem, and taking it a step further, how they react and deal with it. Apart from clarifying concepts such as accreditation and certification amongst others, there are also best practice cases which provide solid examples of how public awareness has been raised successfully, prompting the readers to investigate further should they wish to.

Finally, **Section 4** constitutes the heart of the study. It encompasses good and best practices of sustainable tourism cases throughout the European territory. The team of authors underwent extensive online research in order to locate and select examples of numerous entities that have attempted to incorporate sustainability principles into their entrepreneurial environment. We have tried to include as many sectors of tourist business life as possible. Hence, the range includes cases of hotels and accommodation, tourist destinations, natural and cultural heritage sites, big cities, communities and villages, more sustainable means of travel and transport, all the way through to waste management and green procurement, among others. We have tried to create an interesting portfolio of best European practices in sustainable tourism. Our ultimate goal was to inform our readers regarding responsible tourism and to motivate them to investigate further the cases presented in here and hundreds more that exist out of these pages so as to promote and apply the principles of sustainability to their businesses and personal lives.





MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

(MOST) IN CENTRAL ASIA

For the Countries of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan.

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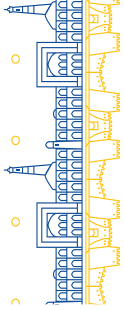


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BACKGROUND

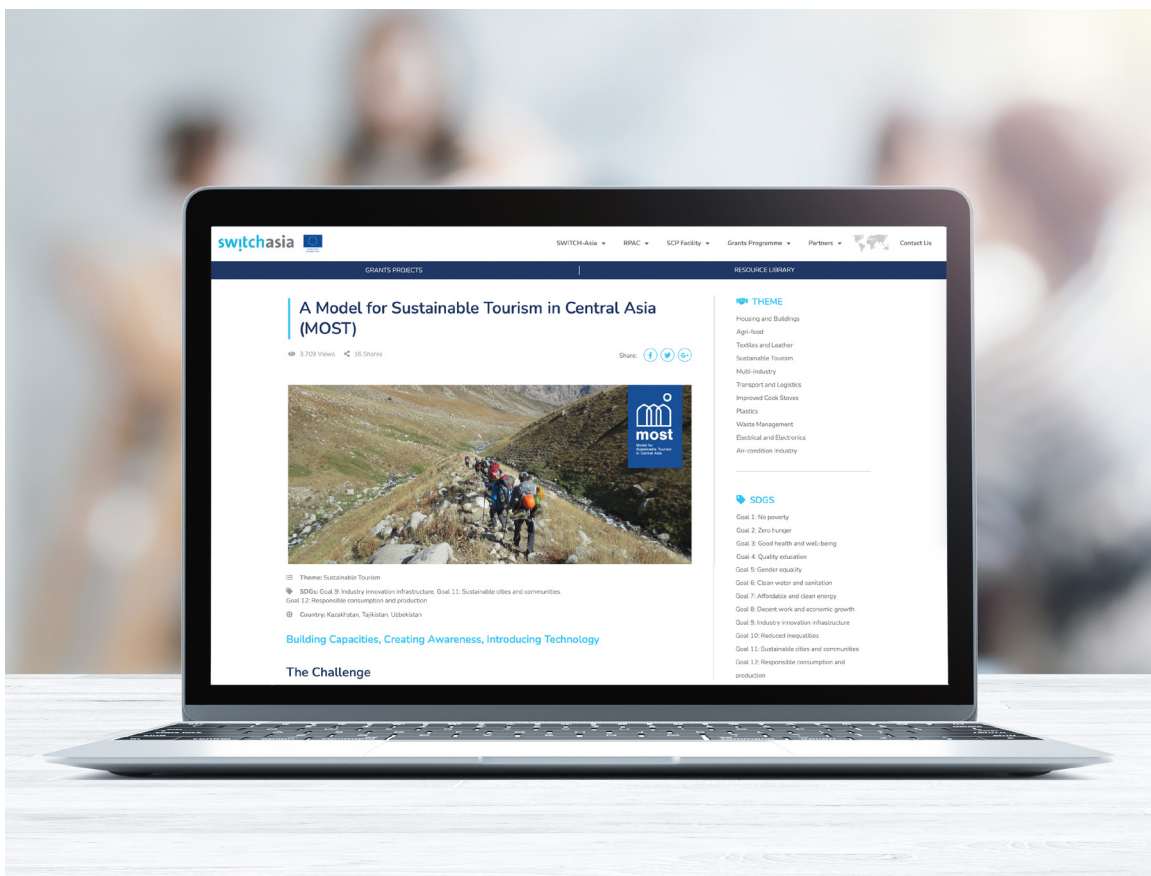
Rapid economic growth in Asia and Central Asia has lifted many countries out of poverty. This has come at a cost of increased use of natural resources, growing Greenhouse Gas emissions and amounts of waste.

Sustainability today is no longer simply about increasing efficiencies or complying with regulations. It is about making fundamental changes in the way business is done and the way the world consumes.

Results can only be achieved rethinking our business models and supply chains and designing new consumption patterns.

That is why the European Union launched the SWITCH-Asia program in 2007. The program promotes Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP).

SCP aims at improving the overall environmental performance of products throughout their life cycle, stimulates demand for better products and production technologies and helps consumers make informed choices.



CHALLENGES



The former Soviet Asian States present considerable opportunities to become a major tourist destination in the way of unique cultural, historical, archaeological, and natural attractions. Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan have strategically utilised tourism for driving economic growth.

However, the sector faces a lot of problems and challenges. The most important are the lack of supply chain and logistics facilities, underdeveloped infrastructure and low standard services for tourists. In some of the countries the visa regime and the high prices are also considered as inhibitory factors. Given the tourism sector in these countries is still under-developed but with very high potential, the setting of a sustainable tourism model is very crucial. Sustainable tourism has the potential to support growing local economies, by respecting communities and protecting cultural and heritage sites from risks of overcrowding and from damage caused by natural disasters.

Destinations that are becoming increasingly popular today, as is the case in Central Asia, have the opportunity to sustainably develop their tourism sectors and become role models for other countries around the world.

KEY ISSUES



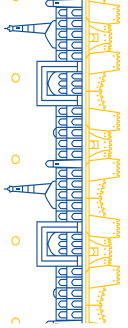
How can compliance with environmental standards and reporting practices increase the competitiveness of the tourism industry?

How can technology and innovation trigger sustainable investment in the tourism industry?

These are key issues in the Switch Asia project called “A Model for Sustainable Tourism in Central Asia”, which aims to address these through:








| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | <p>Training sessions to understand the business significance of standards and good practices in environmental management</p> | |
| | <p>Installation of ICT technology and other metering infrastructure to assist familiarization with the above and gain insight on the power of enabling technology</p> | |
| | <p>Generation of opportunities for partnerships and business cooperation</p> | <p>Capacity building events</p> |
| | <p>Discussions</p> | <p>Conferences</p> |





OBJECTIVES



| | |
|---|--|
|  | Promotion of sustainable tourism in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan through implementation of ISO standards related to green procurement and eco-labeling. |
|  | Elaboration of Guidelines on sustainable consumption, including usage of water, energy and recyclable waste. |
|  | Promotion of EU best practices such as legislative frameworks and regulations, while applying needed ICT and marketing tools. |
|  | Support for tourism companies to adopt sustainable production and consumption (SCP) practices by providing appropriate knowledge and ICT tools. |
|  | Support to regional and local authorities to plan and implement policies that assist the development of sustainable tourism. |
|  | Raising of consumer awareness regarding sustainable tourism and sustainable consumption. |
|  | Strengthening of the dialogue between authorities, SMEs and end-users in order to further promote responsible consumption and production. |



OUTCOMES



- ▶ 380 tourism MSMEs trained on the use of tools and SCP methodologies and standards (GSTC criteria, Travelife and relevant standards, and green procurement)
- ▶ 440 tourism MSMEs in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan equipped with the appropriate ICT tools and knowledge for adoption of SCP practices
- ▶ At least 50 tourism MSMEs trained on marketing tools
- ▶ Dialogue between state actors and business sector for the strengthening of sustainable tourism
- ▶ Recommendations formulated for the adoption of sustainable tourism in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan
- ▶ Local and regional authorities supported in policy planning and linking it to investment and other support instruments
- ▶ Awareness about the sustainable usage of water and energy raised
- ▶ Access of MSMEs to finance promoted
- ▶ Role of local and regional authorities in sustainable tourism strengthened.
- ▶ SCP practices adopted in the tourism sector.

Further information:

<http://www.switch-asia.eu/project/a-model-for-sustainable-tourism-in-central-asia/>

<https://www.switchtogreen.eu/switch-asia/>



GLOBAL INITIATIVES TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY IN TOURISM

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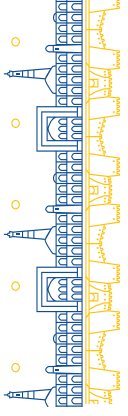


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ORIGINS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



The industrial revolution of the 18th and 19th century and all of mankind's technological advances led to the accumulation of a series of environmental problems that began to be acknowledged by humanity towards the middle of the 20th century.

Up to that time, the discussion had focused on development, mainly on economic terms, which in essence meant that people would use up all the natural resources they found in any one country, without realising that these resources are limited and that would soon arrive a time when they would exist no more.

Another one of humanity's realisations was that every action has its consequences and so was the case of heavy industrialisation and hectic rhythms of production and consumption.

The effects of human activity at all levels were the production of all sorts of waste (industrial, toxic, household), pollution of the sea, soil, air, fresh water, as well as a serious change in the planet's climate, caused by global rising temperatures, which in turn created natural catastrophes, to mention but a few of the Earth's problems that we had begun to widely acknowledge.

That was the general background that slowly but steadily led to the birth of the term "sustainable development" and its consequent "sustainable tourism". But let us see this process in a little more detail.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It was back in 1972 that the term **“sustainable development”** was internationally recognized during the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment which was held in Stockholm, Sweden. The international community for the first time embraced the notion that economic development could not be separated from the natural environment.

Fifteen years later, sustainable development was once again made popular in a report published by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) entitled **“Our Common Future”**.

It was in this report that the term acquired its most classic definition, when stating that **“humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”** (WCED, 1987). It is also known as the Brundtland Report, having acquired this name from the President of WCED, Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway.

“Our Common Future” exposed serious environmental issues around the globe, which had been researched and documented during the previous decades in the works of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962), Garret Hardin’s *Tragedy of the Commons* (1968), the *Blueprint for Survival* by the Ecologist magazine (1972) and the Club of Rome’s *Limits to Growth* report (1972) amongst others.

“Our Common Future” took a step further by assigning responsibility to the enormous

growth gap between the rich North and the poverty-stricken South.

Highlighting the non-sustainable patterns of consumption and production in all parts of the world, the report called for a global strategy that would combine economic development with the protection of the environment.

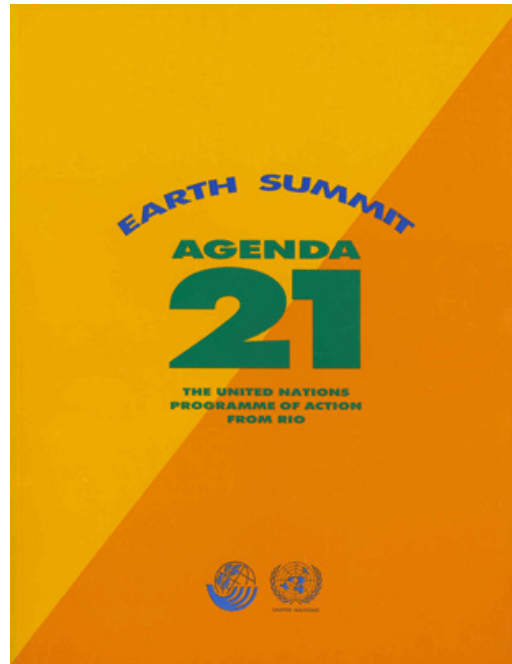
The Brundtland Report succeeded in mobilizing the global society, so the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) followed.

The Rio Summit, as it is also widely known as, took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992 and drew the attention of more than 100 Heads of States, official representatives from 178 countries and hundreds of representatives from civil society organisations.

The signing of the Convention on Climate Change and the Convention of Biological Diversity were outcomes of the Rio Summit, endorsing the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the Statement of principles for the Sustainable Management of Forests, whilst at the same time showing the path to attaining sustainable development through a comprehensible action plan spanning over the next two decades named Agenda 21, which was to be implemented on the global, national, regional and local levels.

Moreover, an international body was created, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) so as to monitor and report on the progress all relevant actors were making regarding the implementation of the actions set by Agenda 21.





AGENDA 21

“Agenda 21 addresses the pressing problems of today and also aims at preparing the world for the challenges of the next century. It reflects a global consensus and political commitment at the highest level on development and environment cooperation.

Its successful implementation is first and foremost the responsibility of Governments.

National strategies, plans, policies and processes are crucial in achieving this. International cooperation should support and supple-

ment such national efforts. In this context, the United Nations system has a key role to play.

Other international, regional and subregional organizations are also called upon to contribute to this effort.

The broadest public participation and the active involvement of the non - governmental organizations and other groups should also be encouraged.” (UNCED, 1992, p.3)

A SERIES OF MILESTONES HAS FOLLOWED SINCE THEN AND IS PRESENTED BELOW, AS QUOTED FROM THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, accessible at <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>:

IN SEPTEMBER 2000

Member States unanimously adopted the Millennium Declaration at the Millennium Summit at UN Headquarters in New York.

The Summit led to the elaboration of eight **Millennium Development Goals** (MDGs) to reduce extreme poverty by 2015.”

THE JOHANNESBURG DECLARATION

on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation, adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa in 2002, reaffirmed the global community’s

commitments to poverty eradication and the environment, and built on Agenda 21 and the Millennium Declaration by including more emphasis on multilateral partnerships.

THE FUTURE WE WANT

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, Member States adopted the outcome document “The Future We Want” in which they decided, inter alia, to launch a process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals to build upon

the MDGs and to establish the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The Rio +20 outcome also contained other measures for implementing sustainable development, including mandates for future programs of work in development financing, small island developing states and more.

IN 2013

the General Assembly set up a 30-member Open Working Group to develop a proposal on the SDGs.

IN JANUARY 2015

the General Assembly began the negotiation process on the post-2015 development agenda. The process culminated in the subsequent adoption of the **2030 Agenda**

for Sustainable Development, with **17 Sustainable Development Goals** at its core, at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015.

2015 WAS A LANDMARK YEAR

for multilateralism and international policy shaping, with the adoption of several major agreements:

- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (March 2015)
- Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development (July 2015)

- Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 SDGs.

- Paris Agreement on Climate Change (December 2015).

TODAY

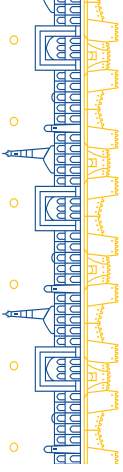
the annual High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development serves as the central UN platform for the follow-up and review of the SDGs.

The Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) provides substantive support and capacity-building for the SDGs and their related thematic issues.

It also plays a key role in the evaluation of UN systemwide implementation of the 2030 Agenda and on

advocacy and outreach activities relating to the SDGs. In order to make the 2030 Agenda a reality, broad ownership of the SDGs must translate into a strong commitment by all stakeholders to implement the global goals.

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PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

As already mentioned above, the most classic definition of Sustainable Development derives from the Brundtland Report “Our Common Future” where, for the first time, economic development is expressly linked to environmental sustainability and agreed upon by hundreds of politicians worldwide.

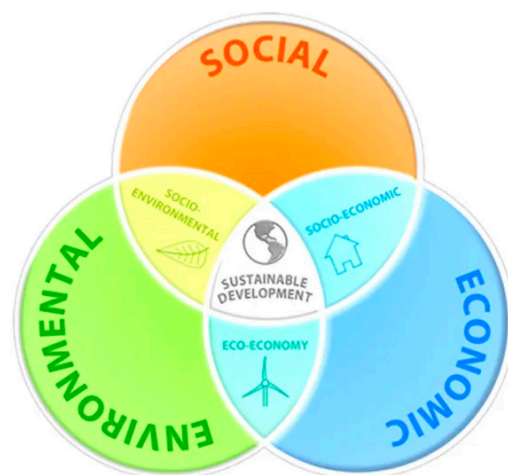
“The development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations General Assembly, 1987, p.43) has been ever since termed as Sustainable Development and it clearly highlights the **“importance of intergenerational equity”**.

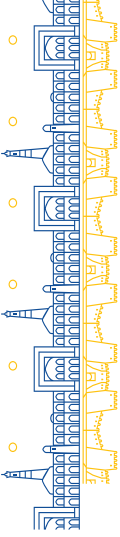
This concept of conserving resources for future generations is one of the major features that distinguish sustainable development policy from traditional environmental policy, which also seeks to internalize the externalities of environmental degradation.

The overall goal of sustainable development (SD) is the long-term stability of the economy and en-

vironment; this is only achievable through the integration and acknowledgement of economic, environmental, and social concerns throughout the decision-making process.

In a brief but rather inclusive way, **“the key principle of sustainable development underlying all others is the integration of environmental, social, and economic concerns into all aspects of decision making”**, requiring “the elimination of fragmentation; that is, environmental, social and economic concerns must be integrated throughout decision making processes in order to move towards development that is truly sustainable” (Emas, 2015).



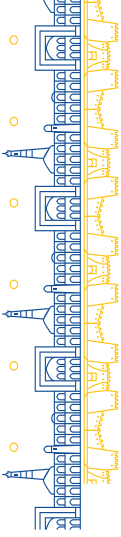


THE 17 UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Global Goals are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a “blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all”. (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>)



- 
Goal 1: NO POVERTY
 Economic growth must be inclusive to provide sustainable jobs and promote equality.
- 
GOAL 2: ZERO HUNGER
 The food and agriculture sector offers key solutions for development, and is central for hunger and poverty eradication.
- 
GOAL 3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
 Ensuring healthy lives and promoting the well-being for all at all ages is essential to sustainable development.
- 
GOAL 4: QUALITY EDUCATION
 Obtaining a quality education is the foundation to improving people's lives and sustainable development.
- 
GOAL 5: GENDER EQUALITY
 Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.
- 
GOAL 6: CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
 Clean, accessible water for all is an essential part of the world we want to live in.
- 
GOAL 7: AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
 Energy is central to nearly every major challenge and opportunity.
- 
GOAL 8: DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
 Sustainable economic growth will require societies to create the conditions that allow people to have quality jobs.
- 
GOAL 9: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE
 Investments in infrastructure are crucial to achieving sustainable development.
- 
GOAL 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES
 To reduce inequalities, policies should be universal in principle, paying attention to the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized populations.
- 
GOAL 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
 There needs to be a future in which cities provide opportunities for all, with access to basic services, energy, housing, transportation and more.
- 
GOAL 12: RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
 Responsible Production and Consumption.
- 
GOAL 13: CLIMATE ACTION
 Climate change is a global challenge that affects everyone, everywhere.
- 
GOAL 14: LIFE BELOW WATER
 Careful management of this essential global resource is a key feature of a sustainable future.
- 
GOAL 15: LIFE ON LAND
 Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss
- 
GOAL 16: PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
 Access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels.
- 
GOAL 17: PARTNERSHIPS
 Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.



SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

Sustainable Development Goal number 12 is all about transforming the current unsustainable patterns of production and consumption into ones that stop harming the natural environment and resources. Taking a glimpse on the numbers reported by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations **“A growing global population combined with the unsustainable use of natural resources is having a devastating impact on our planet** – propelling climate change, destroying nature and raising pollution levels. About 14 per cent of the world’s food is lost along the supply chain prior to the retail level. Around the world, 1 million plastic drinking bottles are purchased every minute, and 5 trillion single-use plastic bags are thrown away each year. The global material footprint increased by 70% between 2000 and 2017.

“It is for these reasons that they urge the world “to build sustainable and resilient economies and societies. It is time to fully embrace the decoupling of economic growth from environmental degradation, a reduction in carbon emissions, improvements in resource efficiency, and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles.”

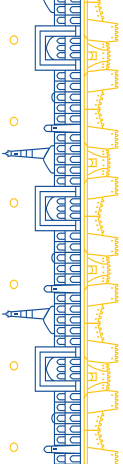
Tourism appears to be largely recognized as a high-impact sector with the potential to advance all SDGs.

The set-up of institutional frameworks and mechanisms for SDG implementation, regarding the shaping of national policies for tourism, varies from country to country.

While there is no one-size-fits-all solution, a whole-of-government approach – involving multiple sectoral entities, local and sub-national authorities, as well as the private sector and civil society – is often emphasized as being key to achieving the SDGs at the country level.

This requires that all stakeholders collaborate effectively when integrating the goals and targets into their respective policy area so as to ensure policy coherence at all levels.

For tourism policymakers to firmly position themselves in national government structures, they should, therefore, engage in dialogue with line ministries and other stakeholders and actively participate in the national government structures for the SDGs.



UN WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION (UNWTO)

The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. As the leading international organization in the field of tourism, UNWTO promotes tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability and offers leadership and support to the sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide. Its top **priorities** include:

MAINSTREAMING TOURISM IN THE GLOBAL AGENDA

Advocating the value of tourism as a driver of socio-economic growth and development, its inclusion as a priority in na-

tional and international policies and the need to create a level playing field for the sector to develop and prosper.

IMPROVING TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS

Improving UNWTO Members' competitiveness through knowledge creation and exchange, human resources development and the promotion of excellence in areas such as policy planning,

statistics and market trends, sustainable tourism development, marketing and promotion, product development and risk and crisis management.

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Supporting sustainable tourism policies and practices: policies which make optimal use of environmental resources,

respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities and provide socio-economic benefits for all.

ADVANCING TOURISM'S CONTRIBUTION TO POVERTY REDUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Maximizing the contribution of tourism to poverty reduction and achieving the SDGs by making tourism work as a tool

for development and promoting the inclusion of tourism in the development agenda.

FOSTERING KNOWLEDGE, EDUCATION & CAPACITY BUILDING

Supporting countries to assess and address their needs in education and training, as

well as providing networks for knowledge creation and exchange.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

Engaging with the private sector, regional and local tourism organizations, academia and research institutions, civil so-

ciety and the UN system to build a more sustainable, responsible and competitive tourism sector.



SUSTAINABLE TOURISM



“Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” is the definition of Sustainable Tourism according to the UNWTO website.

Elaborating on the above, sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable

to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments.

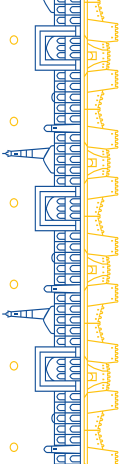
Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability, claims the World Tourism Organisation. Thus, **sustainable tourism should:**

-  **01** Make **optimal use of environmental resources** that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
-  **02** **Respect the socio-cultural authenticity** of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.
-  **03** Ensure **viable, long-term economic operations**, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building.

Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary.

Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005).



TOURISM & THE EUROPEAN UNION

EU policy aims to maintain Europe's standing as a leading destination while maximising the industry's contribution to growth and employment and promoting cooperation between EU countries, particularly

through the exchange of good practices. The EU's competence in tourism is one of support and coordination to supplement the actions of member countries.

Challenges for the European tourism industry

- 01
|
Security and safety - environmental, political, and social security; safety of food and accommodation; and socio-cultural sustainability threats.

- 02
|
Economic competitiveness - seasonality, regulatory and administrative burdens, tourism-related taxation, difficulty of finding and keeping skilled staff.

- 03
|
Technological – keeping up to date with IT developments caused by the globalisation of information and advances in technology (IT tools for booking holidays, social media providing advice on tourism services, etc.)

- 04
|
Markets and competition - growing demand for customised experiences, new products, growing competition from other EU destinations.

EUROPE, THE WORLD'S TOURIST DESTINATION - A NEW POLITICAL FRAMEWORK FOR TOURISM IN EUROPE

In June 2010, the European Commission adopted the Communication, 'Europe, the world's No. 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for

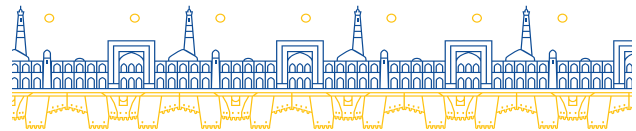
tourism in Europe'. This communication set out a new strategy and action plan for EU tourism.

Four priorities for action were identified:

| | |
|---|---|
| To stimulate competitiveness in the European tourism sector. | To promote the development of sustainable, responsible, and high-quality tourism. |
| To consolidate Europe's image as a collection of sustainable, high-quality destinations | To maximise the potential of EU financial policies for developing tourism. |



SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE EU



Major challenges for sustainable tourism include:

- ▶ Preserving natural and cultural resources
- ▶ Limiting negative impacts at tourist destinations
- ▶ Promoting the wellbeing of the local community
- ▶ Reducing the seasonality of demand
- ▶ Limiting the environmental impact of tourism-related transport
- ▶ Making tourism accessible to all
- ▶ Improving the quality of tourism jobs

The 2007 Commission Communication, '**Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism**' recommended the use of the following principles to address these challenges:

- ▶ Taking a holistic, integrated approach
- ▶ Planning for the long term
- ▶ Adopting an appropriate pace of development
- ▶ Involving all stakeholders
- ▶ Using the best available knowledge
- ▶ Minimising and managing risk
- ▶ Reflecting impacts in costs
- ▶ Setting and respecting limits
- ▶ Practising continuous monitoring

The competitiveness and sustainability of the tourism industry go hand-in-hand as the quality of tourist destinations is strongly influenced by their natural and cultural environment and their integration into the local community.

Long-term sustainability requires a balance between economic, socio-cultural, and environmental sustainability. The need to reconcile economic growth and sustainable development also has an ethical dimension.

Having recognized that the **competitiveness of the European tourism industry is closely linked to its sustainability**, the European Commission has been working on a number of **initiatives** in this area.



SUSTAINABLE TRANSNATIONAL TOURISM PRODUCTS

These are thematic tourism products such as transnational itineraries, routes, trails focusing on different themes such as: environmentally friendly tourism, sports tourism, food and wine

tourism, health and wellbeing tourism, nature tourism, or 'slow tourism' – travel which allows tourists to engage more fully with communities along their route.



THE EUROPEAN TOURISM INDICATORS SYSTEM (ETIS)

Because tourist destinations are increasingly called upon to measure their performance in relation to sustainability, the Commission has deve-

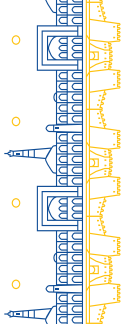
loped a European Tourism Indicators System as a simple method for measuring sustainability performance.



THE EU ECOLABEL AND EMAS

The EU Ecolabel is a voluntary tool that is available to tourism accommodation services willing to prove and promote their environmental excellence. Specific EU Ecolabel criteria have been developed for tourist accommodation and campsite services.

EMAS allows actors in the tourism sector to improve their environmental performance and promote the quality of their services. EMAS best environmental management practice document can guide them in this process.



EU GREEN DEAL

The EU recognises that climate change and environmental degradation are an existential threat to the world and to the European continent itself. In order to overcome these challenges, it brought forward the new European Green Deal, a growth policy that aims to transform the EU into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy, ensuring that there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050, economic growth is decoupled from resource use and that no person and no place

are left behind.

The European Commission adopted a set of proposals to make the EU's climate, energy, transport and taxation policies fit for reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels.

Achieving these emission reductions in the next decade is crucial to Europe becoming the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050 and making the European Green Deal a reality.

THE BENEFITS OF THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

The European Green Deal will improve the well-being and health of citizens and future generations by providing:

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| Fresh air, clean water, healthy soil and biodiversity | Renovated, energy efficient buildings | Healthy and affordable food | More public transport |
|  |  |  |  |
| Cleaner energy and cutting-edge clean technological innovation | Longer lasting products that can be repaired, recycled and re-used | Healthy and affordable food | More public transport |

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

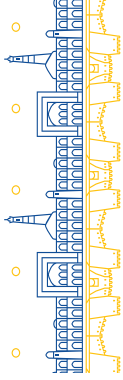
The EU Green Deal is an integral part of Europe's strategy to implement the UN's 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals and pledges to make Europe the first carbon-neutral continent by 2050 (UNWTO, 2020).

A LONG WAY AHEAD

Tourism, however, in the framework of the new Green Deal, is still not directly referenced nor identified as one of the driving forces of sustainable development in Europe.

There is a recognized need from European Member States to exchange views and to come together for a united message on the importance of Sustainability in tourism for the future of Europe (UNWTO, 2020a).





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LINKS

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- ▶ http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/history_sd.html
- ▶ https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_CONF.151_26_Vol.I_Declaration.pdf
- ▶ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
- ▶ <https://www.unwto.org/about-us>





RAISING CONSUMER AWARENESS ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

switchasia
GRANTS PROGRAMME

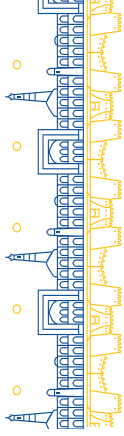


Funded by the
European Union



most
Model for
Sustainable Tourism
in Central Asia

GRANT CONTRACT N. ACA/2019/412-065



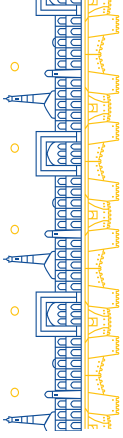
RAISING CONSUMER AWARENESS

We live in the age of information and there certainly is a lot of it around us. Everyone is bombarded with numerous amounts of content on various subjects on a daily basis, yet when it comes down to a specific issue, one has to make an effort to find the appropriate data in order to get educated about it and be assured that what he/she is learning about is valid. Two major problems that therefore occur regarding information is whether this information is first, useful and second, credible. That is the reason why the issue of consumer awareness is so crucial in our days and even more so the question how to create awareness.

For sustainable tourism, the aforementioned problems remain a reality. The abundance of data available out there create confusion and misinformation, rather than clarify the picture. It is for this reason that serious efforts are being made to educate the general public regarding the concept of sustainability in the tourism sector. This section of the study presents the ways that consumers are being made aware of the sources that verify that statements of sustainability in tourism are credible, thus creating and consequently helping in increasing awareness as far as sustainable tourism is concerned.

Section 3 deals with the question of how consumers become aware of all those crucial issues that concern the sustainable and responsible management of economic, environmental and social resources that the tourism industry is utilising. Raising awareness in society as a whole is a multi-level, multi-faceted process, and is interrelated with information and most importantly with trustworthy and credible sources of information. What is presented below are ways that people get educated, people who are tourists and consumers, and at the same time should be able and have the right to make responsible choices when travelling around the world, or within their own countries, so as to leave little or no negative environmental footprint whilst enjoying their holiday.

Certification is one such process that ensures that what is being claimed is true and is therefore used as a strong lever for creating awareness. In this quest for raising public awareness of sustainability issues in the tourism sector, new technologies are widely used. Electronic **platforms** of networking and clustering, **electronic journalism**, as well as activities such as **awards** and **competitions**, all play a major role in involving more and more stakeholders, thus spreading the word for sustainability throughout the global society and hence are presented in this section.



GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM COUNCIL (GSTC)

WHAT DOES IT DO?

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) manages the GSTC Criteria which are the global baseline standards for sustainable travel and tourism; it is an international body that provides assurance for sustainable tourism certification in three key sub-sectors of tourism:

Hotels/Accommodations

Tour Operators/Agencies

Destinations

THE GSTC CRITERIA

The GSTC establishes and manages global sustainable standards, known as the GSTC Criteria. There are two sets: Destination Criteria for public policy-makers and destination managers, and Industry Criteria for hotels and tour operators. They are the result of a worldwide effort to develop a common language about sustainability in tourism.

The Criteria are arranged in four pillars:

A Sustainable management

C Cultural impacts

B Socioeconomic impacts

D Environmental impacts (including consumption of resources, reducing pollution, and conserving biodiversity and landscapes).

Since tourism destinations each have their own culture, environment, customs, and laws, the Criteria are designed to be adapted to local conditions and supplemented by additional criteria for the specific location and activity.



The following lines attempt to clarify the grey picture among three different terms that frequently being confused: accreditation, certification and recognition.

WHAT IS CERTIFICATION?

Certification is defined as a voluntary, third-party assessment, through an audit, of a tourism enterprise or destination for con-

formity to a standard and it is not conducted by the GSTC. That is the job of the many Certification Bodies throughout the world.

WHAT IS ACCREDITATION?

Accreditation is a mark of quality that GSTC places on Certification Bodies that choose an independent and neutral process to veri-

fy that they certify businesses, such as hotels or tour operators, or destinations, in a competent and neutral manner.

WHAT IS GSTC RECOGNITION?

GSTC Recognition is a status provided by GSTC to a set of standards that are equivalent to the GSTC Criteria, showing that

they are based on the four pillars of the GSTC Criteria: Environment, Social, Cultural and Management principles.

Certification = a third-party assessment of a tourism enterprise or destination to a standard.

Accreditation = an intensive verification of a process of certification.

Recognition = verification by GSTC that the set of standards used by standard owners is equivalent to the GSTC Criteria.

GSTC DESTINATION CRITERIA AND ITS CORRESPONDING SDGS

The GSTC Destination Criteria v2.0 includes performance indicators designed to provide guidance in measuring compliance with the Criteria. Application of the Criteria will help a destination to contribute towards the

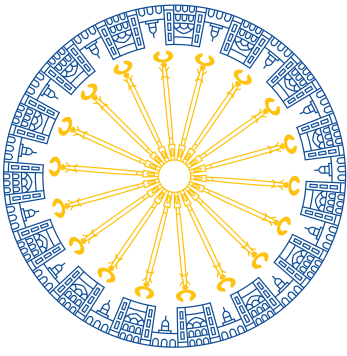
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Against each of the Criteria, one or more of the 17 SDGs is identified, to which it most closely relates.

HOW CERTIFICATION HELPS IMPLEMENT SUSTAINABILITY

A vivid example of how certification works for the benefit of all participating sides, strengthening the relationships that co-exist throughout the touristic experience and re-enforcing credibility and trust-

worthiness amongst the actors involved and on the actual process is the case of GoodPlace Factory and Slovenia Green, a green scheme they developed and execute with great success.

For more information, visit: <https://www.gstcouncil.org/>



-  **GoodPlace**
Factory
-  **Certification**
Body
-  **GSTC**
Accredited

GOOD PLACE FACTORY FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

- non-profit institute from Slovenia. I
- accredited by GSTC and storage expenditure.

KEY ROLE

- create the environment which will encourage forward-oriented thinking
- offer a number of solutions and tools on how and why implement sustainable management in the travel sector both in Slovenia and internationally.

ACCREDITATION

GoodPlace developed Slovenia Green certification scheme for Slovenian Tourist Board and is accredited partner for implementation and a coordinator of Slovenia Green Consortium.



SLOVENIA GREEN

Green scheme of Slovenian tourism

The scheme is based on global criteria, while taking into account national characteristics and requirements. Destinations are evaluated according to the global criteria of the Green Destinations standard, which is recognized by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.

Depending on the level of achievement of the criteria, destinations may receive a bronze, silver, gold or platinum badge.

The scheme started operating in 2015, when the first pilot destinations and tourism companies joined the project. It currently brings together as many as 48 destinations, 40 accommodations, 4 parks and 2 travel agencies.

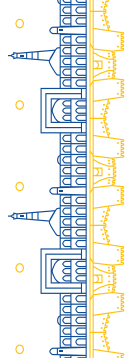
Outcomes

Due to its innovation, integrated approach, development orientation and the possibility of international comparison, the Green Scheme has received numerous awards and titles, including the National Geographic Destinations Leadership Award.

GoodPlace Factory for sustainable tourism

are the authors of the Slovenian national scheme for the introduction of sustainable tourism in the business of Slovenia Green destinations and companies, which they develop in partnership with the owner and manager of the scheme, the Slovenian Tourist Board. As an accredited partner, GoodPlace regularly evaluates and upgrades the scheme, conducts workshops, trains green coordinators and offers assistance in introducing green signs in companies.





INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

An international standard is like a formula that describes the best way of doing something.

It could be about making a product, managing a process, delivering a service or supplying materials – standards cover a huge range of activities.

Standards are the distilled wisdom of people with expertise in their subject matter and who know the needs of the organizations they represent – people such as manufacturers, sellers, buyers, customers, trade associations, users or regulators.

For instance.

Quality management standards to help work more efficiently and reduce product failures.

Environmental management standards to help reduce environmental impacts, reduce waste and be more sustainable.

Health and safety standards to help reduce accidents in the workplace.

Energy management standards to help cut energy consumption.

Food safety standards to help prevent food from being contaminated.

IT security standards to help keep sensitive information secure.

Some of the most popular standards are:

ISO 9000 FAMILY - QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The ISO 9000 family is the world's best-known quality management standard for companies and organizations of any size.

ISO 14000 FAMILY - ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Improve your environmental performance with this family of standards.

ISO/IEC 27001 - INFORMATION SECURITY MANAGEMENT

Providing security for any kind of digital information, the ISO/IEC 27000 family of standards is designed for any size of organization.



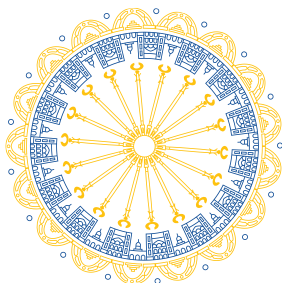
IMPLEMENTING AN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM USING ISO 14001

The case for ISO 14001 is that “it is an internationally agreed standard that sets out the requirements for an environmental management system. It helps organizations improve their environmental performance through more efficient use of resources and reduction of waste...”

Although ISO 14001 focuses on just one pillar of the global criteria that GSTC has set in order for a touristic entity to be characterised as sustainable, it nevertheless deals with all the pressing issues of environmental management that any type of company would need to address so as to operate sustainably.

Hence, “there are many reasons why an organization -including touristic ones- should take a strategic approach to improving its environmental performance. Users of the standard have reported that ISO 14001 helps:

- Demonstrate compliance with current and future statutory and regulatory requirements
- Increase leadership involvement and engagement of employees
- Improve company reputation and the confidence of stakeholders through strategic communication
- Achieve strategic business aims by incorporating environmental issues into business management
- Provide a competitive and financial advantage through improved efficiencies and reduced costs
- Encourage better environmental performance of suppliers by integrating them into the organization’s business systems.



ENHANCING RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

Premier Foods

“Since 2001, we have used ISO 14001 to make big improvements such as increasing our organization’s recycling rate. We have now been at “zero landfill” since March 2013 and are recycling and reusing 100 % of our site wastes.

We have continued to improve our relationship with neighbours because we have the processes in place to respond quickly to any concerns.

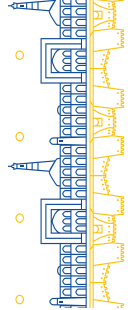
Among other benefits, our processes and the appointment of Green Matters Champions ensure that staff are environmentally engaged and aware of the site’s potential impact on the environment” (Richard Giles, Premier Foods, UK).

For more information, visit: <https://www.iso.org/standards.html>

- **ISO 14001**
Since 2001
- **ENVIRONMENTAL**
Management
- **ISO**
Certification

- BENEFITS**
- environmental
 - social
 - employee satisfaction





THE CONFUSION ON ECOLABELLING

Ecolabelling has become more and more popular over the past years and it carries wider acceptance as time goes by. This fact is based on the growing global concern for environmental protection by customers, businesses and governments. What is obvious nowadays is the agony of the private sector to provide products or services that are “natural”, “green”, “sustainable”, “low energy” and so on.

And on the other hand, it is based on the consumers’ desire to feel that they actually do something beneficial for the world they live in. This realization from both sides -producers and consumers, has led to the appearance of several labels, certificates and declarations. Especially in the field of tourism, it seems that people are attracted by these labels as they look for ways to reduce the environmental impact of their travel experience. But how clear is the picture regarding these ecolabelling brands? It seems that there is a lot of confusion and skepticism after the emergence of hundreds of ecolabels.

WHAT IS ECOLABELLING

According to the Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN), “Ecolabelling is a voluntary method of environmental performance certification and labelling that is practiced around the world. An ecolabel identifies products or services proven to be environmentally preferable with a specific category. ... Requirements and product categories can differ but all standards address multiple environmental and health issues which can include toxicity, air quality, energy and water use, recyclability, use of natural resources and other areas of concern.”

It has to be mentioned that the Global Ecolabelling Network member programs have attained the status of Type I according to ISO 14024:2018 and according to ISO, “A Type I label is a third-party assessment of a product based on a number of criteria involved in the environmental impact of a product or material throughout its life cycle. The objective of this type of environmental labelling program is to contribute to a reduction in the environmental impacts associated with products, through the identification of products that meet the specific criteria of a Type I program for overall environmental preferability”.

TOURISM ECOLABELLING

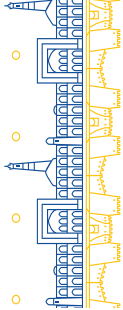
The first ecolabels in tourism emerged around 1987 when the Blue Flag for European coastal zones was launched. Today there is a great number of ecolabels worldwide for different topics, including sustainable tourism. Ecolabels may refer to accommodation, tour operators, destinations or other aspects of tourism and their purpose may differ. Some of the ecolabels highlight the unique characteristics of a location, others the need to protect the

natural environment from overtourism, while others promote the quality of environmental amenities or brand an entire region of certain natural or cultural characteristics. While some focus on the environmental criteria such as the Green Key label which is quite well known among hotel and accommodation companies, their labels cover more than one pillar of Sustainable Tourism such as TourCert or Green Globe.

ARE ECOLABELS TRUSTWORTHY?

Which labels are trustworthy however? Which of the certificates serve their purpose and how can a consumer rest assured that all claims are true? To answer these questions, one would

have to be reminded of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and the work it performs in accrediting certification organisations, having set the global certification Criteria.



EUROPEAN ECOLABELLING INITIATIVES

But let's see what's happening with ecolabels within Europe, which has long committed itself to promoting sustainable

development of tourism within its territory. Presented below are the most widely known such ecolabelling schemes:



THE EU ECO-MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT SCHEME (EMAS)

The Ecolabelling and Audit Scheme (EMAS) is a tool developed by the European Commission allowing actors in the tourism sector to improve their environmental performance and promote the quality of their services. This voluntary tool and certification scheme aims to help its



Performance,
Credibility,
Transparency

users to achieve enhanced performance. Registered organizations gain credibility and transparency thanks to a verification of performance and the validation of external communication (the EMAS environmental statement) by a third-party verifier.



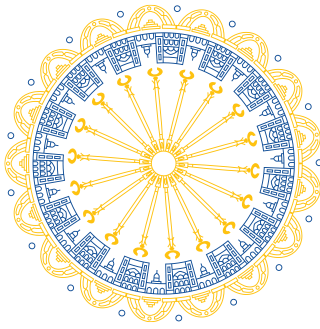
THE EU ECOLABEL

Established in 1992 and recognised across Europe and worldwide, the EU Ecolabel is a label of environmental excellence that is awarded to products and services meeting high environmental standards throughout their life-cycle: from raw material extraction, to production, distribution and disposal. The EU Ecolabel promotes the circular economy by encouraging producers to generate less waste and CO2 during the manufacturing process. The EU Ecolabel criteria also encourage companies to develop products that are durable, easy to repair and recycle.



The EU Ecolabel criteria provide exigent guidelines for companies looking to lower their environmental impact and guarantee the efficiency of their environmental actions through third party controls. Furthermore, many companies turn to the EU Ecolabel criteria for guidance on eco-friendly best practices when developing their product lines. The EU Ecolabel is recognized throughout Europe.





- **Samsic Italia**
- **Indoor Cleaning Services**
- **Eco Label Certification**

ADDED VALUE

"It is within Samsic's DNA to provide a high-quality service with an environmental added value, for a right price. Given the increasing importance of Corporate Social Responsibility, each stakeholder must play their part to improve their environmental impact".

Umberto Diamante, Samsic Italia commercial director

EU ECOLABEL AMBASSADOR: SAMSIC ITALIA

Samsic Italia is one of the first companies to have received the EU Ecolabel certification for Cleaning Services in 2019. As a member of the larger Samsic group, which operates in 25 countries, Samsic Italia provides cleaning, maintenance and energy services for buildings and facilities across Italy.

Samsic Italia actively involves every one of their employees in sustainability measures, by encouraging them to use cleaning products more efficiently. In fact, these employees are committed to strengthening the company's environmental performance and they take pride in knowing they are limiting the negative impact of their daily tasks. This greater optimisation has also helped reduce costs for Samsic Italia.

Becoming awarded with the EU Ecolabel has also enabled Samsic Italia to create synergies and durable partnerships with clients and suppliers that share the same principles of sustainability. In fact, the EU Ecolabel requires that half of the cleaning products used by cleaning service providers be certified by a recognized ISO14024 Type I ecolabel, and the remainder have strict limitations on the hazardous substances they contain. In Samsic Italia's case, this has had the effect of creating a sustainable quality-driven supply chain.

Information retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/documents/Success_story_SAMSIC_IT.pdf



THE TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENT REPORTING MECHANISM (TOUERM)

The Tourism and Environment Reporting Mechanism TOUERM, developed by the European Environment Agency, is based on the use of indicators. These indicators are policy relevant, feasible and regularly updated in order to be able to reflect both environmental impacts (baseline and

threshold) and sustainability trends at a European scale. Some of the indicators may also address specific geographical contexts, such as coastal zones, rural areas and urban areas. Some relevant information deriving from destinations might also be included if relevant.

THE EUROPEAN TOURISM INDICATOR SYSTEM – ETIS

The European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) was launched by the European Commission in 2013, with the objective to provide a measuring and monitoring tool for destinations wanting to adopt a sustainable management approach and to enhance their sustainability performances. It is designed to be a tool which any destination can pick up and use voluntarily without any specific training.



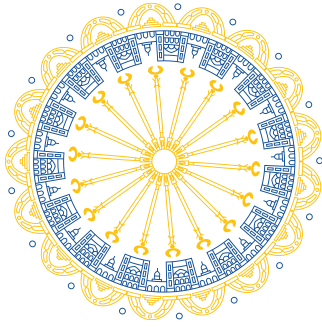
ETIS' system of indicators is suitable for all tourist destinations, encouraging them to adopt a more intelligent approach to tourism planning. It is:

- ▶ **a management tool**, supporting destinations who want to take a sustainable approach to destination management.
- ▶ **a monitoring system**, easy to use for collecting data and detailed information and to let destinations monitor their performance from one year to another.
- ▶ **an information tool** (not a certification scheme), useful for policy makers, tourism enterprises and other stakeholders.

Participating destinations have shown that sustainability and accessibility of tourism destinations are both financially and logistically feasible and can have a positive impact on the competitiveness of the entire tourism sector.

Destinations that use ETIS can improve their economic sustainability while helping to preserve the diverse natural landscapes that the European continent has to offer and enabling access for everyone.

MONITORING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE DANUBE



- **Regional Development Programme**
- **Monitoring through Indicators**
- **ETIS Assessment**

CERTIFIED SUSTAINABILITY MANAGERS

The ETIS training and field research has also paid off for the students of St. Kliment Ohridski University who participated in the program: most of them were motivated to use the opportunity to become certified sustainability managers through the Travelife Sustainability System for tour operators and represent an entire new generation for whom sustainability and collaboration will form the core of further tourism development.

As part of a regional tourism development programme, the Danube Competence Centre was set up in 2010, mobilising public, private and nongovernmental organisations from all ten Danube countries to establish Destination Danube as a tourism brand.

In Bulgaria, the program coincided with a national concept for establishing tourism regions and raising awareness of the benefits of tourism on the local level. The initiative was extended in 2013 when the Bulgarian Danube region was first in the destination network to apply the European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) to assess destination sustainability and competitiveness.

Professor Vasil Marinov, Head of the 'Geography of Tourism' department of Sofia's St. Kliment Ohridski University, acted as Project Leader during the ETIS testing phase. His team, which consisted of over 40 researchers and students in collaboration with coordinators and working groups from the local municipalities of Vidin, Belogradchik, Rousse and Tutrakan, has carried out extensive monitoring, surveying and data collection work. Looking back at his experience, Vasil says, "We immediately saw that ETIS provided a good basis to assess and then support tourism development in Bulgaria. The benefits of such comprehensive testing were not obvious to some local stakeholders though, so we ended up providing guidance and training along the way. The awareness raising aspect has become a priority because we want to show that monitoring of sustainable tourism is important over the long term."

On the basis of their analysis, seminars and surveys with local stakeholders, the team created various papers on the tourism indicator testing, as well as on cruise tourism on the Danube. The local working groups have also set 5-year targets on ETIS indicators for the four participating municipalities. "There is lots of energy and a good dynamic amongst stakeholders. Some of the participating municipalities are introducing new initiatives and products to support sustainable incentives and are also willing to continue the monitoring process through satisfaction surveys that have been developed in Bulgarian, English and German. Our goal is to promote the monitoring of tourism development along the entire river", says Vasil.

Further details and more case studies can be retrieved from:

https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/sustainable/indicators_en

THE EUROPEAN ECO TOURISM LABELLING STANDARD – EETLS

The European Ecotourism Labelling Standard (EETLS) is a baseline quality standard developed along the lines of the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria, for European Ecotourism. The EETLS is the result of a lengthy development and consultation process that documented international best practice leading to a set of criteria and indicators that are suitable for ensuring quality of ecotourism services.

The EETLS is complimentary to existing certification schemes, setting minimum acceptable standards that can be used by certification schemes and quality labels

to benchmark and, hopefully, adjust their own requirements. The EETLS aims to provide a Europe-wide dimension of ecotourism quality certification, offering the possibility for an EETLS-compliance sign integrated in the existing labels.

The EETLS was the first Standard to gain recognition from the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) in 2011. Among the project partners, PRISMA and the affiliated NGO Hellenic Ecotourism Society use standards based on EETLS that have currently (2019) achieved “Recognition” by the GSTC.w

THE EUROPEAN ECOTOURISM NETWORK

The European Ecotourism Network (EEN) is a network of organisations aiming to ensure that ecotourism services in Europe contribute to a genuine conservation and sustainability effort. Their target is to connect ecotourism stakeholders across Europe and facilitate the transfer of knowledge and experience for the benefit of ecotourism practitioners, academics and policy makers. EEN supports the development and implementation of the European Ecotourism Labelling Standard (EETLS) - an initiative that ensures baseline standards of quality in ecotourism while avoiding at

the same time green-washing and unsustainable operations. EEN supports the training resources and the quality evaluation tools developed by the ECOLNET project, which are accessible online and free to use by all EEN members.

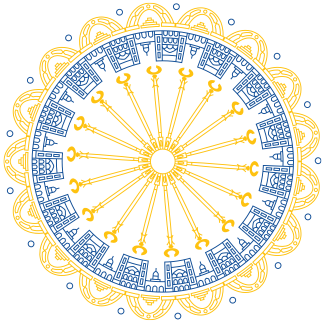


<http://www.ecotourism-network.eu/>

LIBRARY OF BEST EUROPEAN ECOTOURISM NETWORK SITES

The Library of best practice on the European Ecotourism Network site aims to link best practice examples of ecotourism with the practical implementation of the EETLS criteria, through a number of case studies. Every case study is described and the ingredients of the best practice are analysed and linked to the EETLS criteria.

One such case study is the Achentel eco-model project, which has implemented the EELTS criteria of Protection of Sites and Incorporation of Culture, having achieved significant progress on these two sectors, gaining its place in the Library of Best Practices.



- **ACHENTAL**
Area Heritage
- **Cultural & Environmental**
Landscape
- **Local**
Partnerships

LOCATION

The Achental is located on the northern edge of the Bavarian Alps between Munich and Salzburg, on the immediate border with Tyrol. It is home to 33,000 residents and a variety of rare animal and plant species.

FOCUS AREAS

- preservation of the natural and cultural landscape
- safeguarding of small-scale agriculture
- promotion of nature-friendly tourism and trade

THE ACHENTAL ECO-MODEL

The Achental eco-model is a project run by an association made up of different Upper Bavarian communities. Neighbouring Tyrolean communities are involved as project partners. Local residents participate in subject-based working groups and initiative circles.

Its main aim is to take care of Achental area heritage in a multidisciplinary way according to the principle that landscape is a mix resulting from people, historical and cultural facts and, obviously, environment.

Criterion 1 C.3. **Protection of Sites**

The Achental Eco-model comprises initiatives towards protection and sustainable management of culturally and environmentally valuable rural landscape. Some good results have already been achieved in this direction: agriculture has been stabilised (with farmers' children again willing to take over the farms) and has become more extensive (area devoted to organic farming and extensive agriculture doubled and still increasing). The number of farm-holiday visitors has also risen significantly. Many working groups are now well established and can increasingly run themselves. Schools and kindergartens have been recruited as partners (e.g., biotope sponsorships, project days). The growing degree of networking facilitates the implementation of measures.

Criterion 1 C.4. **Incorporation of Culture**

The Achental eco-model promotes the local processing chain by making visitors appreciate local food and craftsmanship. This has a value both for tourists and locals who will be prouder of their culture and more motivated to hold that policy of development. Further, the projects plan prices for producers that will manage their business according to environmental sustainability.



<http://data.prismanet.gr/ecolnet-case-studies/view.php?id=62>

Here are some labels indicating the need of businesses and destinations to promote their sustainable characteristics and gain points to the chaotic world of sustainable tourism.

The following standards for hotels have been Approved as in compliance with the requirements of the Manual for GSTC Approval.



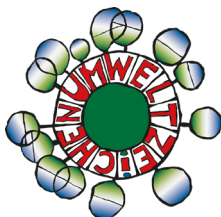
ECO CERTIFICATION MALTA

The ECO certification is the national scheme for ensuring the environmental, socioeconomic, and cultural sustainability of hotels and farmhouses on the Maltese Islands and has been recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council as fully reflecting the GSTC criteria.

The scheme was launched by the Malta Tourism Authority in 2002. The criteria were updated in 2008, 2012 and again in 2019. GSTC fully recognised the updated criteria meaning that the new sustainable tourism criteria were reviewed by the Council's technical experts and Accreditation Panel and deemed equivalent to the GSTC criteria for sustainable tourism.

The new criteria follow a shift from an environmental scheme to a sustainable scheme covering environmental, social, cultural, economic, quality and health & safety. Third party audits are carried out every two years to ensure that hotels and farmhouses are meeting the requirements of the scheme.

<https://www.mta.com.mt/en/eco-certification>



AUSTRIAN ECOLABEL

The Austrian Ecolabel addresses itself primarily to consumers but also to manufacturers and public procurement. The ecolabel provides consumers with guidance in order to choose products or services the least hazardous to the environment or health. The ecolabel draws the consumers attention to aspects of environment, health and quality (fitness for use).

<http://www.ecolabelindex.com/ecolabel/osterreichisches-umweltzeichen-austrian-ecolabel>

The following standards have not been Recognized or Approved by the GSTC. This means that the standard is not a member of the GSTC and that the GSTC has not verified the standard in any way. We have chosen some that we think are trustworthy.



Viabono was established in 2000 as an initiative of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment and the Federal Environmental Agency. The certificate awards all types of accommodations providers, conference centres, restaurants, holiday packages and vendors as well as canoeing, nature parks and local tourism destinations.



NORDIC SWAN ECOLABEL

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel works to reduce the environmental impact from production and consumption of goods – and to make it easy for consumers and professional buyers to choose the environmentally best goods and services.

Requirements:

- ▶ Sets strict environmental requirements in all relevant phases of a product's life cycle.
- ▶ Sets strict requirements for chemicals used in ecolabelled products.
- ▶ Tightens requirements for goods and services continuously to create sustainable development.
- ▶ Certifies and verifies that all requirements are met before a product is approved.

More than 25.000 different products

are sold with the Nordic Swan ecolabel in the Nordic countries and the number is growing.

Established in 1989.

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel was established in 1989 by the Nordic Council of Ministers as a voluntary ecolabelling scheme for the nordic countries Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

<https://www.nordic-ecolabel.org/the-nordic-swan-ecolabel/>



GREEN TOURISM

Promotes greener ways for businesses and organizations to operate, by offering members advice on:

- ▶ Reducing energy use
- ▶ Saving water
- ▶ Efficient & eco-friendly waste disposal
- ▶ Ethical buying
- ▶ Staying local & seasonal
- ▶ Minimizing food miles
- ▶ Promoting biodiversity
- ▶ Adopting a smart, sustainable outlook from top to bottom

Other ecolabels mainly in the tourism sector follow. This list is non-exhaustive of existing EU and international eco-labels. These are mentioned in the <http://www.ecolabelindex.com/ecolabels/> and many of these are being referred to the Europa.eu, though its accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Our goal is to underline the plurality of the ecolabels and the effort of the various organization to certify the quality of the services provided. <https://www.green-tourism.com/about-us>

SOME OF THESE ECOLABELS ARE:



This certification covers organic and regional products in Hotels. BIO Hotels uses only organic certified products that meet the standard of Bioland or similar ecolabels.



EcoLabel
Luxembourg

ECOLABEL LUXEMBOURG

The EcoLabel is an initiative by the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry for sustainable development and infrastructure, running since 1999.

ecovillage THE “ECOVILLAGE. ECO-FRIENDLY COTTAGE COMMUNITIES”

The “EcoVillage. Eco-friendly cottage communities” project was implemented in 2006 as an integrated system of environmental certification of low-rise suburban cottage facilities and infrastructure design and construction.



ESTONIAN ECOTOURISM QUALITY LABEL

This label indicates tourism options which promote local economic development and the conservation of natural and cultural heritage of Estonia.



GREEN CERTIFICATE: LATVIA

An eco-label affirming environmental quality in vacation properties which save natural resources and use them rationally.



LEGAMBIENTE

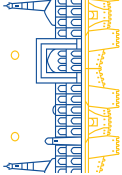
LEGAMBIENTE TURISMO

Eco-tourism label for Italy for any type of tourist accommodation business. Since 1997 Legambiente Turismo has worked to help tourist businesses to reduce tourist impacts in the destination and raise awareness in holiday makers.

OTHER EU ECOLABELS

- ▶ EU Organic Label http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/downloads/logo/index_en.htm
- ▶ Blue Angel – Germany <https://www.blauer-engel.de/>
- ▶ RAL – Germany <http://www.ral-guetezeichen.de>
- ▶ Bra Miljöval – Sweden <http://www.naturskyddsforeningen.se/bra-miljoval/>
- ▶ Milieukeur – Netherlands <http://www.milieukeur.nl>
- ▶ Umweltzeichen – Austria <http://www.umweltzeichen.at/cms/de/home/content.html>
- ▶ NF Environnement – France <http://www.marque-nf.com>
- ▶ Környezetbarát Termék – Hungary <http://www.kornyezetbarat-termek.hu/>

For more information: <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/ecolabels.pdf>



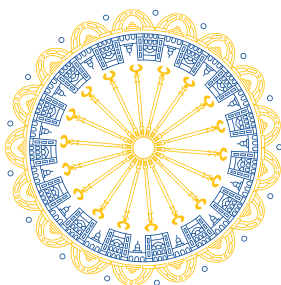
GLOBAL ECOLABELLING INITIATIVES

GREEN KEY

Green Key is a voluntary eco-label awarded to more than 3,200 hotels and other establishments in 65 countries. The Green Key award is the leading standard for excellence in the field of environmental responsibility and sustainable operation within the tourism industry. This prestigious eco-label represents a commitment by businesses that their premises adhere to the strict criteria set by the Foundation for Environmental Education. A Green Key stands for the promise to its guests that by opting to stay with the Green Key establishment, they are helping to make a difference on an environmental level. The high environmental standards expected of these establishments are maintained through rigorous documentation and frequent audits. Green Key is eligible for hotels, hostels, small accommodations, campsites, holiday parks, conference centres, restaurants and attractions.

Each year, Green Key runs a best practice competition to encourage its awarded sites to present their most inspiring sustainability stories. In 2018, Green Key's best practice competition focused on how to inform and involve guests in sustainability. The theme relates to SDG 12 "responsible consumption and production" to ensure "sustainable consumption and production patterns". Not only does Green Key help consumers identify responsible tourism establishments, but awarded establishments also have to inform their guests about sustainable practices during their stay.

<https://www.greenkey.global/>



GREEN KEY AWARDED RESTAURANT

At 'A Cozinha', Chef António Loureiro and his team are totally committed to sustainable eating and also strive to pursue a policy of near-zero waste. An integrated approach considering several practices was implemented since the opening day. António, awarded Portuguese Chef of the Year in 2014, is well-known for his high-quality gastronomy that combines tradition and innovation. He mainly uses regional or local products and the motto "cooking what Mother Nature is offering" has become an integral part of every menu he creates. To prevent food waste, António uses the entire product that is bought, cooked and combined in different ways.

As a part of the restaurant's mission towards sustainability, António opens his kitchen for several initiatives to inform the local community and children about food waste. For example, in the activity "be a chef for a day", or "team building with a cooking experience" guests have the chance to have a hands-on high-level experience where they learn how to respect the products, how to promote the local economy with their choices and how to plan a week menu without creating a big amount of food waste.

For more information, visit: <https://a-cozinha.pt/>

-  **High-Quality**
Gastronomy
-  **Sustainable**
Eating
-  **near-Zero**
Waste

'A COZINHA'

is a Portuguese restaurant run by Chef António Loureiro. It has been awarded with the Green Key ecolabel since 2017.

TRAVEL LIFE

Travelife is a leading training, management and certification initiative for tourism companies committed to reaching sustainability.

Both consumer and business demand for responsible products is growing and the public wants to know how the business is managed.

Companies ready to get to work towards sustainability will, therefore, score better

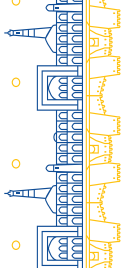
on customer satisfaction, staff motivation and business efficiency with positive effects for their competitive advantage. Sustainability management is all about commitment and consistent sustainable business practices. This includes products, how the impact of business practice is monitored and managed, and how suppliers and collaborators are supported on the road to sustainability.

The Travelife Certification standard integrates both management and performance criteria and is based on leading international sustainability and CSR standards and guidelines:



- ▶ EMAS III - The EU Eco Management and Audit Scheme
- ▶ ISO 14001 - Environmental management
- ▶ UNEP - Tour Operators' Initiative (company and supply chain management manuals)
- ▶ GRI - Global Reporting Initiative, tour operator supplement
- ▶ GSTC - Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Criteria
- ▶ OECD - Guidelines for multinational enterprises
- ▶ ISO 26000 - Corporate Social Responsibility Guidelines and principles

https://www.travelife.info/index_new.php?menu=home&lang=en#



NETWORKING & DISSEMINATING INFORMATION

USEFUL TOOLS FOR RAISING AWARENESS

Labelling is one way of raising awareness regarding sustainable choices in the tourism sector. There are, however, other ways of educating consumers on sustainable and responsible tourism. Such initiatives include educational and networking platforms, informational campaigns, electronic journals, as well as awards at various levels, all aiming at popularizing knowledge about sustainable development, communicating to individuals and businesses how to operate in a socially and environmentally friendly manner and how to make ethical choices in the processes of production and consumption of goods.

This part of Section 3 presents such initiatives that have acquired wide acceptance across Europe, proving that efforts to increase consumers awareness requires a long, but at the same time, creative path ahead. The list that is included in this study is by no means an exhaustive one and the authors certainly encourage our readers to investigate the matter even further, as there is a wealth of initiatives and actions out there for anyone interested in delving deeper into the subject.

SUSTAIN - T

Sustainable Tourism through Networking and Collaboration or Sustain-T is an EU co-funded project which aims to enhance the sustainability performance of EU micro and small enterprises in the tourism sector by raising their managers' awareness of sustainable tourism practices and improving their networking and collaboration skills for establishing new green alliances and implementing joint sustainability initiatives.

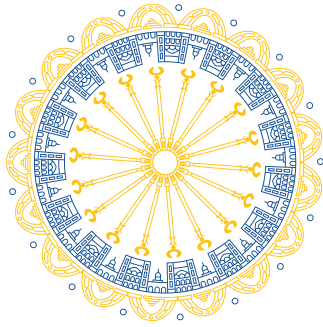


The project's specific objectives are:

- ▶ 1. The development of an on-line training package;
- ▶ 2. The creation of interactive tools, facilitating collaboration;
- ▶ 3. Provide tourism MSEs with an open educational resource - an interactive learning platform;
- ▶ 4. Deliver guidelines for MSEs and for VET (Vocational Education and Training) providers.

More than 1.500 representatives of the project target groups and stakeholders will be directly involved in project activities and events. Close relationship with the project stakeholders – “multiplier agents” (tourism administration and management bodies, tourism associations, professional associations and networks, etc.) will be established and supported throughout the lifetime of the project and at least for five years after project completion. Sustain-T training and e-tools will reach out to and will be used by more than 25.000 tourism enterprises and tourism education and training institutions in the partners' countries.

For more information: <http://www.sustain-t.eu/>



CONNECTING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Tourism2030 is an independent portal which brings together the global community of people and organisations working for making tourism more sustainable.

The portal offers a free Knowledge Base and a set of DestiNet Services for making tourism more sustainable. The Tourism 2030 compass leads you to helpful organisations, courses & resources, good practice examples, sustainable tourism certification programmes and their certified products and services world wide.

- **Tourism2030** Portal
- **Network for** Sustainable Tourism
- **Knowledge Base &** DestiNet Services

ECOTRANS

Tourism 2030 - DestiNet Services is managed by ECOTRANS - an independent not-for-profit European network of experts and organisations who are working since 1993 for making tourism more sustainable.

GOING GREEN

The Tourism2030 platform aims to support the tourism sector in making their products and services more sustainable and visible. ECOTRANS is managing the platform and offers a set of services and tools:

- **the Global Certification Quickfinder**
- **the Green Travel Maps**
- **the Travel Green Europe app.**

The DestiNet portal was originally designed in 2002 to present and disseminate the results of the Sustainable Tourism Information Portal (European Environment Agency - EEA) and the Network Evolution for Sustainable Tourism - NEST (Nordic Industrial Fund). The Portal definition was finally oriented by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, which developed an Agenda 21 policy line that included tourism (Item 43 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation). In response to this, the European Environment Agency and ECOTRANS formed a public-private partnership for the further development of DestiNet. The partnership was registered in 2004 as a "UN Type II Partnership for Sustainable Development".

Since 2005 ECOTRANS, as executive directors of the partnership, has developed the coherent international content structure and has feeded DestiNet with information. EEA has further developed the technical content management system and the design. In 2006 the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) and the United Nations Environment Programme joined the partnership.

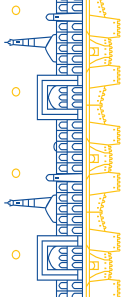
Further support for its development has recently been given by the European Union - CIP programme (project FASTLAIN which promotes research to market-place innovation processes for competitiveness and sustainability in tourism regions through ICT-based knowledge networking) and by the Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliances programme (project TRIANGLE).

In 2015 DestiNet joined the new SDG Partnership network to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, above all to the Goal 12 of "ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns" in tourism.

In 2017 the DestiNet Portal for Sustainable & Responsible Tourism has been re-launched as Tourism 2030.



For more information: <https://destinet.eu/>



SPREADING THE WORD THROUGH PAN-EUROPEAN ACTIVITIES

The **European Sustainable Development Week** (ESDW) is an initiative to facilitate the organization of activities that promote sustainable development and make these efforts visible on a common platform. The recently adopted Global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), they articulate key issues that call for urgent action at all levels and by all stakeholders. The ESDW contributes to this ambitious, universal and transformative agenda by promoting the organization of bottom-up activities that have a thematic link to and support the SDGs. As such, the ESDW aims to raise awareness for the 2030 Agenda in Europe and calls upon local stakeholders to actively engage with sustainable development, in general, and the SDGs, in particular.

For more information: ESDN. (2021). European Sustainable Development Week. <https://esdw.eu/>



**EUROPEAN
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
WEEK**
20.-26. SEPTEMBER

The **EU Sustainable Energy Week** (EUSEW) is a month-long series of activities to build a secure energy future for Europe. It brings together public authorities, private companies, NGOs and consumers to promote initiatives to save energy and move towards renewables for clean, secure and efficient power.

Launched in 2006 by the European Commission, EUSEW was organised by the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME) until 31 March 2021, and as of 1 April 2021 is organised by the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA), in close cooperation with the Directorate-General for Energy.

It is an ideal platform for sharing ideas and knowhow, and for forging alliances to bring about an Energy Union based on:

- Energy efficiency
- Decarbonising the economy
- Research, innovation and competitiveness.

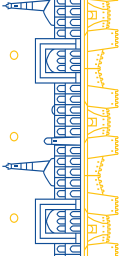
<https://www.eusew.eu/>



The **European Green Week** is Europe's biggest annual environmental event and this year was dedicated to the 'zero pollution ambition'. It featured an opening event and a virtual high-level conference, but the topic was also addressed in hundreds of partner events around Europe. Reduction of pollution was discussed in the context of the EU Action Plan toward a Zero Pollution Ambition and other European Green Deal initiatives,

the post-COVID-19 recovery and transition towards a more sustainable EU economy. The events brought together stakeholders and interested citizens to find ways to work together to make the ambition for a zero pollution and toxic-free environment a reality.

For more information: European Commission. (2021). EU Green Week 2021. <https://www.eugreenweek.eu/>



EDUCATING THROUGH AWARDS

LIFE AWARDS

At the EU Green Week, Europe's biggest environmental event, the winners of the 2021 LIFE Awards were announced by the EU LIFE programme. The Awards honoured winners in three different categories from the Slovak Republic (Nature), Spain (Environment), and France (Climate Action). The public also voted for their favourite project in the Citizen's Award, and the work and dedication of young volunteers were recognised in the LIFE4Youth Award.

The LIFE Awards recognise the most innovative, inspirational and effective LIFE projects in

three categories: nature protection, environment and climate action.



The LIFE programme is the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action. It has been running since 1992 and has co-financed about 5 500 projects across the EU and in third countries. At any given moment, some 1 100 projects are taking place on the ground. The budget for 2021–2027 is set at €5.4 billion in current prices. This is 60% more than the previous period. €3.5 billion will go to environmental projects and the remaining €1.9 billion will be allocated to those on climate action. LIFE has four sub-programmes: nature and biodiversity, circular economy and quality of life, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and clean energy transition.

EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF SMART TOURISM

is a competition that rewards European cities for outstanding, innovative and sustainable tourism practices. The call is aimed at supporting EU cities and encourage them to develop innovative and inclusive solutions for sustainable and accessible tourism, which makes use of digital technologies and which strengthens the function of heritage and cultural industry and creativity as tourist goods.

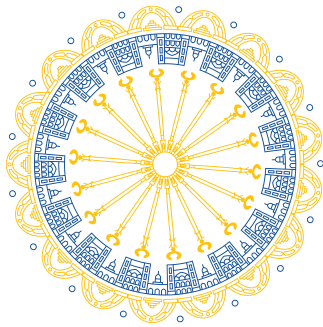
The cities applying will be evaluated in relation to the following categories:

- Accessibility
- Sustainability
- Digitisation
- Cultural heritage and creativity.



For more information: European Commission. (2021). European Capitals of Smart Tourism. https://smart-tourism-capital.ec.europa.eu/index_en





MÁLAGA - EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF SMART TOURISM 2020



Ayuntamiento
de Málaga



EUROPEAN CAPITAL
OF **SMART TOURISM**

Málaga
Ciudad Genial

- **Malaga,**
Spain
- **Air Quality**
Sectoral Plan
- **City**
of Museums

SMART TOURISM CAPITAL

"Málaga has been incorporating the concepts of sustainability, innovation and culture into their strategic plans for many years" according to the European Commission's website on European Capitals of Smart Tourism (<https://smart-tourism-capital.ec.europa.eu/competition-winners-2020/malaga/malaga-winner-2020-european-capitals-smart-tourism-en>) and that is the reason why it was awarded the title European Capital of Smart Tourism for 2020.

SUSTAINABILITY

Málaga works in all spheres – it has installed public LED lighting, offers over 20 bike hire stations and created bike lanes that now add up to over 40km. The city has installed smart watering systems for parks and gardens in order to save water and has introduced an Air Quality Sectoral Plan to reduce air pollution, monitor pollen levels and improve noise quality. Málaga has also upgraded street cleaning equipment and has worked on better waste separation in the city centre.

NATURE

Malaga has almost 50 hectares of protected natural areas, 60 hectares of botanical gardens, more than 400 hectares of green space and 5 beaches. Malaga revitalised many of their natural spaces, such as its wetlands, creating ideal spots for bird watching and nature walks

CULTURE

Moreover, Málaga is quite literally a city of museums. Within just two decades, the city has gone from having 4 museums to having 37 – the city's exhibition space thereby went from 400m² to 35.000m². Many old buildings and their surroundings were transformed into vibrant, cultural spaces, like Málaga's old tobacco factory and its Tabacalera neighbourhood, or the city's art district, Soho. The work carried out in these areas even caught the notice of the United Nations, which, through the UNITAR agency, has established a CIFAL centre in Malaga, specialised in sustainable tourism training.





CASE-STUDYING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM BEST PRACTICES IN EUROPE

switchasia
GRANTS PROGRAMME



Funded by the
European Union



most
Model for
Sustainable Tourism
in Central Asia

GRANT CONTRACT N. ACA/2019/412-065

EUROPEAN BEST PRACTICES IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Section 4 is looking into cases that apply sustainable practices in the tourism sector all over Europe. They are cases from various sectors of the tourism industry. Each case is different, having followed diverse principles, targeting multiple objectives and having applied differing criteria. Still, each case is thought-provoking and motivating, since they have managed to distinguish themselves from the norm, managing to connect their efforts with responsible and sustainable practices in the travel and leisure business. This is the reason why they have been included in this part of the study. It is the writers' hope for these Best Practices to become examples for all those interested to learn from others' experiences.





INTERREG MEET & DESTIMED PROGRAMS: IMPROVING SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM FLOWS



Interreg is one of the key instruments of the European Union (EU) supporting cooperation across borders through project funding. Its aim is to jointly tackle common challenges and find shared solutions in fields such as health, environment, research, education, transport, sustainable energy and more.

The Interreg program DestiMED builds off the success of the MEET project (Mediterranean Experience of Ecotourism), another European Interreg program that is now a non-profit association and Destination Management Organization (DMO).

The “MEET” Project or “Mediterranean Experience of Ecotourism”, started in January 2013 and concluded in 2015. It is a strategic project involving 20 Protected Areas in 10 countries of the Mediterranean region in the framework of cross-border cooperation through the European Neighborhood Partnership Instrument – “Mediterranean Sea” Programme (ENPI CBC Mediterranean Programme). The Projects’ budget is approximately 5.000.000 € from which 90% is allocated by ENPI Med and the rest 10% from private co-financing.

Objective

The main objective of the Project is to develop an integrated strategy for the establishment, development and promotion of an Eco-Tourism model to Mediterranean Protected Areas (PAs) that will eventually promote a better seasonal distribution of tourism flow. Basic pylon of this initiative is the “European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas” and the direct goal is to consolidate a cohesive network among protected areas in the Mediterranean region.

For more information on the MEET & DestiMed programmes, visit:

https://destimed.interreg-med.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Sites/Sustainable_Tourism/Projects/DestiMED/News_events/DestiMed_guide_2019.pdf, <https://destimed.interreg-med.eu/>, <https://destimed.interreg-med.eu/news-events/news/detail/actualites/how-protected-areas-local-stakeholders-can-work-together-to-create-sustainable-tourism-products/>

MEET – a regional governance system

The Mediterranean Experience of Ecotourism (MEET) was established with the intent of fostering a regional governance system that will coordinate, enhance and promote protected area ecotourism across the Mediterranean Basin (Interreg Mediterranean, 2021).

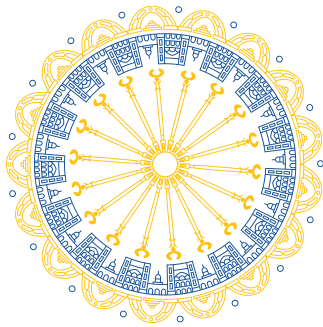
The MEET project aimed to improve the sustainability and the rationalization in distribution of the tourism sector in the Mediterranean region. In the framework of cross-border cooperation within the European Neighborhood Policy Instrument (ENPI Med), under the strategic line “Promoting sustainable tourism for the socio-economic development and enhancement of territories”.

Tourism is a growing source of income and an increasing driving force for actual negative impacts in the Mediterranean coastal regions. Protected Areas are the best example of it: they look at the tourists as additional “financial resources” for their weak institutional budget, but at the same time they fear the impact of large groups of tourists, concentrated in peak season.

The DestiMED Project has worked on a comprehensive methodology for ecotourism product development, which is being continuously improved and refined. This approach, based on the outcomes of the MEET project, has now been enhanced and updated thanks to successful cooperation between regional conservation organizations, local authorities, staff from protected areas and local tourism service providers.

The suggested activities included in a MEET Ecotourism product are:

- 1.- Soft Adventure
- 2.- Cultural and Culinary Activities
- 3.- Wildlife Watching
- 4.- History and archaeology
- 5.- Birdwatching
- 6.- Beach-related (Sun and Sand)



SAMARIA NATIONAL PARK: USING THE ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT TO ACHIEVE A LOWER FOOD FOOTPRINT

The Samaria National Park in the Prefecture of Chania in Crete is a MEET ecotourism product.

The ecotourism product was designed in collaboration with tourism service businesses in the protected area of Samaria but also with a tourism agency in Chania. The Project was titled “Crete – From Mountain to the Sea: The trail of Gods”. Its ecotourism activities and their impacts have been measured, tested and evaluated by two different groups of experts, in 2014 and in 2015, following the MEET approach, presenting significant results.

Continual monitoring of a MEET ecotourism product is a crucial element in understanding the measurable impact of its activities on the environment. This methodological rigor differentiates a MEET ecotourism product experience. It underpins the relevance and role of the product in protected area conservation and lends legitimacy to low impact (or “green”) claims when communicating the MEET brand and product portfolio to trade partners and consumers.

How Samaria National Park adjusted its ecotourism product in response to Ecological Footprint findings offers an excellent example of why and how this process works in action.

Of all the components of the ecotourism product, food provision was found to play a key role, representing more than half of the total product Footprint (56%).

- Samaria National Park
- Protected Area Management
- MEET Ecotourism Product

ROUND 1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Ecological Footprint analysis on the data in the Food & Drinks category included:

1. Choose a more balanced diet, low in protein and rich in vegetables, cereals and legumes
2. Reduce the number of calories and increase the share of local food products
3. Limit the consumption of meat to one serving per day
4. Choose low trophic-level seafood (e.g., sardines, prawns, mussels, etc.)
5. Provide shorter and lighter lunches

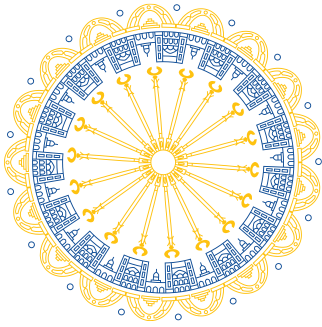
ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT METHODOLOGY

The Ecological Footprint is an environmental accounting tool conceived in the early 1990s by Mathis Wackernagel and William Rees at the University of British Columbia. The tool measures the human appropriation of the biosphere's capacity to provide renewable natural resources (i.e. crops) and key ecological services (i.e. carbon sequestration).

Ecological Footprint analyses are measured in global hectares (gha), which are hectare-equivalent units of land with world-average biological productivity.



For more information, visit: <https://www.samaria.gr/>



INTERREG MEET & DESTIMED PROGRAMS “LAID THE FOUNDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING INDICATORS TO MONITOR TOURISM”



INTERVIEW WITH ANTONIS BARNIAS
FORESTER AND PROJECT MANAGER FOR THE MANAGEMENT
BODY OF THE SAMARIA NATIONAL PARK

- **Measuring Sustainability**
- **Environmental Social Financial**
- **Indicators**

BENEFITS

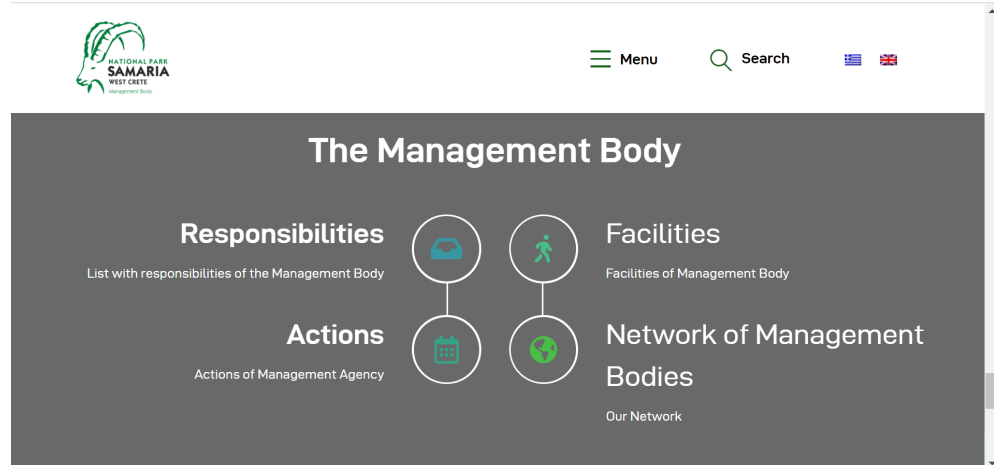
Barnias postulates that both MEET and DestiMED project were and still are extremely useful for environmental managers in a threefold dimension:

- a. They inserted tourism in the central environmental management scheme, acknowledging in that way the fact that tourism can be a severe altering factor for Protected Areas which needs to be monitored like all other biophysical factors
- b. They provided measurable data needed to support any type of decisions
- c. Environmental managers needed to get familiar with dimensions (social and economic) that were usually outside their thinking box as well as get in touch and cooperate closely with the business sector, a fact that boosted the true management objectives of any type of Protected Area management plan.

d. Local communities and SME owners on the other hand were able to cooperate with the environmental and management sector thus creating the notion that they are part of a larger process. In addition, all data that they provided were returned to them in a simple and clear way in the form of suggestions to minimize their economic costs thus increasing benefits for their SMEs and ultimately for the PA environment.

Commenting upon the experience in the aftermath of the MEET Project, Mr. Barnias summarises the most important outcomes of the implementation of the MEET approach. He emphasises that the DestiMED project laid the foundations for developing and using on-site several environmental indicators (i.e., energy consumption, transportation, food and beverages consumption, activities' carbon footprint etc.) for monitoring tourism.

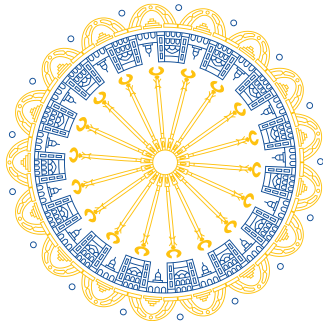
Its successor, DestiMEDPlus Project which is now being implemented in a Prefectural level has designed and incorporated social and financial indicators as well. All these indicators can provide a solid and measurable image about the impact of tourism in Protected Areas and can help mitigate negative situations by providing the necessary feedback for managers so that they can offer consultation to SME owners.



Collecting data needs Resources

All these indicators and relative processes, in order to be steady and robust, managers of Protected Areas must have a certain level of commitment in terms of available personnel and time in order to keep up-to-date data. These data for the Samaria National Park were successfully gathered during the previous Projects' implementation but nowadays need to be put again within a specific management framework in order to be able to provide the necessary outputs.

Source: Tsoukala, K. (2021). Interview with Antonis Barnias, Forester and Project Manager for the Management Body of the Samaria National Park.



EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST) in Protected Areas, developed by the EUROPARC Federation, is recognised internationally as a model for sustainable tourism management. It is a practical management tool that enables Protected Areas to develop tourism sustainably. It is in line with the international Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development, the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for destinations, and the European Commission's tourism policy and its priority "to promote the development of sustainable, responsible and high-quality tourism", and gives guidance to Parks and Businesses to work for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The core element of the Charter is working in partnership with all relevant stake-holders, to develop a common sustainable tourism strategy and an action plan on the basis of a thorough situation analysis.

The methodology includes a set of 5 principles, which defines and recognises good practice in the development and management of sustainable tourism in Europe's most treasured landscapes.

- **107**
SUSTAINABLE
DESTINATIONS
- **15**
COUNTRIES
- **5**
PRINCIPLES

THE CHALLENGE

EUROPARC has long recognised the need to take care of both the land and the people who live and work there and often derive their livelihoods from those who come to appreciate these special places. We understand that not only are parks themselves facing challenges and pressure from visitation and misuse on the land they manage but have the opportunity and potential to act as catalysts for sustainability and lifestyle changes at a local and regional and indeed national level.

PRINCIPLES

1. Giving priority to protection
2. Contributing to sustainable development
3. Engaging all stakeholders
4. Planning sustainable tourism effectively
5. Pursuing continuous improvement

OUTCOME

Network of EUROPARC
Sustainable Destinations

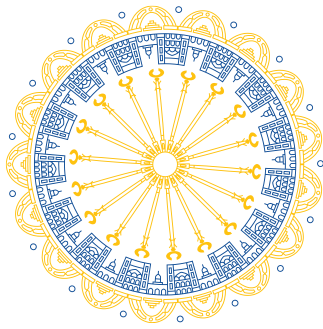


EUROPARC
Sustainable Tourism
in Protected Areas

Network of EUROPARC Sustainable Destinations

The European ECST Network has grown significantly since the first members were awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (ECST) in 2001. The ECST Network now counts 107 Sustainable Destinations from 15 countries involving a growing number of local tourism businesses as ECST partners, local and regional government authorities, NGOs and many more. Recognizing the value of the ECST-process for sustainable regional development, an increasing number of Candidate Protected Areas is engaging in the ECST process.

For more information: <https://www.europarc.org/sustainable-tourism/>



THE EDEN INITIATIVE

The European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) initiative rewards and promotes sustainable tourism practices in smaller tourist destinations. Since 2007, the European Commission has supported EU countries in rewarding non-traditional, emerging sustainable tourism destinations in Europe through the EDEN award. The initiative aimed to foster sustainable tourism destination management models across Europe by selecting and promoting EDEN destinations.

- SINCE **2007**
- TOURISM **SUSTAINABILITY PIONEERS**
- DESTINATION **MANAGEMENT MODEL**

AIMS

1. showcase the best achievements in sustainable tourism and green transition practices across smaller European destinations
2. promote the development of sustainable tourism in destinations, bringing value to the economy, the planet and the people
3. establish a framework for participating destinations to exchange best practices and create opportunities for cooperation and new partnerships

THE COMPETITION

EDEN holds regular competitions to select an emerging 'destination of excellence' based on the commitment to social, cultural, and environmental sustainability.

Each competition is based on a specific theme such as rural tourism, aquatic tourism, or accessible tourism.

The winners are identified as a sustainable tourism pioneer and join the EDEN Network, where they can share good practice with their counterparts across Europe.

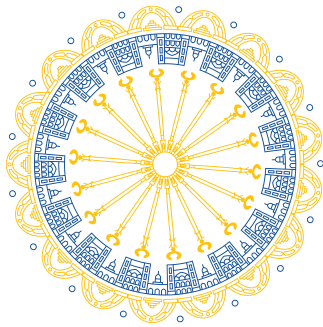
The EU Green Deal, the EU's commitment to a climate-neutral Europe by 2050, and the focus on circular economies, will drive changes in the tourism industry. The ecosystem will need to change how it operates, including how destinations are managed, to deliver sustainable and quality experience to visitors.

EDEN winning destinations have been positioned to stand out as tourism sustainability pioneers, committed to European Green Deal objectives and seeking to inspire other European tourism destinations in their green transition practices.

2022 EUROPEAN DESTINATIONS OF EXCELLENCE COMPETITION

APPLY NOW

For more information, visit: <https://youredenexperience.com/rism/>



EDEN NETWORK

The EDEN network consists of the winners and runners-up of the EDEN European Destinations of Excellence awards.

The network is a platform for exchanging good practice in sustainable tourism on a European level and for promoting contact between award-winning destinations. The network aims to encourage other destinations to adopt sustainable tourism development models.

● **350**
EDEN Destinations

● **27**
European countries

● **924,923** followers
on social media

#IST NETWORK

With more than 70 members and nearly 300 destinations awarded, EDEN is the biggest network of sustainable destinations in the World.

6,4 MILLIONS

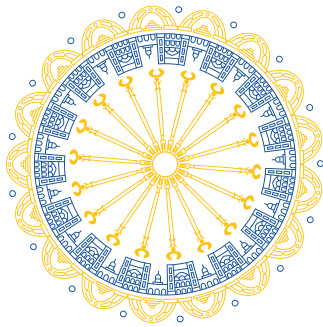
<https://www.europeanbestdestinations.com> is the first website dedicated to tourism in Europe and reaches more than 6,4 millions travellers, media and tourism professionals.

The original members of the network were the 30 winning destinations from the first two editions of the EDEN competition. In 2008, they were invited to sign a memorandum of understanding, a 'Declaration on a European Network of Destinations of Excellence for Sustainable Tourism'. By signing the declaration, the members officially committed themselves to collaborating with each other and to guaranteeing constant exchanges of information and knowledge on sustainable tourism development.

The following winners and runners-up of the EDEN competition have since been invited to join the network, ensuring a wider collection of model destinations, while preserving the strict criteria of sustainability. With more than than 350 EDEN destinations from 27 European countries as members to date, the EDEN network is the world's biggest network in the field of sustainable tourism.



For more information, visit: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/eden/about/network_enrism/



MINCIO PARK, ITALY

Best Practice in Experience with local economy Eden Competition Winner 2017

The Mincio Park is a protected area established by the Region Lombardy in 1984, and it is situated in the province of Mantua along the river Mincio in a territory belonging to 13 municipalities. The river, from the lower Garda to the Po river, flows along 73 km crossing northwards the moraine hills and the plain, before flowing into the Po river. It is one of the first Parks established in Lombardy, and the management of the area was entrusted to an Authority composed by the coastal municipalities and by the Province of Mantua. It safeguards and enhances a territory including also three Nature Reserves and four Sites of the Natura 2000 European Network.

- 3** Nature Reserves
- 4** Natura 2000 Sites
- across 13** municipalities

THE CHALLENGE

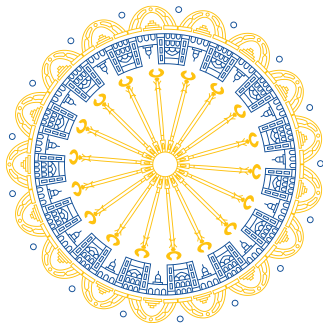
To create a network of economic operators in the EDEN area so as to offer to guests emphatic experiences.

OUTCOMES

- Annual hiking programs in nature involving numerous local operators: environmental guides, hospitality staff in hostels, experts in local gastronomy, artists and performers, musicians, museums, canoe and bicycle rental services
- Guided tours accompanied by show cooking
- 14 operators (companies, associations, private professionals) involved
- School tourism experiences combining environmental education with economic development. A total of 3.266 students and 300 teachers have participated so far



For more information, visit www.parcodelmincio.it



PREHISTORIC ROCK ART TRAILS

“Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” certified in 2010

Prehistoric Rock Art is the art of the first Europeans. It appeared in Europe 42,000 years ago and continued until the Early Iron Age in some regions. Since the scientific recognition of the Cave of Altamira in 1902, Prehistoric Art has constituted an important cultural and tourism resource for Europe, as the first major cultural, social and symbolic expression of humankind.

More than 200 rock art sites are open to the public in Europe, concentrated in countries like Norway, Sweden, Italy, Portugal, Georgia, Azerbaijan, France and Spain. Many are small sites, but there are locations with significant tourism infrastructure where it is possible to visit large archaeological sites. In addition, the traveller can also see some excellent facsimiles of caves and rock shelters, which make it easy to display this art without endangering the original sites, many of which can only receive a few visitors per day or no visits at all.

The Cultural Routes programme was launched by the Council of Europe in 1987. Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe provide a wealth of leisure and educational activities for all citizens across Europe and beyond and are key resources for responsible tourism and sustainable development.



Through the programme, the Council of Europe offers a model for transnational cultural and tourism management and allows synergies between national, regional and local authorities and a wide range of associations and socio-economic actors.

- **200 +**
Rock Art Sites
- **Local**
Cultural Heritage
- since
1997

THE CHALLENGE

- 112 Archaeological and Rock Art sites of scientific, cultural, artist and archaeological interest
- 1.5 million visitors come each year

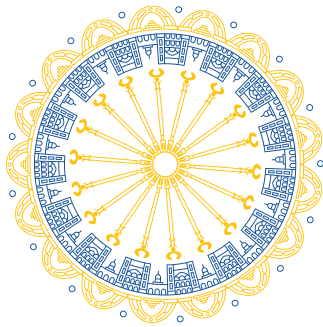
BENEFITS

- recognition and protection of local Cultural Heritage
- support for local identity
- sustainable development of rural communities

Cultural route
of the Council of Europe
Itinéraire culturel
du Conseil de l'Europe



For more information, visit [Prehistoric Rock Art Trails](#)



FISU – FINNISH SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Finnish Sustainable Communities (FISU) is a network of 11 municipalities committed to working towards becoming carbon neutral and waste-free by 2050. The Fisu network is a competence community of resource-smart pioneer cities and municipalities.

The Fisu communities strive to have no greenhouse gas emissions by leaning on renewable energy, low carbon solutions and energy efficiency. The target is to minimise the amount of waste by operating in a circular economy where all materials and their value stay in the economy as long as possible and services and smart solutions create added value for products. They also aim to curb overconsumption by sustainable use of natural resources.

The process starts with mapping the present status. The Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) calculates the starting level for each city, including greenhouse gas emissions, amount of household waste and recycling rate per capita. The communities then start conducting the roadmap by targeting five main themes to advance:

- ▶ Energy production and consumption
- ▶ Transportation and logistics
- ▶ Consumption and material flows
- ▶ Food production and consumption
- ▶ Water use and natural waters.

Learning from each other, peer support and pressure are among the key elements of the communal goal for better future.

Potential for learning or transfer:

The Fisu practice has great potential for learning and transfer for other regions. The practice is transferable for any town or community that is willing to be more sustainable by working towards becoming carbon neutral and waste-free and curbing overconsumption.

- Finland
- 11 Municipalities
- Carbon neutral by 2050

RESOURCES NEEDED

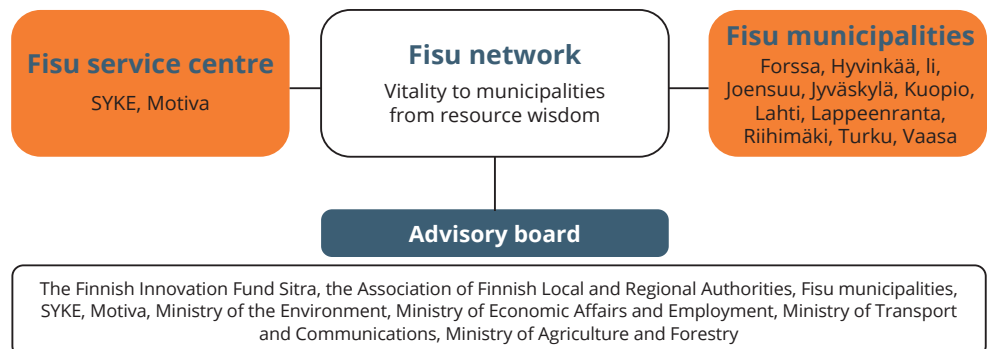
Commitment from the local communities, business, operators and the municipality in the creation and implementation process of the roadmap.

Open information and communication about the municipal and commercial material flows.

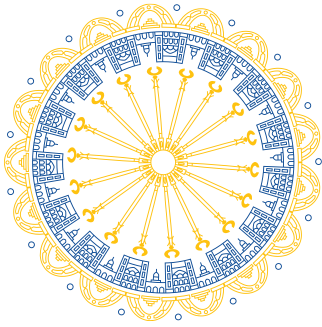
EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

The greenhouse gas emissions have decreased all together in the Fisu communities 30% in CO2 equivalent between the years 2007-2016.

The community started with four communities and now there are 11 communities involved.



For more information, visit <https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/2438/fisu-finnish-sustainable-communities/>



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM IN REYKJAVÍK ICELAND TOURISM CLUSTER

Companies participating in Responsible Tourism agree on a limited number of clear and simple measures of responsible tourism. The purpose of the incentive project is to maintain Iceland's status as an optimal future destination for tourists by supporting sustainability for future generations of the nation.

The Iceland Tourism Cluster and Festa – the Center for Corporate Social Responsibility operate the project in cooperation with the Tourist Board, SAF – the Tourism association, Promote Iceland, Regional Marketing Offices of Iceland, Visit Reykjavík and SafeTravel Iceland. The companies involved in the project aim to:

- ▶ Demonstrate exemplary behavior and respect for nature.
- ▶ Ensure the safety of guests and treat them courteously.
- ▶ Respect the rights of employees.
- ▶ Have a positive impact on the local community.

Reykjavík
Iceland

Tourism
Cluster

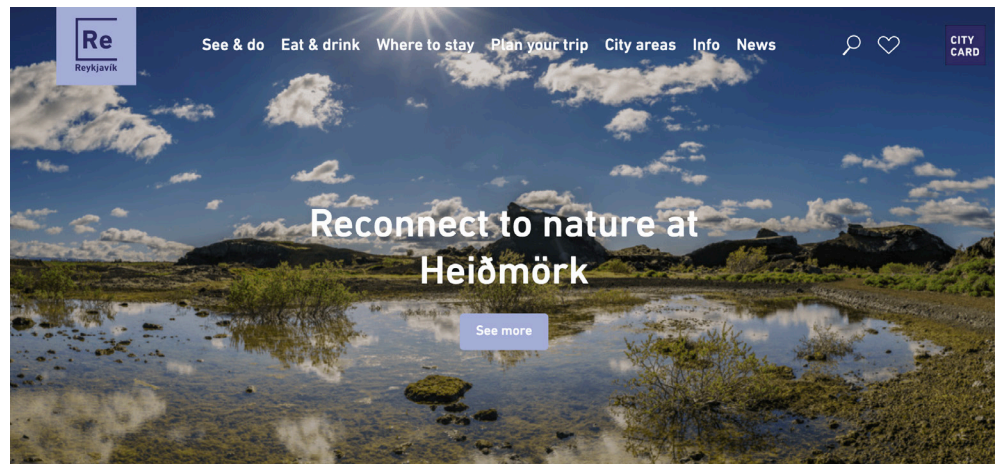
Sustainability
for future
generations

IMPACT

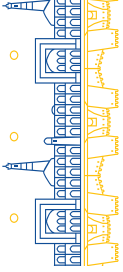
- The city promotes all year round cycling and is further building out its cycling path system with resting places and maps.
- Currently there are no taxes on importation of electric cars and there is free parking in Reykjavík, resulting in 700% increase in ownership of electric cars.
- Reykjavík uses geothermal and hydropower for ALL electric consumption and heating and its already limited emission of greenhouse gas will be further reduced by 35% in 2020.
- Icelanders are according to the World database of happiness a happy nation with happy life years and satisfied with life.

PATHWAYS FOLLOWED

| SOCIO-CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION | SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION | TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ensure equal access to municipal services · Involve citizens through participatory implementation · Encourage local private and civic engagement · Promote social innovation supporting inclusion · Nurture a sharing economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Capitalise on local economy and production · Create and close local value chains · Apply innovative financing approaches · Implement sustainable procurement principles · Pursue a shift towards a circular economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Wisely select and apply smart technologies · Accelerate sustainability and innovation through public procurement · Guarantee equal access to information & digital services · Support open data standards · Prepare policies for socio-cultural changes due to innovation |



For more information, visit https://sustainablecities.eu/transformative-actions-database/?c=search&action_id=fj1drn5y



SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

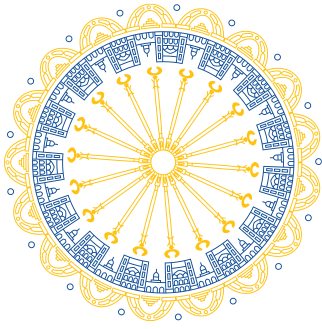
Purchasing power is one of the strongest tools in the economic system and can be a leader in driving innovation. Public procurement is a process that public organisations use in order to purchase the products and services they need for their everyday operations. Public authorities, whether national, regional or local, hold a strong advantage when it comes to implementing positive change in the procurement processes, as they are the ones that set the criteria. Hence, public procurement procedures could not have been excluded from the global path to sustainability. Sustainable Public Procurement therefore is a new way of doing business with public authorities and it is based on two pillars, environmental sustainability and social responsibility.

Even though Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) is of a non-legally binding character, the trend is growing as it has shown firm signs of contributing to the shift to more sustainable patterns of production and consumption, to a more efficient use of natural resources, to the turning towards a more circular, greener and a socially fairer economy.

There is still a long way to go in order for SPP to become the norm throughout the European Union territory. With this in mind however, a set of national criteria have been developed by the European Commission and a number of European Member-States, criteria that attempt to include environmental and social standards that products and services need to fulfill in the public procurement processes. The hope is that if European Nation-States and the EU as an entity demand sustainable procedures, they will then become best examples and create a sustainability domino effect that will spread out to the private sector as well.

Detailed information on the EU Sustainable Public Procurement criteria, the legal and policy framework, on projects as well as a large set of useful information regarding this issue can be found on the European Commission's website at https://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index_en.htm. It is from this website that the following best practices have been drawn and present cases from the two founding pillars of Sustainable Public Procurement, namely Green Public Procurement and Socially Responsible Public Procurement.





SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE PROCUREMENT OF FOOD AND BEVERAGES THE CITY OF OSLO

● **Public Procurement**
Strategy

● **City of Oslo**
Norway

● **Social**
Responsibility

SOCIAL IMPACTS

The City achieved more responsible suppliers as a result of the use of social selection criteria, with the following outcomes:

- The share of publicly procured Fairtrade-certified and organic bananas increased from 3% to 50% in the first four months of 2019.
- Over the same period, the share of fair trade-certified coffee went up from 9% to 13%. This shows that establishing central framework agreements and using category management are effective instruments in strengthening ethical trade. The City works together with suppliers to make the market more socially responsible and to increase the supply of fair trade and organic alternatives at a good price.
- The share of organic food also increased alongside Fairtrade.

A new Procurement Strategy was developed in 2017 by the City of Oslo in Norway regarding the procurement of food and beverages, including fruits, vegetables and dairy products for various facilities and services such as child care services, retirement homes etc. The new Strategy was the result of extensive dialogue with internal and external stakeholders and it was founded on sustainability principles.

The main objective was that Oslo shall conduct appropriate and cost-effective procurement processes, providing sound and sustainable solutions in both the short and long-term. The sub-objectives state that procurement shall contribute to making Oslo a greener, more socially inclusive and more innovative city that provides its residents, businesses and industry with solutions and services in line with their present and future needs.

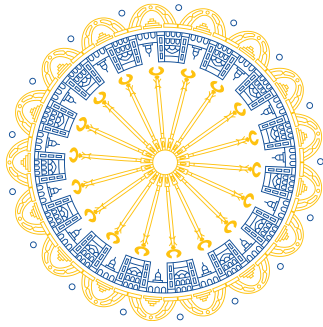
The strategy also addresses social aspects of procurement and includes strategic guidance that states that “the municipality must not deal with suppliers who can be associated with violations of fundamental human rights, ILO’s core conventions or international law that Norway is subject to through UN resolutions.”

For a company to be considered as a potential supplier for the City of Oslo, the company had to document the quality management and a suitable traceability system suitable to verify compliance with social clauses throughout the supply chain.



Oslo

For more information, visit [Making socially responsible public procurement work: 71 good practice cases | Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/european-council-for-ethical-trade/making-socially-responsible-public-procurement-work-71-good-practice-cases-internal-market-industry-entrepreneurship-and-smes)



GREEN CLEANING SERVICES DENMARK

The Danish Agency for the Modernisation of Public Administration launched a new joint framework contract for cleaning services in Denmark's government departments and agencies in January 2012. All government departments and agencies were obliged to use the framework contract. The contract sought to ensure that cleaning services met the demands of these institutions with respect to quality and efficiency, while also ensuring, among other things, that such services are respectful of human health and the environment. The subject matter of the contract was the provision of green cleaning services in government agencies and departments.

The contract between the government agency and the service provider outlined a series of minimum environmental and requirements that meet a number of criteria of the EU Ecolabel and the Nordic Swan Ecolabel.

Public
Administration
Modernisation

Denmark
Government Agency

Green Public
Procurement

LESSONS LEARNT

· Clarifying the specific needs in the government departments and agencies, and formulating the adequate minimum requirements that ensure a high standard of the delivered cleaning services was a challenge.

· Including minimum environmental requirements in the contract ensures uniformity among government agencies and departments with regard to environmental performance of cleaning services.

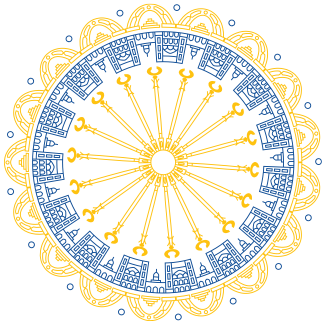
· The value of minimum requirements to ensure workers' conditions are in accordance with international conventions and EU law has also been highlighted.



Environmental impacts

The various specifications in the contract reduce significantly the use of chemicals that are hazardous to human health and the environment. This is achieved not only through the restriction of certain chemicals and substances (PVC, chlorinated materials, dyes and perfumes) but also through the application of criteria from the Nordic Swan ecolabel, and the EU Ecolabel.

For more information and best practices in Sustainable Public Procurement, visit [GPP Good Practice - Environment - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/gpp/good-practice-environment)



ECOBNB

A JOURNEY TO CHANGE THE WAY WE TRAVEL

EcoBnB is an electronic marketplace where travelers can book their environmentally-friendly accommodations using a quick search system integrated with social media and developed for smart-phones. What differentiates EcoBnB from other similar electronic platforms is that the company has developed a number of Sustainability Criteria that must be fulfilled by all enlisted to its platform accommodation providers. In other words, EcoBnb forms business connections with tourist companies that possess a high level of environmental and social consciousness.

They promote responsible tourism with low environmental impact by encouraging stays in sustainable accommodations, organic food, environmentally friendly routes, green traveling and the rediscovery of nearby and authentic places. The company also claims to be 0% CO2 emissions and 100% Clean Energy. Servers of Ecobnb are powered 100% by renewable energy produced on-site.

When describing themselves, they state that “EcoBnB is a community that wants to discover a more sustainable way of travel, in harmony with nature, places and people.”

- Electronic **Travel Agency**
- Sustainable **Accommodation**
- Green **Private Procurement**

SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA

There are ten main Sustainability criteria for an accommodation to fulfill so as to become part of the EcoBnB community. Each participant must comply with a minimum of five out of the ten criteria.

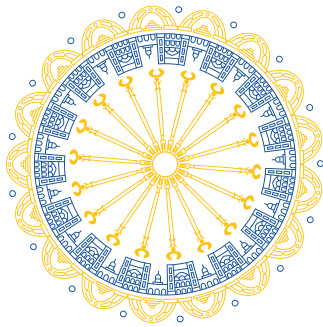
1. 100% Renewable Energy
2. Organic or Local Food
3. Car-free accessibility
4. Ecological cleaning products
5. More than 80% waste recycling
6. Green building
7. Energy saving lights
8. Solar thermal panels for hot water
9. Water flow reducers
10. Recovery & Reuse of Rain water

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The administrators of the EcoBnB platform have calculated the environmental impact of every traveler choosing a sustainable accommodation, which is visually depicted as follows.



For more information, visit: [Making socially responsible public procurement work: 71 good practice cases | Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs \(europa.eu\)](#)



EUROPEAN YEAR OF RAIL 2021

2021 is the European Year of Rail. The European Commission initiative intends to highlight the benefits of rail as a sustainable, smart and safe means of transport. A variety of activities throughout 2021 puts rail in the spotlight across the continent, to encourage the use of rail by both citizens and businesses and to contribute to the EU Green Deal goal of becoming climate-neutral by 2050.

-  **European Commission Initiative**
-  **Travel & Transport**
-  **Energy Consumption Reduction**

THE CHALLENGE

Only about 7% of passengers and 11% of goods travel by rail.

The European Year of Rail will create momentum to help increase rail's share of passenger and freight transport.

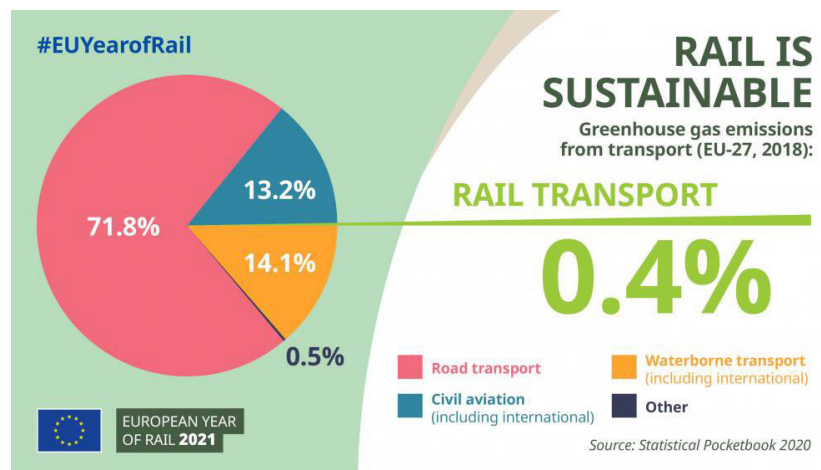
This will cut the greenhouse gas emissions and pollution coming from EU transport significantly, making a huge contribution to the EU's efforts under the European Green Deal.

WHY RAIL

Rail is diverse. Businesses and freight carriers can shift to rail and benefit from low-cost, increasingly competitive offers to transport their goods all over Europe.

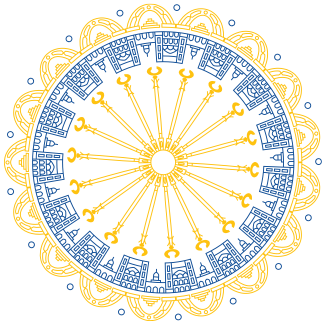
Rail is sustainable. Rail is largely electrified and emits far less CO₂ and accounts for only 0.4 % of greenhouse gas emissions from EU transport, while all EU transport accounts for 25% of the EU's total emissions. Plus, it is the only transport means that between 1990-2017 has consistently reduced its emissions and energy consumption, while increasingly using renewable energy sources.

It is safe. It is the safest land transport mode with the lowest incidence of fatal accidents.



For more information on the EU mobility strategy, visit: https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/mobilitystrategy_en

For more information on the European Year of Rail, on projects and initiatives taking place throughout 2021 to celebrate rail mobility, visit: https://europa.eu/year-of-rail/index_en



- **Sardinia**
Italy
- **Regional**
Program
- **Waste Management**
Plan

ZEROWASTE EUROPE

ZeroWaste Europe works on a wide range of projects and policy areas with the single objective of advancing the zero waste future for Europe. This holistic approach enables them to effectively influence European policy and the grass-roots implementation of zero waste projects.

The **Zero Waste Cities** approach is a continuous effort to phase out waste – not by burning or landfilling it – but by creating and implementing systems that do not generate waste in the first place.

One of their **success** stories is that of **Sardinia**.

ZEROWASTE SARDINIA

Who said Zero Waste cannot work in tourist destinations?

In 2000, Sardinia was Italy's worst performing region in waste management with a separate collection rate of 3.8%. Since then the situation radically changed, thanks to the decision of setting up a Regional Programme for organic waste within its Waste Management Plan in 2004.

The programme included **four measures**:

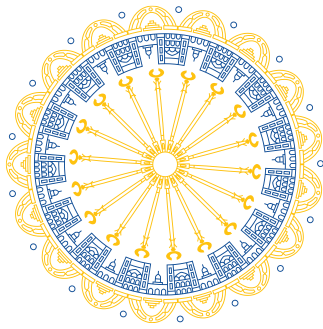
- Compulsory separate collection of organic waste
- Increase of the landfill tax
- A bonus/malus system on the cost of residual waste management based on the municipalities performances
- Promotion of door-to-door collection and Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) systems, and home composting

Today, 12 years later, **Sardinia** is the **best performing island** in the Mediterranean and sits at the forefront of Italian and European regions with:

- Separate collection rate reaching 60%
- Waste generation per capita decreased consistently: moving from 520 kg to 443 kg
- Residual waste went from 500 kg to 176 kg per inhabitant



For more information, visit <https://zerowastecities.eu/bestpractice/the-story-of-sardinia/>



- **Nowa Huta**
Poland
- **Entrepreneurial**
Initiative
- **Historical Education**
Project

SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

The intervention managed to create a profitable product and job opportunities for young locals, boosting an economic revitalisation through tourism.

The initiative promotes the conservation of cultural heritage and manages to find an appropriate interpretation of a dissonant local heritage that was causing frictions and divisions among locals. It also helps international tourists to have an alternative and critical gaze on East European communist heritage.

LESSONS LEARNT

Cultural tourism interventions based on edutainment (combining education and entertainment) supported by appropriate storytelling skills and narrative techniques represent a possible solution for the interpretation of dissonant and divisive heritage.

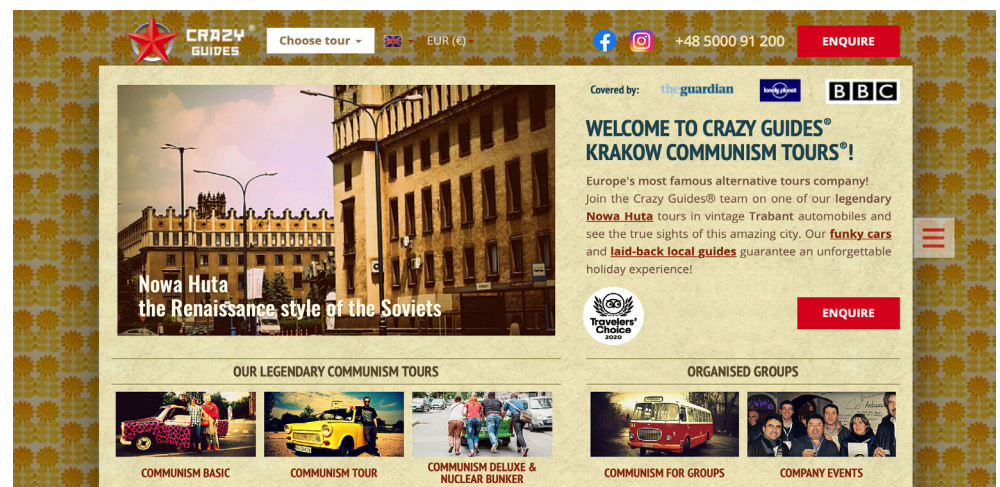
They might even help heal profound fractures existing in the socio-cultural fabric of a community.

THE 'CRAZY GUIDES' OF NOWA HUTA

Huta is a district of Krakow (Poland), originally created in the 1950s as a utopian socialist ideal city. After the change of the political system in 1989 the town was confronted with unemployment, poverty, socio-economic struggle and a communist heritage dividing the society between the ones inclined to reject and forget the past and the ones willing to understand more about it.

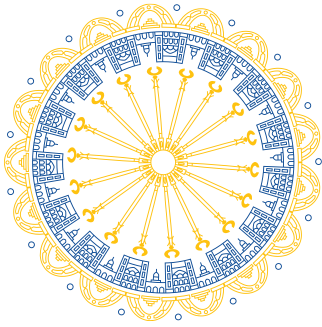
The 'crazy guides' of Nowa Huta aimed to offer an alternative to the mainstream mass tours offered in Krakow. By exploring the local environment, the Crazy Guides narrate ironically the everyday life during the communist past, combining education, entertainment and experiences of iconic stereotypes, such as driving in an old Trabant. The entrepreneurial initiative also aims at generating job and economic opportunities for locals.

This entrepreneurial intervention was initiated in 2004 by a local entrepreneur. It now has 11 employees, mainly young locals working as guides. Other small businesses in Nowa Huta supported this intervention by adapting their own products and providing the atmosphere of 'the old days'. Over the time, its success triggered other entrepreneurs to start offering similar products in Nowa Huta.



The abovementioned best practice is part of a deliverable of the SmartCulTour project, which has as its main objective to propose and validate innovative, community-led interventions directed at sustainable cultural tourism; cultural tourism that supports the sustainable development of all European regions rich of tangible and intangible cultural assets, in particular rural regions and cities, and contributes to their resilience and inclusiveness.

For more information, visit: <http://www.smartcultour.eu/deliverables/>



CHARMING VILLAGES

CHARM is a project co-funded by the COSME Initiative of the European Union, that aimed to boost the competitiveness of European tourism and promote the image of Europe as a global tourist destination of excellence. The core element are hidden gems from rural Europe, villages perceived as charming by visitors because of their identity or personality linked to history, traditions, gastronomy, cultural and natural heritage.

- **10 Villages**
6 countries
- **Excellence in**
Cultural Tourism
- **Use of Creative**
Industries

THE CHALLENGE

The project had the aim to create tourism flows towards the rural areas or the less tourist ones, and to contribute to the decongestion of the areas and cities with a high amount of visitors.

ACTIVITIES

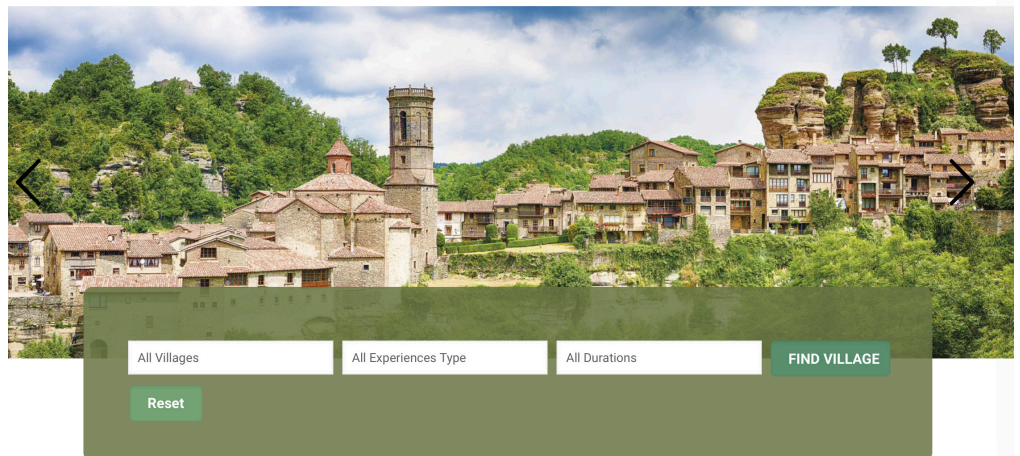
There are more than 75 different available activities related to rural life:

- natural
- gastronomic
- cultural

The overall objective of the project is to position Europe internationally as an integral destination of quality and excellence for cultural tourism, by promoting its most charming rural villages and making the most of Cultural and creative Industries (CCI) and technologies to provide an unforgettable experience for visitors.

Outcomes

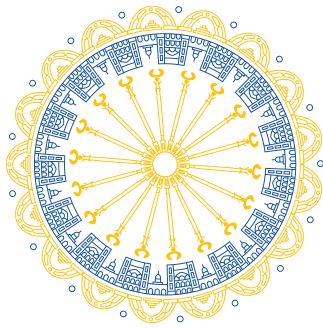
- more than 50 activities and more than 20 tourism products throughout Europe
- development of a European Network composed by 10 villages from 6 different countries
- diversification of tourism offer
- development of the local economy (mainly through the creation of jobs and support to SMEs)
- mitigation of seasonality
- promotion of decentralisation of tourism zones
- boost of European tourism competitiveness
- promotion of Europe as a global tourist destination of excellence



For more information, visit

<https://www.charmingvillages.eu/about-charming-villages/>

<https://www.charmingvillages.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CHARM-Press-Release-4-Outputs.pdf>



ST FRANCIS WAY INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HISTORY AS A DRIVER FOR RURAL TOURISM

- 500+ km
- Pilgrimage Route
- Cultural Heritage

THE CHALLENGE

The concentration of tourist flows to key attractions creates pressures there (parking, crowds) while neglecting the potential of villages and the region's natural and cultural assets.

THE SOLUTION

Expansion and improvement of the experience with slow and sustainable tourism products to attract walking, cycling and horseback tourism, beyond the usual towns and to create new business opportunities in rural areas

St Francis Way is a superb walking trail inspired by the life of St Francis of Assisi. It takes an **ancient Roman road from Florence to Rome** connecting cultural heritage and sites of natural beauty creating a 550 km route. Using a bottom-up approach, the initiative focuses on developing a sustainable offer in 'slow tourism', by promoting overlooked villages and cultural heritage sites, and by providing a source of revenue and employment for rural and mountain communities.

Outcome

The enhancement of the St. Francis Way route has resulted in an increase of 35% in the number of hikers using the route in the period 2015-2017. The St. Francis Way also won best European 'Destination of Sustainable Cultural Tourism' in 2018, an accolade awarded by the European Cultural Tourism Network and Europa Nostra.

Benefits

- establishment of strategic partnerships with local stakeholders (e.g. a tourism board, hiking, cycling and horse-riding clubs, etc.).
- development of minimum standards for walkers, cyclists and horse riders
- lessons to other regions in Europe on how to effectively involve stakeholders, and improve specific skill-sets needed to implement, manage and promote a pilgrimage route



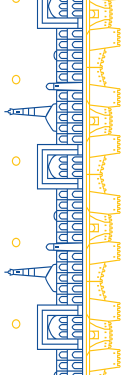
For more information, visit: <https://www.viadifrancesco.it/en/>
<https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/1808/st-francis-way-development-of-an-intangible-cultural-history-asset-to-drive-rural-tourism/>
https://www.interregeurope.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/plp_uploads/policy_brief/2019-03-27_PB_Cultural_routes_final.pdf

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ON CRETE: BEST PRACTICES ON A LOCAL LEVEL

The island of Crete in the Mediterranean Sea has been a favourite tourist destination for decades. It receives millions of visitors every year and has acquired a significant experience in the management of tourist flows, whether it be in hotels and accommodation, in transport and travel infrastructure or in tourism hospitality and education.

Moreover, as the authors of this guide reside in Crete, best practices that have been developed and implemented locally could not but be included. In so doing, this part of the study deploys local successful cases of sustainability within the tourism sector. The cases presented here include a hotel which applies sustainable practices, an abandoned village rebuilt and operating energy-efficiently, a cluster of private wineproducers marketing their products under a common brand, an EU funded project making good use of hotel food waste and finally, a training course on mitigating the COVID-19 pandemic for all those involved in the tourism sector.





UNDERSTANDING SUSTAINABILITY GOALS IS THEIR MISSION CACTUS HOTELS, CRETE

The company Theofilos Chalkiadakis SA has been active in the hospitality industry since 1980 with its founder the late Theofilos Chalkiadakis. The first hotel of the company named Cactus Beach is the starting point of the investment activity of Chalkiadaki's family. The investments of all these years in the construction of new modern hotel units are many. It is worth noting that the company in 2010 added Cactus Royal to its portfolio, in 2018 Cactus Bay welcomes its guests and continues in 2019 with Cactus Mare while at the same time the renovations and the creation of additional infrastructure in Cactus Royal 5 * & Cactus Beach 4 * continue. The strong investment activity of the family business contributes significantly to the further increase of employment as it is estimated that Cactus Hotels employs a total of 350 employees. Also, the selection of local suppliers and producers is a well-known competitive advantage of the company, thus contributing even further to the financial support of the local community.

Cactus Hotels was founded in 1980 as a tourist accommodation unit with 27 rooms. The idea, the goals and the vision have become the driving force for its development, as today the business consists of a family of accommodation with the distinctive title Cactus Hotels with a capacity of 700 rooms of different categories. They are located on the northern coast of the island of Crete.

OBJECTIVES

The mission of the company is the obligation to live in harmony with all partners, to understand sustainability goals and to align priorities (customers, suppliers, local community). The ultimate goal is to minimize environmental impacts, optimize business processes, and maximize safety, quality and performance.



EN ▾



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“FOLLOWING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES LEADS TO INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION”

An interview with Nikos Chalkiadakis, Managing Director of the company and President of Heraklion Hotelier Union, confirms the strong commitment of his company to the development of sustainable tourism.

When and why did you deal with the term “sustainable tourism” and what made you get involved?

After 2010 but mostly during the 2015 we integrated green policies and actions in our companies. The fact comes along with our philosophy and our personal sensitivity in such issues. An important motive were the tour operators who started to consider these actions a prerequisite to hold a cooperation. For example, through the Travel Life Project, the tour operator TUI assures the high quality of the services provided in terms of economic, social and environmental aspects.

What are the main challenges for a touristic company to apply sustainable policies?

As I have already mentioned the main reasons are the personal philosophy and culture and of course the relevant requests from the tour operators, as the basic providers of the touristic flows. The ultimate goal is for the customer to be pleased and satisfied. However, the implementation of such policies come at a price, extra personnel and procedures which is not always easy to handle. The biggest challenge remains for us to pass over this philosophy to our guests and personnel so that the whole circle is fulfilled. That’s why we have embraced different policies regarding the environment, human rights, the work environment and we apply waste, energy and water management.

What kind of certificates and awards have you received?

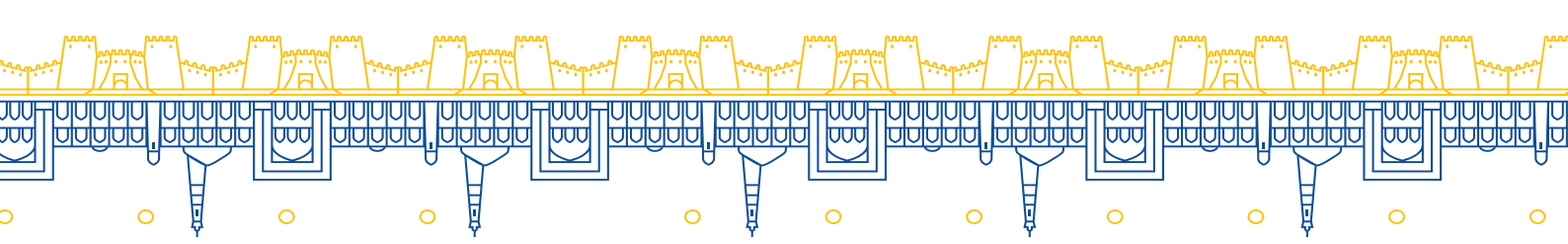
Cactus hotels operates in terms of sustainable practices, quality facilities and services and this leads to recognition via awards and certifications by national, international and worldwide institutions.



The Managing Director of Cactus Hotels Mr Chalkiadakis and Mrs Borboudaki Eva, Head of Communications & CSR

Some of the certificates and awards are:

| CERTIFICATES | AWARDS |
|--------------------|---|
| ISO 9001 | TUI UMWELT CHAMPION |
| ISO 22000 | TUI TOP QUALIT |
| ISO 14001 | HOLIDAY CHECK |
| Greek Breakfast | TOP HOTEL |
| Green Key | GREEK HOSPITALITY AWARDS |
| We Do Local | ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS WASTE & RECYCLING AWARDS |
| HACCP Travelife | TREASURES OF GREEK TOURISM |
| Gold Creta Cuisine | THE BIZZ WINNER |
| Covid Shield | BRAVO AWARDS BOOKING GUEST REVIEW GREEK TRAVEL AWARDS TOURISM AWARDS |



Are you following the green procurement procedure?

We give priority to supplies of organic origin or companies of goods and services or consultancies whose results have the least possible harmful effects on the environment, human health and safety and we constantly inform our partners about our philosophy. More specifically, we try to minimize gas emissions through the limitation of scheduled itineraries and we prefer companies that use ecological paper, materials or detergents.

How do the guests react to your actions?

Our visitors seem to be extremely aware of green and sustainable policies. They usually ask, get informed and fill in the questionnaires that we provide. They have access to the whole information through various apps, such as Mobile apps, Info Kiosks, Info channels and they respond with enthusiasm. Personally, I believe that the percentage of visitors who will seek for sustainable policies in their accommodation will continue to increase. The feedback we receive from our partners, clients and tour operators is more and more positive every year. The certificates and awards, our prompt position among significant international “players” but most of all the satisfaction of our visitors gives us the strength to continue the effort to become greener and more sustainable.

Do you have a clear picture of the results of the practices applied? Which are the indicators that stand out?

The results of our efforts are reflected in the annual sustainability report, which is a useful tool that helps us improve our performance and set higher goals. We do not use any indicators yet, only comparative results every year. Nevertheless, we intend to include such indicators in our toolkit soon.

How Covid-19 has affected your future plans?

Our sector has been dramatically affected by the corona virus pandemic, changing dramatically

the way we operate. Our goals are left behind. The staff training has been left behind as not all the employees are familiar with technology and distant learning. At the same time, waste management was left behind, but as the digital actions were evolving, we managed to consume noticeably less paper.

Anyhow, it has to be noted that the touristic season this year exceeded our expectations as the arrivals were many more than expected and we succeeded in applying in full the strict health protocols.

In what way has your perspective changed regarding sustainable tourism and what are your future plans in developing more green practices in your company?

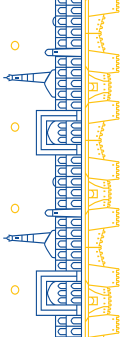
Our immediate goals are linked with food waste. Since 2019, we plan to use an area next to our hotels in order to transform it into a compost landfill. Another priority goal is to digitalize as many procedures as we can in order to make our marketing group more active and through it to communicate our actions effectively.

What do you think about the future of sustainable tourism in Crete?

I feel quite optimistic about the future of sustainable tourism in Crete especially when I see that the new generation of hoteliers are in charge and the conversation about green policies and development is more and more in the forefront.

I strongly believe that in a couple of years, Crete will play a leading role in the tourism sector and sustainability will be the core issue for many actions and plans. I also believe that more and more tour operators and partners - even the government bodies, will demand green policies application. So, I hope that we will all become part of a greater scheme which promotes sustainability.





RESTORED WITH RESPECT FOR THE ORIGINAL FEATURES INTERVENTION KEPT TO A MINIMUM

Aspros Potamos traditional settlement Makrigialos Crete, Greece

Aspros Potamos is known to be the most ancient settlement in the area of Pefki. It is located in south-east Crete, a thousand meters above sea level and the coastal village of Makris Gialos. The area is famous for its natural beauty, which comprises of numerous unspoiled beaches, traditional picturesque villages, and its four magnificent gorges. It is an ideal location, since the area combines both beaches and mountains covered by lush greenery and endogenous pine, olive and citrus trees. It is thought that early Aspros Potamos was originally much larger; however, probably the constant attacks and raids from pirates forced the inhabitants to abandon the settlement. So, they sought refuge in the higher mountain ranges, where it was safer and more isolated and they used the settlement to house their livestock during the harsh winter months or they would venture down in order to maintain their vegetable gardens. The old inhabitants of Aspros Potamos are considered to be the first settlers of the mountain area of Pefki. This comes as no surprise, since the location is spectacular, with densely covered mountain sides and valleys giving an intense green foliage. The valley on the south side reaches all the way up to Analipsi and the stream Aspros Potamos, which the settlement takes its name from, runs through it. Nowadays, all the relics and the old stone and soil-built houses have been renovated and fully restored. The settlement of Aspros Potamos has been characterised as traditional and its authenticity is protected by the Greek government.



SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE

The architecture of the area is typical to south-east Crete. The stone-built houses (10 in total) are in harmony with nature and the guest will feel as if living in the old times. The houses were built 300 years ago and they were last renovated in 2011. The decoration is simple and plain using traditional objects such as small tables, wood, accessories for traditional bread making,

old woven fabrics, pots and pans. Beds made from stone, original windows and bedrock walls, ceilings of crossed beams, use of straw and soil for insulation, all help to create their traditional style. The houses are connected by a network of traditional stone paths. Thick outer walls made of stone and rock keep the houses cool in the summer and warm in the winter.



RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

With respect for nature and the environment, Aspros Potamos uses only renewable energy sources. A solar photovoltaic system has been installed which has won the first European Award for Greece. This solar system generates its own electricity which is used to illuminate the grounds and gardens, reading lamps above beds, bathroom light, and also refrigerators in the kitchen. Hot water for the shower is generated with this system. Candles and oil lamps provide the main lighting in the houses. There are no electrical sockets in the houses.

As the owner of Aspros Potamos accommodation says, "In a time when the destruction of our natural environment increases daily,

Green Tourism has become a reality and an ideology for us, our mission being to minimize this destruction by making ecology a way of life."

To support the belief that beauty lies in simplicity and not exaggeration, the old settlement Aspros Potamos has been restored with respect for the original features and intervention and renovation was kept to a minimum. Many nature lovers, hikers, mountaineers, and people simply looking for something different on their vacation, visit Aspros Potamos every year. The location is ideal for those looking for tranquillity and relaxation and it combines country and sea holidays.



“WE BELIEVE IN THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF SUSTAINABILITY”

An interview with the manager and owner of the place, Mirto Botsari confirms all the above.

Mirto narrates the story of Aspros Potamos and how her mother originally committed herself to this place, and underlines the characteristics of the cottages that have been kept untouched throughout the years.

“In the top of the gorge that ends up in Aspros Potamos, there is this traditional small village Pefki which is dated since the Venetian times. The peasants were cultivating wheat and cereals to make the famous Cretan rusk “ntakos” and they would also deal with livestock farming. At the end of the summer, these peasants built

small cottage houses, made of stone in order to spend their nights in the valley. During the winter they chose to settle in areas with a lower altitude, with their animals. Over the years these peasants left the cottages as they moved to the coastal area due to the tourism development.

Back in the 80’s my mother Aleka came as a visitor to this area and she visited Aspros Potamos. She was thrilled and she imagined retaining the characteristics of the cottages making only basic changes in order to be more comfortable. At that time there were 20 cottages, without toilet or electricity. The solar photovoltaic system, as described covered all the needs”.

VISITORS DO NOT COME HERE BY CHANCE

“The visitors of Aspros Potamos do not come here by chance,” Mirto says. “Our visitors appreciate the authentic and pure perception that we have about life. We totally support green and sustainable policies as:

we love the natural environment of the country, we prefer tourism development with a more qualitative prospect, we respect our tradition, history and culture and we believe in the economic viability of sustainability”.

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN PLACE

To support this whole aspect of sustainable tourism, there have been several systems developed such as:

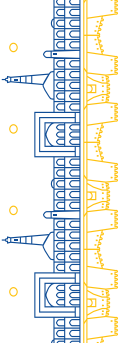
- Special system for water management
- Autonomous solar panel system
- Recycling
- Food management through chickens’ feed
- Biodegradable sanitation equipment
- Organic products



AS FOR THE FUTURE PLANS, MIRTO SAYS:

“The way we operate does not belong to the mainstream ways of tourism development in Greece and there is no significant government assistance, but there are great long-term results. Over the years though, I feel much more ambitious, as more and

more sustainable and alternative units of tourism grow in Crete. This fact gives me strength and hope to build a better future. There are many improvements that we are planning, water and waste management being one of our top priorities.”



"WINES OF CRETE": A GLOBALLY-RECOGNIZED WINE DESTINATION OF HIGH ADDED VALUE

Cretan Winemakers Network

Cretan winemaking industry has entered a new growth path following a mindset of cooperation and synergies, since 2006. Functioning as core production of bottled wines, Prefecture of Heraklion, provided the initial impulse for what would soon develop into 'Wines of Crete'. The creation of the Heraklion Winemakers' Network urged the creation of the Chania - Rethymnon Winemakers' Network two years later. Subsequently, Prefecture of Lasithi joined the network of Heraklion, resulting in the achievement of the first goal, which was none other than the unified promotion of Cretan wine not only within the island but to other places as well.



OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the whole action are two. On the one hand, the promotion and recognition of Cretan wine, both inside and outside Greece now, and on the other, the development of wine-tourist mainstream on the island, taking advantage of a series of 'tourist' advantages the island displays. All the actions are financed from resour-

ces derived from the contributions of the members. There has also been funding from European projects, such as Leader and Interreg, as well as nationally-funded programs of the Ministry of Rural Development, which also support the efforts of the 30 Cretan wineries participating in the overall shape.

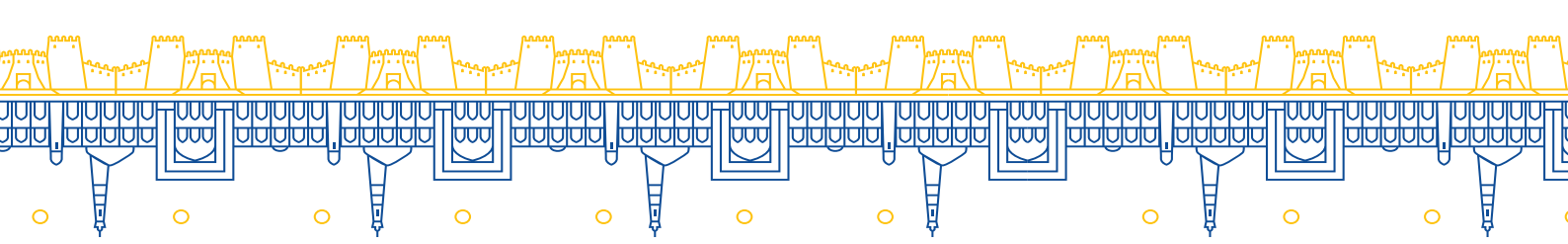
RESULTS

The results are obvious over the last years. Crete now has the image of a very active and dynamic area in the production of quality wines, being characterized by the uniqueness of locally-grown grape varieties. Our region has permanently escaped from the image of the region of meaningless mass wine production that was

much to its unjust and is moving towards becoming a globally-recognised wine destination of high added value.

The next decade will be crucial for the completion of this effort and it requires firm planning, consistent strategy and persistent actions which will allow the effective "construction" of our brand.





“PERSISTENCE AND CONSISTENCY MADE US A REGIONAL ENTITY TO BE RECKONED WITH”

WINES
OF GREECE



A UNIQUE PROPOSAL

MEET THE GRAPES

REGIONS & WINERIES

WINEPEDIA

EN GR 

• A UNIQUE PROPOSAL •



Heritage

Wines of Greece celebrate the intersection of millennia of Greek winemaking history with present-day Greece's embrace of the latest agricultural and vinification practices.

Nikos Miliarakis, member of Wines of Crete and former President of the cluster, explains which were the obstacles, the opportunities and the future challenges in developing this type of cooperation.

What was the need for developing a Wine Cluster in Crete?

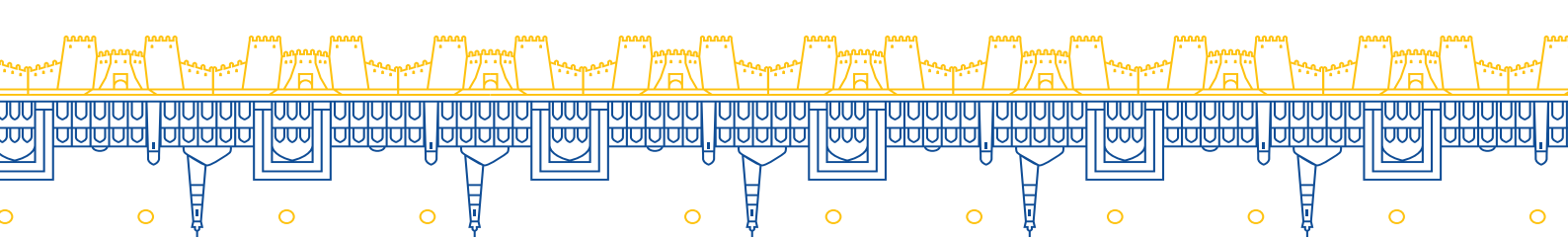
There were many reasons. The all-inclusive tourism development pattern and the need to introduce the Cretan wine beyond the borders of Crete and Greece in order to earn its place in new markets were the two fundamental reasons for becoming a cluster. The timing helped significantly as most winemakers of the old generation were ready to pass on the torch to the next generation, which could see further, had other needs and priorities. The key for our success is that the core of the cluster is the members themselves and this is crucial because the initial team of winemakers had a clear vision about the goals set. So, we started off having two strong assets: a very good product and a dynamic situation that was changing inside our wineries.

Which were the main challenges till today?

I would not say that we faced insurmountable difficulties. From the very beginning, we were determined to support the attempt. A challenge that we were faced with was how we would establish fairness within the network. We found a formula that seems to work and today we contribute to and support the cluster according to the size of our participation and production. Another challenge has been the cooperation among different areas of Crete and their Incorporation to the cluster, but it ended up being easier than it first appeared. Another important element has been the contribution and support of the public bodies and entities of Crete all those years.

What are the benefits from this cooperation?

The Region of Crete supported this initiative and consequently we participated as partners in funded projects, a fact really helpful in our first steps. We were persistent and our consistency made us a regional entity to be reckoned with.



What do you consider to be the major successes and failures of the cluster?

Our greatest success is that everyone talks about the Cretan wine as a distinctive product of high quality.

A possible failure could be the fact that we have not managed to gather statistics through a formula or a system that would be a useful tool regarding prices, sales, exports and cultivation data. But that saying, we intend to focus more on improving our statistics gathering in the future.

Have you connected the term “sustainable tourism” with the cluster? In what way?

Wintourism development, being one of the ultimate goals since we started this operation, is closely linked to sustainable tourism development. The economy that operates in the rural regions, combined with a different perception that is being cultivated to the visitors and the inhabitants, one that gives priority to the quality and not the quantity, is directly related to sustainability. We have managed to “guide” small groups of tourists or individuals to our wineries for a visit that indulges many senses at the same time, as they have the opportunity to see, learn, feel and taste the richness of nature in our products.

What are the next steps of the cluster “Wines of Crete” regarding Sustainable Tourism?

We are already involved with the circular economy philosophy. And many of our daily practices are part of it, without even realizing it. The remaining of the grapes are left to dry and become fertilizer, together with the residues from the vineyard pruning.

What is more, we are really concerned with the glass recycling which we are already looking for sustainable solutions. Another thing that is being discussed amongst us is the energy production

from solar panels and the growth of precision agriculture.

How has Covid-19 affected your future plans?

Our sector has been dramatically affected by the corona virus pandemic as the tourism sector, restaurant and catering services have been suffering since 2020. Even our exports have been minimized significantly. Our annual turnover has decreased more than 65%. And the average turnover fell by 50% as we are directly connected to the local and the touristic market.

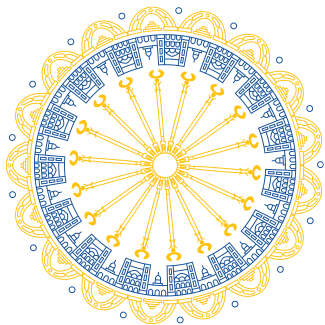
Do you consider the cluster “Wines of Crete” a development model that could be operative in other sectors as well in other economic areas? What is your advice to those who want to dive into something similar?

It takes a lot of effort and time to create a successful cluster. For instance, in our case, the Board of Directors holds a meeting once a week, which is not really easy. The secret lies in the determination and the will of the members to succeed, their engaging to the whole endeavor with their time, soul and experience and of course personal development through constant training.

Are you optimistic about the future of sustainable tourism in combination with the winemaking in Crete?

I feel quite optimistic. We are close enough to developing even more circular economy practices. And we are already participating in a global conversation regarding packaging and bottling and how we are going to be greener. These actions are in the front row because we are deeply committed to developing sustainability in tourism which we strongly support.





Food Waste
Reduction

Animal
Feed Product

Use of Innovative
Technology

OBJECTIVES

- Determine at pilot scale the quality of the animal feed produced and the innovative drying/pasteurizing methodology based on solar technology;
- Verify the various technical aspects of the suggested process
- Evaluate economic and environmental parameters of the process and product (from the source to the shelf), as well as the commercial viability of full-scale units.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The main expected result of the LIFE-F4F (Food for Feed) project is to deliver a process that allows the safe, economically and environmentally viable transformation of food waste from hotels (and the hospitality industry generally) into animal feed, which can be utilized by the relevant animal breeding/ husbandry and pet industry, leading to the creation of at least one full-scale industrial unit implementing the F4F process.

This will be achieved by:

- A source separated food waste collection system that does not affect the quality of the collected food waste,
- A hand sorting, grinding and solar drying/ pasteurizing pilot unit, able to produce at least 50 tons/year of acceptable quality feed,
- A detailed feed production manual
- A series of manuals such as design, construction, business and marketing plans
- An environmental assessment of the process;

AIM

From a policy point of view, the aim is for the results to feed into the EU legislation on waste, the Circular Economy Package and the Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe.

ANIMAL FEED FROM FOOD WASTE

The European Union food and drink value chain causes 17% of the EU's direct greenhouse gas emissions and 28% of material resource use. European consumption patterns have global impacts, especially related to the consumption of animal protein and water use. In the EU, it is estimated that 90 million tons of food waste is produced every year, equivalent to 180 kg per person. In some EU countries, especially those in the south, the majority of food waste ends up in landfill. In Greece, for example, more than 95% of food waste ended up in landfill in 2013, either directly or indirectly.

The EU Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC) sets as a target the progressive reduction of biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill, to 35% of the 1995 disposal level by 2020, and the Circular Economy Package foresees a binding target to reduce landfill to a maximum of 10% of municipal waste by 2030. Furthermore, the latter foresees food waste as being one of the priority sectors that need to be addressed in a targeted way, to ensure that the interactions between the various phases of the cycle are fully taken into account along the whole value chain. It also foresees that measures will be taken so that foodstuff and by-products from the food chain are used in feed production without compromising safety.

The main aim of the LIFE-F4F (Food for Feed) project is to evaluate, through a pilot-scale demonstration, an innovative and simple technology, and a low-emission process that enables the safe transformation of food waste, mainly from hotels (and more generally from the hospitality industry and restaurants), into animal feed.

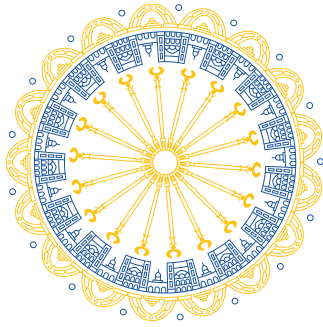
Food will be processed using solar energy to pasteurize and dry food waste, a process that has not been tested or applied previously, either in Europe or elsewhere worldwide. The F4F process will address the need to reduce waste food going to landfill, and will support the implementation of separation schemes at source for food waste to create valuable raw materials for the production of feed.

Apart from ESDAK, the Association of Solid Waste Management Crete, which is the main partner of this project, other partners are: the Hellenic Mediterranean University of Crete (former TEI of Crete), the Agricultural University of Athens, Harokopio University and Freie Universität Berlin. There are ten participating hotels and restaurants in the project so far.



European Commission. (2021). Food for Feed: An Innovative Process for Transforming Hotels Food Wastes into Animal Feed. LIFE Programme. https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/life/publicWebsite/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&n_proj_id=5762&docType=pdf

ESDAK (2021). From Crete to Cyprus the expertise of the project LIFE F4F – Food for Feed <https://esdak.gr/apo-tin-kriti-stin-kypro-i-technognosia-tou-programmatos-life-f4f-trofi-apo-trofima/>



HOTEL SECTOR PERSONNEL TRAINING BY THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CRETE, FUNDED BY THE REGION OF CRETE

The Region of Crete in the framework of a **comprehensive strategy to support tourism during the Covid19 pandemic**, has cooperated with all relevant stakeholders, with the aim of supporting entrepreneurs and workers to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In collaboration with the Medical School of the University of Crete, the Region of Crete implemented a pioneering educational program, aiming to meet the needs of thousands of employees in the tourism sector in Crete, with the assistance of the Hotel Employees Association of Heraklion.

As such, hotel employees participated during April-May 2020 in the first training program in Greece for the prevention of SARS-CoV-2 and the prevention measures specifically for the hotel sector organized by the Region of Crete. The project aimed to:

- provide trainees with the knowledge, methods and skills for their own personal protection and for the provision of tourist services that ensure health safety
- train in practices and actions to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2 for the protection of Public Health
- strengthen the credibility of Crete as a safe and innovative tourist destination.

The training was implemented remotely, through an online platform that can be found on the official website of the Region of Crete: crete.gov.gr. The training lasted for about 10 hours and was completed in 4 days. Upon completion of the training, the trainee is examined through the platform (multiple choice questions), in order to receive a certificate of attendance from the Training and Lifelong Learning Center (KEDIVIM) of the University of Crete.



- **Region of Crete &**
University of Crete
- **Joint**
Initiatives
- **Mitigating**
COVID-19

OUTCOMES

The programme covered the educational needs of thousands of employees who were trained on the implementation of all COVID19 Health Protocols. The procedure was deemed as a great success, as Crete was among the most popular and safe tourist destinations during the 2020 summer season. Its success led to the continuation of the training programme in the following year.

In his public statement concerning inauguration of the second even-wider cycle of the training programme, the Governor of Crete, Stavros Arnaoutakis said that [The Region of Crete] 'remains firmly oriented towards supporting employees and businesses not only from the hospitality industry but widening it to include all economic sectors in order to equip them further in the fight against the pandemic and to lessening its consequences on local society and economy', expressing his gratitude for the strong collaboration among all stakeholders.

