Dear stakeholders, dear all,

Welcome to the April 2024 edition of #EUTourism T4T News.

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) is happy to share with you the latest news on events, projects and calls in the area of tourism.

HEADLINE NEWS

First Stock-taking of the Transition pathway and EU agenda for tourism 2030
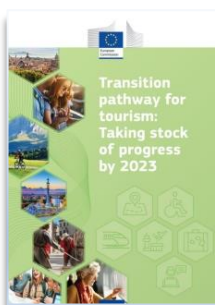
The very first stock-taking of the progress and visible results of the transition pathway for tourism since its launch in February 2022 was published in January 2024. Two years after the publication of this transition pathway, the report highlights tangible progress across all areas of action, and demonstrating concrete results from the Commission, national public actors and all types of tourism stakeholders from EU Member States and beyond. It sets the basis for regular progress assessment and recognition of areas where more action should be prioritised. The report was also presented and discussed in the informal ministerial meeting of Tourism ministers organised by the Belgian Presidency on 20th of February 2024 in Louvain-la-Neuve. On this occasion, representatives of the Member States reaffirmed their commitment to the Transition Pathway and Agenda 2030 and exchanged some valuable national best practices.

The report is available at Publications Office website

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Transition Pathway for Tourism turned 2 together with stakeholders!

On 15 March, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship & SMEs (DG GROW) celebrated the two-year anniversary of the Transition Pathway for Tourism. To mark this milestone, the Commission organised an event to reflect on the past, present and future of the tourism ecosystem.

Since its publication in February 2022, the Transition Pathway for Tourism has grown in importance, supporting the green and digital transition of the tourism ecosystem, ultimately increasing the sector's resilience. Through an online call for commitments, tourism stakeholders are continuously invited to contribute to this process, with over 400 pledges published so far.

The anniversary event took stock of the progress achieved since the publication of the Pathway, showcased inspiring examples from the industry and reflected on future challenges and opportunities for the tourism ecosystem. Over 300 stakeholders attended the event, either in-person or online, leading to fruitful exchanges and networking.

All event materials, including a recording, are available on the following website: 2-year anniversary of the Transition Pathway for Tourism – European Commission (europa.eu)

<div style="background-color:#1F3864; color:white; text-align:center; font-weight:bold; padding:4px;">Guide on EU funding & open calls</div>

The Guide on EU funding for tourism is regularly updated with relevant open calls for tenders and proposals under the **section "Open tourism calls"**. Current funding opportunities include, for example:

- Pilot Action: Building Capacity for Tourism, Call for tenders (EISMEA/2023/OP/0024) deadline 29 May 2024

    The objective of this Pilot Project is to provide EU Tourism stakeholders, mainly SME, better access to EU funding by increasing their awareness of funding opportunities and improving the quality of their bids.

    How? Increasing the knowledge and capacity of stakeholders regarding the existing funding opportunities, improving the possibility of success in their applications for financing programs available in the EU. For that purpose, the project shall map in detail the funds and calls dedicated to tourism under different EU financial instruments and communicate in a clear and easy understandable language to the tourism ecosystem, namely SME's, about the existing funding opportunities.

    By what means? Start by a panoramic analysis of the last 4 years of tourism funding in the EU (2019-2022) and identify success and failure factors when applying for EU funding and based on those factors, gather a "compendium of Best Practices", issue a simple manual on "Dos and Don'ts" and issue "Guidelines for improving the quality of tourism stakeholders' applications to the EU Funding Programmes / Calls".

    It shall also analyse how actors of the tourism ecosystem look for information, what they don't find, what they don't understand, how to solve possible problems and develop solutions (e.g. translation online guide in other official languages of the EU, place adds in specialised media used by the tourism industry, etc).

    Finally, the project shall also test various 'capacity building' solutions, organizing training sessions to support and strengthen stakeholders in the tourism sector, including SMEs, developing tourism specific guidelines / training materials on how to apply successfully to EU calls and provide a place where tourism actors could find partners to submit joint bids.

    Total budget for the execution of all the tasks referred in this call for tenders is EUR 3 000 000.

- IKAT Tourism 2º Call for SMEs in Europe – Financial support for services (IKAT) deadline 15 May 2024 (17:00)

Up-to-date information and additional calls can be found **online** via the **pre-defined search for "tourism"** on EU Funding & Tenders Portal.

Launch of the new European Capital and Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism 2025 competitions

On 6 March 2024, the European Commission launched the 2025 edition of the European Capital of Smart Tourism and the European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism competitions. Tourism destinations across Europe are invited to submit their innovative practices of smart and sustainable tourism to become leading examples in European tourism.

To compete for the 2025 titles, cities have to demonstrate their innovative tourism practices and submit their applications online. Applications will first be evaluated by a panel of independent experts. In the second step, shortlisted cities will present their city's candidature in front of the European Jury. The European Jury will select two winners, the 'European Capital of Smart Tourism 2025' and the 'European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism 2025', which will be announced in November 2024.

Both competitions are open to cities across both the EU, as well as the non-EU countries that take part in the Single Market Programme (SMP), including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Kosovo, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Türkiye, and Ukraine. Eligible destinations for the Smart Capital title must have a population exceeding 100.000 inhabitants, while Green Pioneer contenders should have populations ranging between 25.000 and 100.000.

For more details watch the recordings of two online sessions for applicant cities:
- European Capital of Smart Tourism: https://vimeo.com/932900453
- European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism: https://vimeo.com/933280450

Find here more information about "This is what you need to know before you apply" or listen to the dedicated EU Smart Tourism podcast episode.

Website: https://smart-tourism-capital.ec.europa.eu/index_en

APPLY NOW to become the next European Capital or Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism
Deadline: **31 May 2024**

Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR) for Hotel Accommodation services: Kick-off Technical Secretariat

On 8 February 2024, the Technical Secretariat (TS) for the Hotel Accommodation PEFCR development started their work with the official kick-off meeting. In this first meeting, the TS Members defined internal working procedures and already started initial discussions on substantive issues such as system boundaries as well as the

Representative Product. In a second meeting, held on 20 March 2024 in Brussels, the TS progressed on defining the scope of the PEFCR. Once this step is finalised, the work on datasets can proceed.

The TS is a multi-stakeholder working group, representing at least 51% of the EU hotel market. This governing body will develop the PEFCR for Hotel Accommodation for the EU Single Market within the next 2.5 years. Besides the representatives of the European Commission (DG GROW and DG ENV), the committee consists of representatives of various stakeholders from all over Europe, including hotel chains, small and medium hotels, environmental NGO and scientific experts to ensure different considerations and balanced approach in the decision-making process. The TS members will meet periodically to make technical decisions, discuss the progress made, and organise hotel industry testing of the draft PEFCR.

The PEF is a comprehensive Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) method for quantifying the overall environmental impacts of products (goods or services), including carbon footprint, water footprint and a range of other environmental impacts geared towards reliability and reproducibility of the results. To reach this goal, a set of specific rules needs to be defined for the respective product category (here: Hotel Accommodation), in the form of a PEFCR. This is the first time that PEF is applied to the tourism ecosystem and services.

More information: https://pefhotelaccommodation.eu/

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Code of conduct project on online ratings

As a follow-up of the "study on the feasibility of possible initiatives at EU level and establishment of a multi-stakeholder platform on quality of tourism accommodation", it was recommended to create a code of conduct for online reviews and rating.

Thus, the action will bring together relevant stakeholders and make them endorse the above-mentioned code of conduct.

The selected contractor is therefore responsible for the implementation of the action, among others: a mapping of relevant stakeholders, a business impact analysis, setting up surveys and targeted consultations and meetings, dedicated workshops and communication actions.

The survey should soon be sent to the stakeholders and the dedicated workshops will then follow.

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In November 2023, the Commission launched a new project on **"Supporting sustainability and resilience of EU tourism destinations"**. The project is free of charge and includes many benefits for EU destinations, such as:

- capacity building activities in the field of sustainability and resilience (e.g. workshops, peer-to-peer sessions, presentation of available EU funds etc.),
- networking opportunities with other EU destinations sharing similar challenges and goals,
- visibility of destinations' best practices in the field of sustainability and resilience,
- communication campaign package that destinations can use towards their visitors.

To implement the above activities, the project has launched a survey to destination management organisations (DMOs) across Europe. By replying to the survey, DMOs can express interest to participate in the project. All EU languages are available from the dropdown menu at the upper right corner of the page. The deadline for replying is **31 May 2024**.

Link to the EU Survey: Sustainable EU Tourism – Shaping the Tourism of Tomorrow
Website: Sustainable EU Tourism – Shaping the Tourism of Tomorrow (europa.eu)

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The Single Market Programme supports a "Crisis Management and Governance in Tourism" project which aims to improve the EU tourism destinations to become more **resilient** and better prepared for resisting, managing and mitigating crises, in line with the objectives of the Transition pathway for tourism and EU Agenda for tourism 2030. **Already**, the project **has** delivered advisory and assistance services to 50 destinations and cross-border associations across the EU to develop their tourism-related crisis management and governance capacities with tailored action plans. *The common lessons learnt from this work on the ground will be published as learning materials and best practices in summer 2024.*

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The submissions for the Call for Proposals Transitioning to a more sustainable and resilient ecosystem – empowering tourism SMEs (SMP-COSME-2023-TOURSME-01 – closed 21 February) are now under evaluation and projects kick-of should be starting in Q3-2024.

This action will contribute to the transition of the European tourism ecosystem towards more sustainable and resilient practices as prioritised in the Tourism Transition Pathway, providing Direct support to innovative projects presented by third parties, e.g. SMEs; Training key stakeholders (train the trainers) on resilience and sustainability; Technical support, advice and capacity building to the highest possible number of SMEs based on their needs; Collection of best practices.

Your contribution makes a difference

Consultation on the Single Market Programme – Please respond and help us to improve our EU support measures for single market and SMEs

We have published an **open public consultation** to gather feedback for an interim evaluation of the Single Market Programme 2021-2027. The Single market programme funds EU projects and actions for single market, including SMEs. Your feedback will be very valuable for helping us to understand what went well to help us make improvements for the future. Please help us out by responding to this online survey – it will be open until **31 May 2024** (midnight Brussels time).

Background information: The Single Market Programme 2021-2027 (SMP) funds EU projects and actions to help the single market reach its full potential and ensure Europe's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The ongoing interim evaluation will assess the design, implementation, and first results of the

SMP for the period 2021-23. The evaluation covers all 6 pillars of this programme, including the SME pillar which inter alia provides support for the Enterprise Europe Network, clusters actions, Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs, projects for sectors and ecosystems such as tourism and social economy, and other services for helping SMEs with access to markets such as the International IP help desks and the EU Japan centre.

Further general information on the programme: Overview – European Commission (europa.eu).

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The EU Policy Lab (Joint Research Centre, European Commission) started collecting citizens' and stakeholders' real-life experiences in relation with water, in any of its aspects. Water is life, and it underpins our economies, societies, and the natural world. Whether you are working directly with water, use/need water for your work in any way or even study water, your story matters!

We highly encourage you to participate in this 15/20-min innovative survey (all EU languages are available) : Water_EUSurvey

Deadline for completing the survey: **30 April 2024**

This will help gather insights from all 27 member states and a variety of stakeholders on the way water connects, affects and matters most to them. The analysis of the stories will contribute directly to the discussion on current and future policy interventions at Commission level.

Contact point: JRC-WATER-EXPERIMENT@ec.europa.eu

Relevant publications
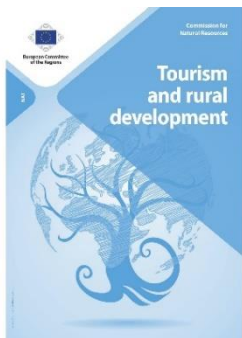
Tourism and rural development

European Committee of the Regions, Commission for Natural Resources, Marcinkowska, I., Maj, A., Sidło, K., *Tourism and rural development*, European Committee of the Regions, 2024, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2863/099682

Link: Tourism and rural development – Publications Office of the EU (europa.eu)

Website UN Tourism | Bringing the world closer (unwto.org)

On Climate Change risks and impacts:

- **Commission Communication on managing climate risks:** UR-Lex – 52024DC0091 – EN – EUR-Lex (europa.eu), more information Managing climate risks: protecting people and prosperity – European Commission (europa.eu)
- **European Environment Agency report on European Climate Risk Assessment:** European Climate Risk Assessment — European Environment Agency (europa.eu)
- **ETC report on Climate Change and Tourism in Europe**: ETC Special Report on Climate Change (etc-corporate.org)

Results of the Pilot Project RESTwithEU are out!

The project developed tools that will make it easier for small and medium-sized restaurants to adapt to the digitalisation era. It provides an interactive test which helps to recognise practical digitalisation pathways, and a digitalisation guidebook that helps restaurants to have a roadmap at hand.

Upcoming events – save the date

11 June 2024   A webinar on EU Ecolabel Tourist accommodations will be held to explain to potential interested tourist accommodation the benefits of this environmental excellence certification in light of the recent and future legal developments.
Success stories and interventions from big tourism players are expected as well.

All information will be soon available on the EU Ecolabel website.

Tourism website & other useful links

The website on **Your Europe** "Running a business in the tourism industry" summarises and links to the essentials on EU rules and consumer rights and some additional important topics for tourism enterprises.

There is also our DG GROW website for Tourism with pages dedicated to the transition of EU tourism.

The DG GROW website for tourism also now features a section on jobs and skills in tourism as part of the EU-wide promotional campaign to be launched soon. Additional materials, including a leaflet and video, will be released shortly – stay tuned!

For general information about DG GROW, please feel free to subscribe to the monthly DG GROW newsletter. You can find the previous editions at GROWTH - Newsletter Archives (europa.eu)

Thank you for your support!

GROW Tourism Team

European Commission
DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
Tourism, textiles|**G1**
B-1049 Brussels/Belgium

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