

EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION

Navigating EU Sustainability Regulations: A Guide for Destinations

Feeling the Pulse – June 2025



Today's Experts



Antonia Alomar

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COO and Head of Public Affairs European Travel Commission







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Liisa Kokkarinen

Head of Sustainable Development Visit Finland



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European Commission



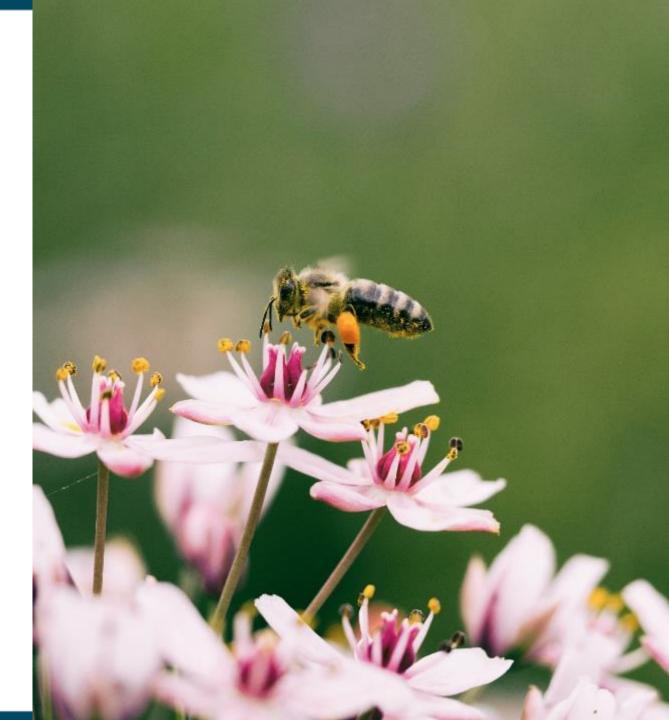
Q&A

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2

- **1** Welcome and Housekeeping
 - European Travel Commission' Sustainability Agenda
- A Destination's Guide to the New EU Regulations
- **4** NTO Perspective: Visit Finland

5 EU Strategy for Sustainable Tourism





About Us

The GDS-Movement is a people-powered data-driven international change agency that acts to catalyse socioeconomic and environmental transformation in cities and regions across the world.

Our Mission

We empower people with the mindsets, skill sets, and toolsets to create more regenerative destinations, events and organisations.



GDS-Index

Benchmarking destinations and leveraging data to drive performance and impact



GDS-Consulting

Facilitating strategies, narratives, and innovation for destinations & events (for the visitor economy)



GDS-Academy Educating and developing changemakers



GDS-Forum Building a dynamic, collaborative global community



GDS-Insights

Researching trends to uncover and define next practices

First, We Have A Quick Question

Wote in the Zoom Poll!

How confident do you feel about your own and/or your organisation's ability to prepare for and comply with *relevant* upcoming EU sustainability regulations?

From 1 to 5, with 1 = not confident at all 5 = extremely confident



European Travel Commission' Sustainability Agenda

Teodora Marinska COO and Head of Public Affairs European Travel Commission



EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION

Mission

Strengthen the **sustainable** development of Europe as a tourist destination and increase competitiveness through knowledge gathering and sharing amongst members and lobbying, as well as by establishing a professional marketing platform for the successful promotion of member countries in overseas markets.

Members

36 National Tourism Organisations Private Organisations (associates)

Partners

UNWTO, EC, ETOA, WTTC, ACI, etc.



Sustainability Agenda

2017

Sustainable Tourism in Europe: Status Quo and Common Challenges

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2020

White Paper on Rail Transport for International Tourism in Europe

2022

Signed the Glasgow Declaration

2024

Chapter Earth



×tx

2025

Climate Action Planning Framework

Guide to EU Sustainability Regulations

2018

Tourism and Climate Change Mitigation: Embracing the Paris Agreement

EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION

2021

First Edition Rail Tourism Awards

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Handbook on Encouraging Sustainable Tourism Practices

Sustainable Tourism Implementation: Framework and Toolkit

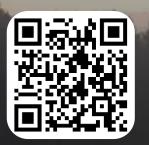
2023

Climate Action Plan

Tomorrow's Air sustainable events partnership



Climate Action Planning Framework



Rail Awards - Apply now!

2026

Measuring of Europe's Tourism Emissions

EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION

Thank you for your attention



Teodora Marinska teodora.marinska@visiteurope.com



A Destination's Guide to the New EU Regulations

Antonia Alomar EU Projects and Public Policy Manager

> Guy Bigwood CEO and Chief Changemaker GDS-Movement

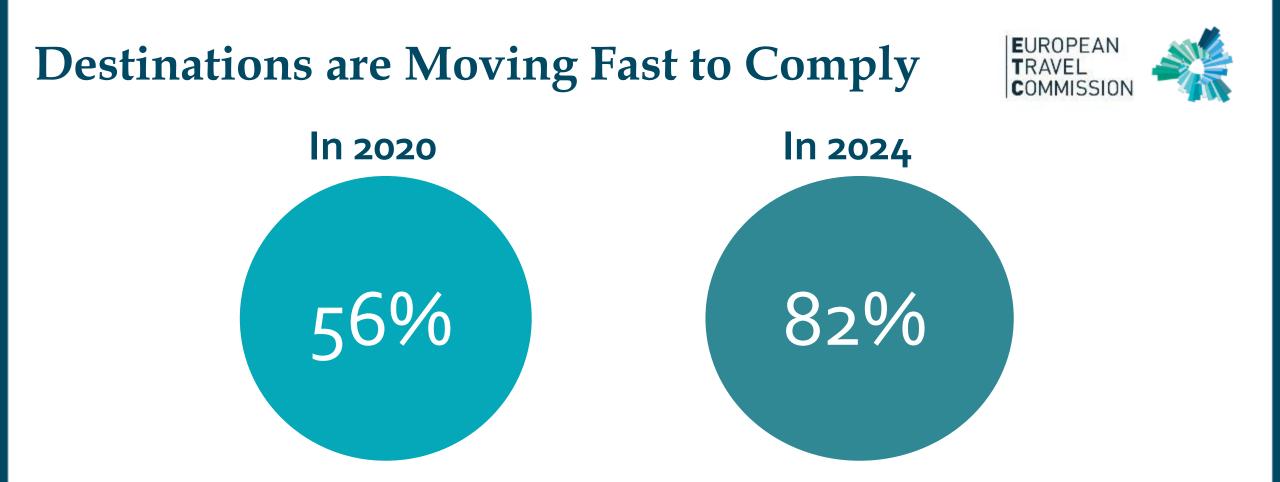


Europe Is Leading The Way

"The European Green Deal will transform the EU into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy. With climate action not only a necessity, but also the greatest economic opportunity of our time.."

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission





of GDS-Index destinations had a sustainability or regenerative strategy in place for managing the visitor economy.

Source: Figures sourced from GDS-Index evaluation results

Visitors are Sceptical



Doubt the authenticity of sustainable products and initiatives.

Trip.com Sustainable Travel Consumer Report 2024



And It's Not Suprising?!

"We have eco-friendly, green practices"





"All our hotels are certified with our own eco-label"

"Our cruise ships are Zero Waste"

53% of green claims were vague, misleading or unfounded 40% were unsubstantiated

EU Research, 2020

"We are the most sustainable destination in the world"

"Our fridges are CFC-Free"

"Our agency is 100% sustainable. We offset all emissions"

A Destination's Guide to the New EU Sustainability Regulations

EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION



Published by the **GDS-Movement** in collaboration with the **European Travel Commission (ETC).**

It aims to help tourism and events professionals understand three key directives under the EU Green Deal:

- Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)
- Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition Directive (ECGTD)
- Green Claims Directive (GCD)



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A Destination's Guide to the New EU Sustainability Regulations What tourism management organisations need to know

First guide of its kind!

What the Guide Offers



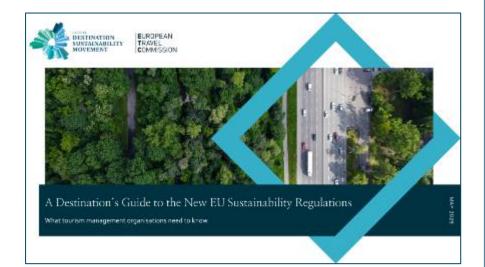
Prepares tourism and event destinations for upcoming EU sustainability regulations

Provides clear, practical guidance for compliance

Supports risk management and builds resilience

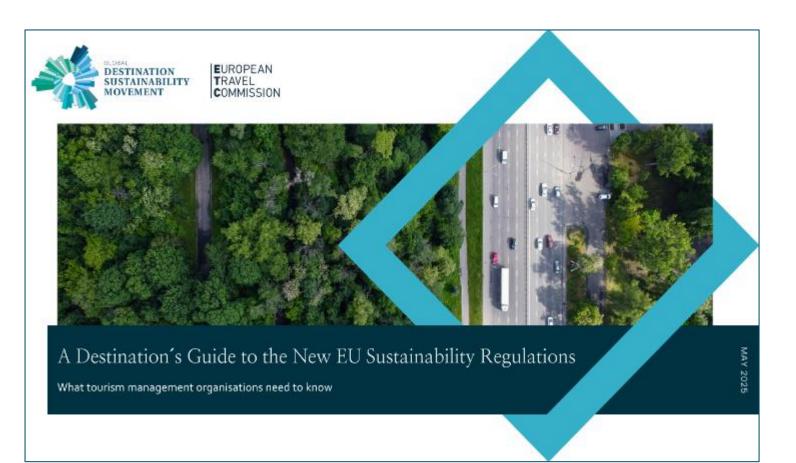
Prevents greenwashing and avoid "greenhushing" through accurate, transparent communication

Highlights new opportunities for sustainability and innovation



What the Guide is Not?





The guide is not perfect! Many things are still unclear and not defined yet.

It will be updated as legislation evolves and new regulations are released.

New Regulation

Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) (2023/1/5/EC)

Objective:

• To make sustainability reporting comparable, reliable, and mandatory, just like financial reporting

Focus:

- Requires large and listed companies to disclose detailed information about their environmental, social, and governance practices
- Brings accountability and increased transparency to ESG efforts—no more greenwashing behind closed doors
- Based on double materiality

Target & Scope:

- Large companies. 1000 employees and €50 million
- Reports must adhere to the <u>European Sustainability Reporting</u> <u>Standards (ESRS)</u>
- Updated by Omnibus Simplification in Feb 2025



New Regulation

Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition Directive (2024/8/25/EC)

Objective:

- To protect consumers from unfair practices related to greenwashing and enable them to make sustainable choices
- Amends the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (UCPD) and Consumer Rights Directive (CRD)

Prohibits:

- Making generic environmental claims without substantiated evidence
- Using sustainability labels without recognized certification or official backing (self-certified labels)
- Claiming overall eco-friendliness when only specific aspects are sustainable.

Target & Scope:

- Voluntary B₂C (sustainability) claims and labels
- All companies active in the EU market
- September 27th 2026



New Regulation

Green Claims Directive (2024/825/EC)

Objective:

• To regulate and verify explicit environmental claims, including voluntary eco-labels and sustainability statements

Focus:

- Requires independent verification and certification of environmental claims before they are communicated to consumers.
- Claims must be
 - Truthful
 - Presentation must be clear, specific, accurate and unambiguous
 - Backed by scientific data/methodology

Target & Scope:

- B₂C (sustainability) claims and labels
- All companies active in the EU market
- Legislation pending approval



Important Changes to Certification





Accreditation Required

• Certification bodies will need to be accredited, and audits need to be third party verified

• GSTC, TSCA, Green Destinations, Virio, Earthcheck and other big bodies already have or working for accreditation by their national accreditation body

The Challenge

• GDS-Index destinations have an unusually high average hotel certification rate of 34.2%

- In a study of 82,301 European hotels, only 9.3% were certified*
- Changes are likely to increase the cost of certification. They will favour large organisations over SMEs.

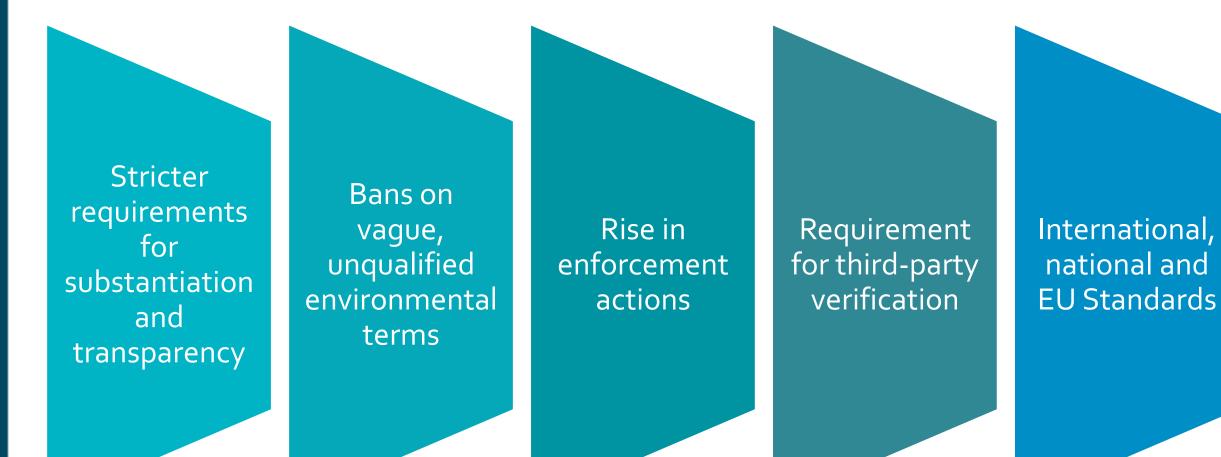
Key Question

Will the regulation increase greenhushing and reduce certification?How can this be mitigated?

In Summary: What's Coming?



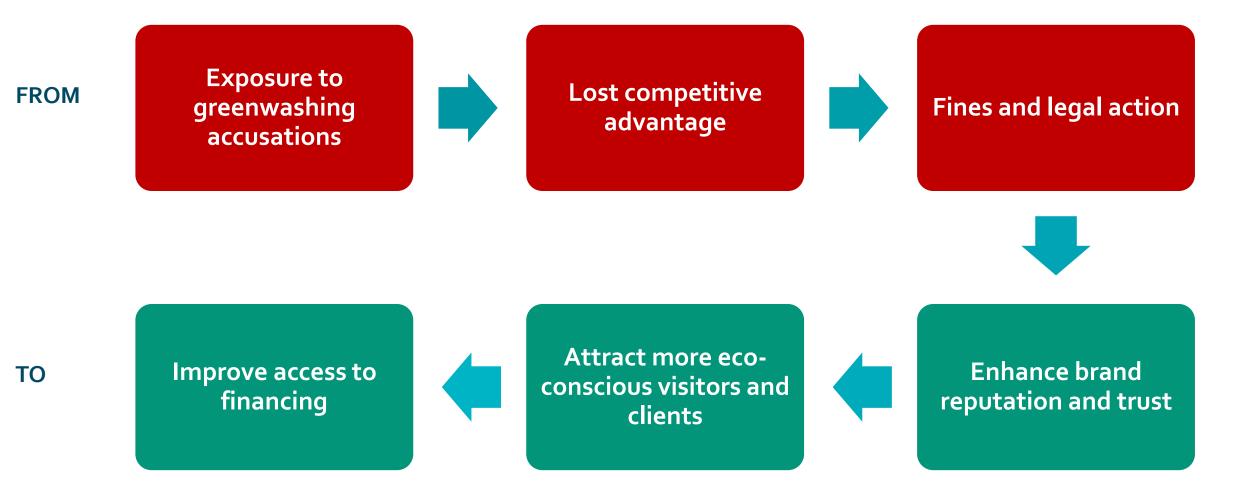
New regulation sets out to provide:



What's at Stake? Risk of Doing Nothing. Benefit of Being in Action



Legislation will require the tourism and events industry to significantly improve transparency, sustainability reporting, and environmental claim management.



Doing Nothing is Not a Strategy! Recommended Actions for Destinations





EVALUATE CERTIFY EDUCATE **SUPPORT** MONITOR MAP • Identify and • Audit your Impact of • Develop a • Develop an Raise awareness legislation and compliance accredited and storytelling promote funding organisation's skills across the greenwashing certification to support processes and roadmap risks strategy for destination businesses with claims • Work with internal businesses compliance • Current claims and and external coms • Share learnings • Assess the Increase focus on destination wide status teams achieving compliance • Work required for certification for compliance the DMO and

Destination

NTO Perspective: Visit Finland

Liisa Kokkarinen Head of Sustainable Development Visit Finland



Liisa Kokkarinen Online

Visit Finland

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL FINLAND[®]





12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

13 CLIMATE ACTION



11/6/2025Feeling the Pulse: Navigating EU Sustainability RegulationsWebinar by GDS Movement & ETC

Image: Elina Sirparanta







Travel industry in Finland



Preparing for CSRD, ECGTD, GDC complience









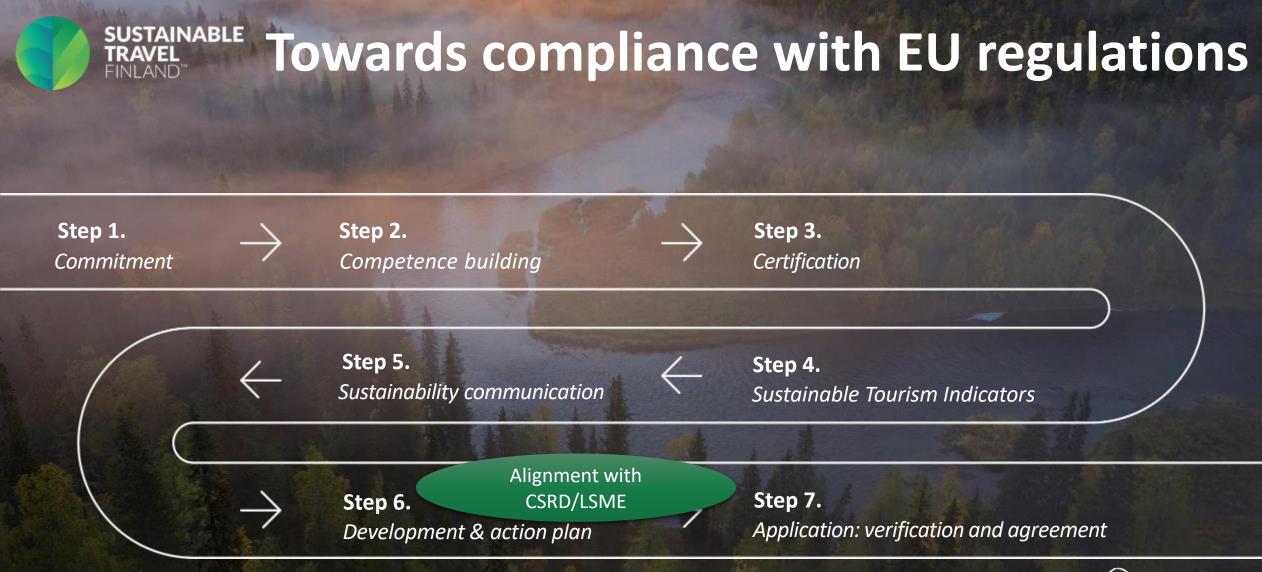




















Kiitos

LIISA KOKKARINEN Head of Sustainable Development Liisa.kokkarinen@businessfinland.fi



SUSTAINABLE

EU Strategy for Sustainable Tourism

Ramune Genzbigelyte-Venturi Policy Officer for Tourism European Commission



Towards new EU strategy for sustainable tourism: building on a common vision & co-implementation



Co-created and co-implemented by stakeholders





EU Strategy for Sustainable Tourism

Targeted Consultation: by 15 August 2025

https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/TourismStrategy



What are we consulting on?

SUST	/IRONMENTAL AINABILITY AND MATE ACTION	SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	DMO RESILIENCE
TRAI	DIGITAL NSFORMATION	SMART TOURISM	SKILLS, SUPPORT TO WORKFORCE
SUPP	IPETITIVENESS, ORT TO MSMEs ID START-UPS	ACCESSIBILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION	MODES OF TRANSPORT
		A SHARED BRAND FOR EUROPE	Europe Comm



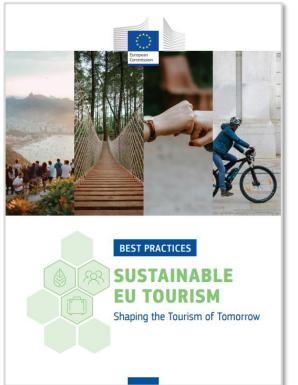
EC supports destinations in sustainability path by:

- Capacity building & peer-to-peer exchanges
- Dialogue forums for destinations
- T4T expert group work:
- ✓ Task force on unbalanced tourism
- Task force on sustainable destination management and regenerative tourism
- Supporting statistical framework and work on sustainability indicators (EU Tourism Dashboard, Tourism Flagship under Technical Support Instrument)
- Promoting a shared brand for Europe, with ETC support: sustainable, inclusive and safe destination
- Research and surveys on trends and travel sentiment



Sustainable EU Tourism project

50 best practices addressing 31 concrete challenges faced by European DMOs







Download the Compilation of **50 Best Practices**

#EUTourism

DMO Twinning Workshops

- : (ْنَ
 - 11-12 March: Diversifying tourism



26-27 March: Smart solutions



8-9 April: Governance & collaborative approaches



Upcoming Webinars





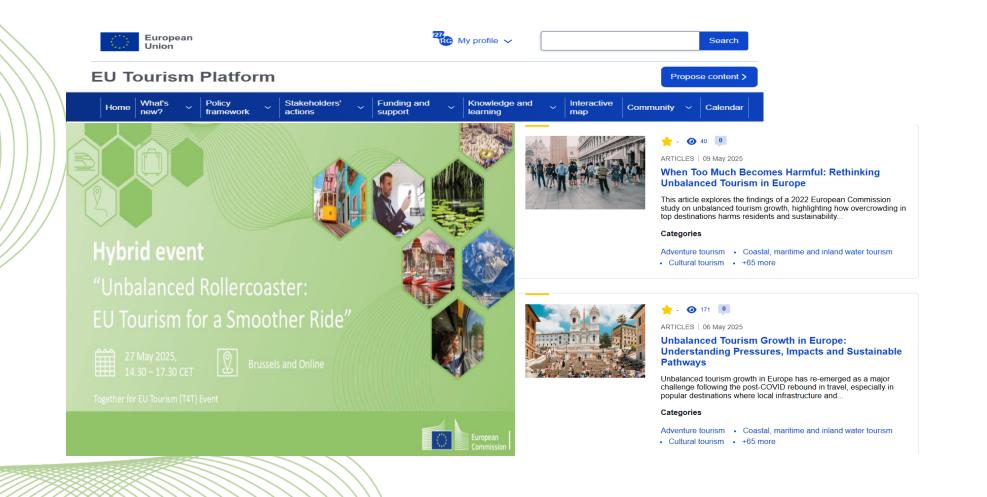
4 June: Unlocking EU funding for sustainable and resilient tourism

- **16 June:** Building capacity and fostering cooperation in tourism
- **30 June:** Practical tools for twinning and cooperation



#EUTourism

Forum on unbalanced tourism at destinations







TOURISMOF TOMORROW DATA DRIVEN DESTINATIONS HUB

Creation of a Competence Centre to support data management in tourism destinations

Build a knowledge support scheme to assist EU tourism destinations Provide tailor-made digital solutions and data for DMOs and tourism SMEs Integrate results and learnings into a business plan to set up and sustain the Centre

Upscale beyond the partnership and build a data-driven tourism community Implement the Centre and ensure its continuity



D3HUB Competence Centre (d3hub-competencecentre.eu)

Sustainable & innovative urban destinations



COIMBRA ST LLM - COIMBRA Sustainable

Tourism Large Language Models

Sustainable tourismy

Coimbra

Portugal

EUROPEAN URBAN INITIATIVE

Country

Innovative actions projects

We supports urban authorities to experiment with bold and innovative solutions to urban challenges.

Status





Co-funded by the European Union

About Urban Agenda Library Partnerships News & Events

<− Home









CULTIGEN - CULture, Tourism, reGENeration

through innovative digital solutions and

Ravenna Italy

Copenhagen

governance platforms

FOOTPRINTS - Facilitation, Organization, Opportunities into a Tourists'/Temporary citizens' urban Platform, Nudging Responsible behaviours, community Involvement, Time saving by Soft mobility



Zentropy MICE - Reshaping a new concept of

MICE sustainability under an urban entropy

approach to enhance the legacy to Valencia citizens and optimize energy, matter and

EU objective

FUII-IA Call 2

Valencia

information

Seale



Ø Map view

Krakow

SCT HUB - Codesign the Future of sustainable cultural tourism





Argiroupoli GreCO - Green Cultural Oases Prato Italy

EPIC - Experience Prato Industrial Culture

Sustainable Tourism | UAEU

Innovative actions projects | EUI

Capacity building opportunities for cities

Ongoing Closing in 2 years 8 months 3 weeks



EUROPEAN URBAN INITIATIVE

City-to-City Exchanges EUI – Capacity Building

The City-to-City Exchanges Call is now continuously open. Check the details and apply to benefit of other city experiences to tackle your sustainable urban development challenges.

portico

The gateway to urban learning

We connect urban actors with knowledge, people and initiatives to achieve sustainable urban development in Europe.

What are you looking for ?

Urban Matchmaker

Portico's matchmaking tool for cities to find their peers and start partnerships

- Connect with peers facing similar challenges, share your experience and benefit from theirs
- Join an Innovative Action project as a Transfer Partner
- Apply together to receive EUI support

Discover the Urban Matchmaker (\rightarrow)





European Capital of Smart Tourism

Are you a smart destination with a population of over 100.000 inhabitants? Apply here for the European Capital of Smart Tourism Competition.



European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism

Are you a green destination with a population of between 25.000 – 100.000 inhabitants? Apply here for the European Green Pioneer of Tourism Competition.





The guide will help you find appropriate funding. It contains links to relevant EU programme websites with the latest developments (such as annual work programmes or calls for proposals) and further details per programme.

For inspiration, you can also see concrete project examples funded by previous EU programmes. The guide is available in all EU languages via a high-quality machine translation tool.

EU funding and businesses - European Commission

Building Capacity for the Tourism Ecosystem

TOTAL BUDGET: € 2 398 900

#EUTourism

OBJECTIVE

Promote greater competitiveness in the tourism sector, mainly for SMEs



Increase the knowledge and capacity of stakeholders regarding existing funding opportunities, improving their success in applying for funding programs available in the EU

Kick off meeting January 2025	Inception report April 2025	Interim report June 2025	Final report and Com December 20	
1	2	3	4	
EU Tourism Funding Overview (2019-2022)	 Tourism Ecosys Analysis 	stem Needs • Best Pra Comper	•	Training for Tourism Stakeholders
Guide Update	Capacity Build	ing Solutions • Manual	l on Dos and Don'ts	
Bidding Success/Failure Factors		• Applica Guidelii	ition Quality nes	



EU Tourism Platform

Single platform for the EU Tourism Transition Pathway

Discover actionable insights and strategies on the Transition Pathway Stakeholder Support Platform for EU Tourism ecosystem to drive sustainable growth and innovation in your tourism business.

Join the pathway >

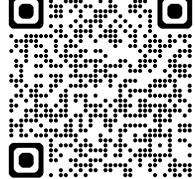


Photo by David Marcu

Access updated information through resources (articles, studies, guidelines, reports....)

- Discover stakeholder pledges & best practices
- Explore events, courses, support and funding opportunities
- Connect with members from around the world using the interactive map

Follow us @Transport_EU in Sustainable EU Tourism

Contact us

MOVE-TOURISM@ec.europa.eu



MASTERCLASSES

Regenerative Destination Management

Storytelling Strategies for Regeneration

Designed for marketing and communications teams, this Masterclass builds skills in storytelling to inspire regeneration across destinations, businesses, and communities.

Using the Storytelling Strategies for Regeneration Framework, you'll gain insights into trends and strategies to strengthen your brand while avoiding greenwashing and navigating EU directives to lead, not only comply.

Email us at academy@gds.earth



GDS-ICCA-CityDNA CERTIFICATE

Regenerative Destination Management

Explore our Dynamic Learning that is quite out of the ordinary

Designed to build the expertise of mid- to senior-level NTO, CVB and DMO professionals and consultants crafting and implementing destination sustainability and stewardship strategies.



Email us at <u>academy@qds.earth</u>

5		Stand Stand Stand Stand		Contraction of the second second	
	1	Thursday, o4 September An Introduction to the Regenerative Revolution		Thursday, og October DMOcracy: Stakeholder Engagement, Co-creation and Governance	
	2	Thursday, 11 September Building Capacity: Tactical Approaches to Accelerating Transformation		Thursday, 16 October Storytelling and Communication Strategies for Regeneration	
	3	Thursday, 18 September The DEI Journey- Social Sustainability in Tourism	8	Thursday, 23 October Impact Strategy: Enabling, Measuring and Reporting on Social and Environmental Transformation	
	4	Thursday, 25 September Demystifying the Climate Jargon. Practical Destination Approaches for Climate Action	9	Thursday, 30 October Funding for Tomorrow: Developing Regenerative Funding Systems	
	5	Thursday, o2 October Visitor Economy Management: Balancing Growth and Regenerative Strategies	10	Thursday, o6 November From Theory to Practice: Strategizing and Purposing the DMO	



THANK YOU

Join a dynamic community of changemakers

Email: <u>info@gds.earth</u> Web: <u>www.gds.earth</u> LinkedIn: <u>bit.ly/GDSM_LinkedIn</u> YouTube: <u>@GDS-Movement</u>



GLOBAL DESTINATION SUSTAINABILITY MOVEMENT

