European Commission

EU priorities and actions on sustainable tourism

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Tourism in the EU – key figures

Over **562 million** international arrivals in 2018 in the EU (+ 4% on 2017)

8th consecutive year of growth **in 2018**

Contributes directly and indirectly to 10% of EU GDP

Accounts directly and indirectly to 12% of EU employment

2.4 million enterprises – 10% of total companies are in tourism

Over 90% of tourism enterprises are SMEs

40% of global international arrivals

31% of international tourism receipts

Challenges and EU priorities

Administrative framework; lack of awareness of funding opportunities

Increasing global competition from destinations in emerging countries

Digitalisation, innovation and new business models in platform economy

Quality of jobs and skills gap

Sustainability, unbalanced tourism growth

5 PRIORITIES OF ACTION

Funding and policy mainstreaming

Promote Destination Europe and internationalisation of SMEs

Smart tourism; encourage uptake of digitalisation and innovation

Enhance skills, training & workforce mobility

Promote sustainable and responsable tourism

EU tourism policy priorities

General objective: support a business environment where EU tourism can develop as a global leader in sustainability and innovation, while maintaining Europe as a leading tourist destination.

Framework conditions: improve regulatory and business environment for EU tourism businesses and stimulate smart investment in tourism

Smart tourism: **innovation, digital transformation**, including platform economy

Sustainable and responsible tourism: sustainability addressing resource efficiency, climate change, circular economy, diversification of tourism offer, balanced management of tourism flows

Resilience of workforce: skills, competences and quality of jobs

Promoting Destination Europe and internationalisation of tourism enterprises

SDGs and sustainable tourism:
environmental, economic and socio-economic pillars

Targets:

8.9 - implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products;

12.B - develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impact for sustainable tourism;

14.7 - sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of tourism.

Sustainable tourism – what we do in the EU

Provided financial support so far:

✓ **Trans-national sustainable tourism:**
2014-2018 COSME supported trans-national tourism partnerships involving over **150 SMEs** and **200 tourism stakeholders** from **31 European countries** with **37 million EUR**.

✓ **Related infrastructure:**
2014-2020 ESIF invest **ca. 4 billion EUR** in tourism related projects

✓ **Support under Horizon 2020, Erasmus +, Creative Europe..**

Improving green skills for tourism professionals:

2017 New Skills Agenda for Europe launched the **Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills in tourism**. Aim – address shortages in green, digital and social skills.

NEW: 2019 COSME - Call for proposals

COS-TOURCOOP-2019-3-01: Boosting sustainable tourism development and capacity of tourism SMEs through transnational cooperation and knowledge transfer

It aims at:

- reinforcing **transnational and cross-border cooperation** to enable sustainable growth of tourism SMEs

- **fostering SMEs' capacities and skills** to explore and uptake solutions, which would improve their sustainable management and tourism sustainability in general

- fostering **innovative solutions for sustainable tourism** through **cross-sectoral cooperation**

The specific objective of the action is to **develop and put in place transnational and cross-sectoral support schemes to build capacity for sustainable growth of SMEs in the tourism sector**.

https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/section/cosme/cos-tourcoop-2019-3-01-boosting-sustainable-tourism-development

Providing tools for sustainable tourism management

ETIS - European Tourism Indicators System toolkit

❑ **Voluntary scheme of indicators to measure and monitor the sustainability performance of tourism destinations.**

❑ **Suitable for all tourist destinations**, encouraging them to adopt a more sustainable approach to tourism planning.

https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/21749

Providing tools for sustainable tourism management

EU-ecolabel for Tourist Accommodations – is creating incentive for those managing tourism accommodation to keep to certain environmental standards. Most popular the service group within the scheme (40% of ecolabel licenses)

http://ec.europa.eu/ecat/hotels/en/list

EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) is a premium management instrument for companies and other organisations to evaluate, report, and improve their environmental performance.

https://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm

European Destinations of Excellence "EDEN"

➢ **European quest for excellence in tourism to award emerging, non-traditional destinations committed to social, cultural and environmental sustainability.**

➢ **158 winning destinations and +/- 400 runners-up awarded from 27 countries**

➢ **Selection is organised at national level around an annual theme:**

|	
2007 – rural tourism	2013 – accessible tourism
2008 – local intangible heritage	2015 – tourism & local gastronomy
2009 – protected areas	2017- cultural tourism
2010 – aquatic tourism	2019 – health and well-being tourism
2011 – regeneration of physical sites	

➢ **EDEN Network - a platform for the exchange of good practices and cooperation, 580 destinations**
http://ec.europa.eu/eden

EUROPEAN CAPITAL
OF **SMART TOURISM**
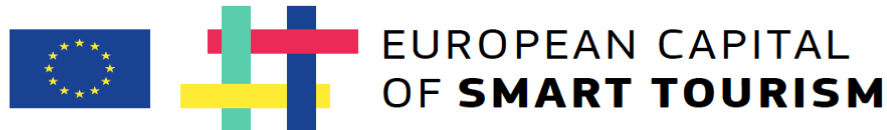
An initiative proposed by the European Parliament as a Preparatory Action, implemented by the European Commission.

It awards **the title of European Capital of Smart Tourism** through an EU-wide competition to those cities that implemented the most outstanding measures in tourism and gives the opportunity to **European cities to share their exemplary practices as smart tourism destinations.**

EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF **SMART TOURISM**

For **EU cities of more than 100 000 inhabitants.**

Apart from showcasing exemplary practices by cities as tourism destinations in **Accessibility, Sustainability, Digitalisation, Cultural Heritage and Creativity,** the initiative aims to establish a **framework for the exchange of best practices** between cities and creates opportunities for cooperation and new partnerships.

- **Compendium of Best Practices and more information:** www.smarttourismcapital.eu

- **European Capitals of Smart Tourism 2019: Helsinki and Lyon**

- **European Capitals of Smart Tourism 2020: Gothenburg and Malaga**

Study on the Contribution of Tourism to Local and Regional Development.
Evidence from the ESIF 2012-2018.
Preliminary findings

Timeframe - 2 programming periods 2017-2013 & 2014-2020.

EU funding:

❑ the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) (incl. INTERREG);

❑ the European Social Fund (ESF);

❑ the Cohesion Fund (CF);

❑ the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD); and

❑ the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

Tourism-related projects:

- Protection and development of **tourism destinations**
- Development of **tourism services**
- Direct **hard infrastructure** (e.g. refurbishment of tourism sites), **soft measures** (e.g. trainings for tourism staff, diversification of activities), or **indirect support** (e.g. road infrastructure leading to tourism sites)

Main activities that received support

Enormous diversity of tourism related activities, which are supported by the ESIF. Examples:

- ❑ Investments in eco and health tourism
- ❑ Investments in cultural heritage sites
- ❑ Tourism promotion activities
- ❑ Vocational training in the tourism sector
- ❑ Hotel renovations, including in rural regions
- ❑ Exchange of tourism practices
- ❑ Investment in tourism activities related to fishing
- ❑ Investment in hard infrastructure, e.g. roads, waste management
- ❑ Investment in tourism related ICT
- ❑ Support for FLAGs investing in tourism

Main impacts of tourism activities

❑ **Economic effects**
  - local and regional economic development (GDP)
  - direct/indirect employment
  - development of a broader skill set and supporting labour mobility
  - enhanced competitiveness of local SMEs
  - increased visibility of regions, brands and investment possibilities

❑ **Environmental effects**
  - sustainable transport
  - increased energy efficiency
  - increased awareness about nature and environmental protection

❑ **Local social effects**
  - urban revitalisation and community building
  - increased social engagement and inclusion
  - improved governance and administrative capacity
  - fostering of a common identity and cross-border cooperation

Key messages:

- **Tourism is a 'booster' for other sectors and activities**. instrumental in fostering a range of additional results across its complex value-chains from its interlinkages with creative industries to its essential role in fostering sustainable infrastructures and circular models for local economies, up to the increased embeddedness of touristic products/services into ICTs and social media.

- **Tourism strategies provide a framework that enhances the effectiveness of support.** Projects that were conceived as a part of strategies to boost the tourism-related activities of multiple regions can provide an effective framework for developing strategic cooperation across local stakeholders in single and multiple territories across the EU.

Messages from best practice cases

- *Promote collaboration between large numbers of local stakeholders, however challenging the administrative side of this might be.*

- *Integrated (LEADER) projects can also have a much higher impact on the revival of a region's economic activity than stand-alone activities*

- *Absence of significant natural sites in the region focus on promoting the cultural heritage of the region to attract tourists.*

- *Marketing can make a difference: As a result of online media exposure, international overnight stays in Lapland increased by 14% from 2011 to 2014 (An award winning and innovative tourist campaign for Lapland and Koillismaa – ERDF)*
- *The long term impact of cross-border cooperation projects may be primarily social rather than economic.*

Preliminary recommendations

- Keep options for financing tourism related activities under all ESIF.

- Seek for interlinkages between the investments in cultural heritage sites and tourism boosting.

- Increasing tourism revenues and activities should ideally not be considered as a stand-alone objective for ESIF-supported projects, but rather as an objective linked to business development in other sectors benefitting from tourism activities, the preservation of natural/cultural heritage and increasing cross-regional cooperation.

- Support investments in the digitalisation of tourism services and heritage for better management of tourist flows.

- Support international tourism initiatives focusing on cross-border/cross-regional cooperation in the tourism sector.

- Support local capacities and skills for the adoption of new tourism-related business models by local stakeholders.

- In this regard, regions should have better dedicated tourism strategies and/or specific priorities in their regional development/CLLD strategies that are linked to tourism activities.

- For the 2021-2027 period, appropriate open databases on ESIF financing, going beyond programme level and including key word searches would increase their usefulness and the overall ESIF accountability.

European Tourism Day, Brussels, 1 April 2020

https://ec.europa.eu/growth/events_en?field_newsroom_topics_tid=248

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http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/index_en.htm