



Up2Circ – Boosting the Uptake of Circular Business Model, Product and Process Innovation

Horizon Europe 2021-2027

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Sectorial catalogue **Tourism**



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Short introduction to the industrial ecosystem / content focus

Tourism sector in Europe

The European Commission adopted an updated New Industrial Strategy (May 2021) highlighting the need for Europe's industry to lead the green and digital transformations and to drive Europe's global competitiveness and strategic autonomy. The Commission proposed the co-creation of transition pathways with stakeholders as an essential collaborative tool for the transformation of industrial ecosystems.

Following the [2021 Updated Industrial Strategy](#) and given the many challenges faced by the tourism industry and the major impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism ecosystem was the first industrial ecosystem to work on a transition pathway.

The transition pathway identifies 27 areas of measures for the green and digital transition, and for improving the resilience of EU tourism. It calls for more circular and environmentally friendly services in tourism, enhancing data sharing for more innovative services, and improving accessibility of services, among others.

(Source: European Commission, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, *Transition pathway for tourism*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2873/344425> , available in multiple languages.

The EU's tourism ecosystem is highly diverse and complex, covering globalised and interconnected value chains: it includes food and beverage services, on-line information and services providers (tourist offices, digital platforms, travel technology providers), travel agents and tour operators, accommodation suppliers, destination managing organisations, attractions and passenger transport (for example, airlines and airports, trains, and cruises).

In 2019, tourism generated 9.5% of total EU GDP and provided 22.6 million jobs in the EU. Out of 3.2 million tourism businesses, 99.8% were micro, or small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

(Source: Cirtoinno handbook *Destination: A circular tourism economy*, © 2017 Centre for Regional & Tourism Research and the authors).

The tourism ecosystem was among the most severely affected ecosystems by COVID-19 crisis. In the following years a sequence of periods of recovery and new emergency measures occurred. Rapid fluctuations in the business confidence indicator confirm that tourism is very sensitive to the waves of the pandemic and related measures.

Regulatory drivers and barriers

In the table below are some of the barriers in the tourism sector :

<u>Digitalisation</u>	<p>Access to data is increasingly important for tourism providers to take up innovative technologies and to develop resource efficient and innovative services. Online intermediation service platforms and short-term rental services are increasingly prevalent in the tourism ecosystem.</p> <p>Due to the high percentage of microenterprises and SMEs in the sector, several challenges are faced in engaging with the twin transition, including increasing indebtedness, access to funding, staff availability, skills and awareness of the relevant opportunities, a lack of knowledge of existing good practices and access to tools to implement them.</p>
<u>Resilience</u>	<p>The COVID-19 crisis has revealed vulnerabilities in the current regulatory framework in terms of responding to unexpected events that result in mass cancellations of services booked by passengers and package travellers, and consequently the lack of liquidity and economic sustainability of business.</p>
<u>Green transition</u>	<p>Several policy strategies highlight the objectives of the European green deal , which also should be followed by the tourism ecosystem: specific challenges in the tourism ecosystem relate to the targets to reduce disposable materials and waste, and improve water use efficiency and sanitation, while ensuring the health and safety of visitors.</p>
<u>Social sustainability and accessibility aspects</u>	<p>One of the key challenges for the recovery and resilience of tourism is the one of workforce, of fair conditions and gender gap.</p> <p>Developing accessible virtual reality and augmented reality solutions can provide alternative ways to access natural and cultural sites.</p> <p>Attention should be given to people with disabilities while implementing the digital transition in tourism marketing, information sharing, reservation services and providing tourism experiences.</p>

Integrating circularity and further advancing resource efficiency in the tourism value chain represent an opportunity for the tourism sector to embrace a sustainable and resilient pathway.

Challenges for the sector with regard to sustainability demands, including a brief overview of relevant regulations

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CE opportunities for the sector, including best practices

Tourism businesses can reduce their use of resources and save costs by implementing circular principles (reduce, reuse, recycle, recover) in their operation and supply chains. For example:

- Energy saving/efficient buildings
- Water and energy-saving laundry technologies
- Extending the life of furniture, carpets, and other fixtures through repairing and remanufacturing
- Reducing food waste through new practices, i.e. produce-on-demand, smaller buffet plates, staff awareness etc.
- Sale/redistribution of food waste
- Sale/redistribution of used furniture, mattresses, building materials and other “by-products” (remanufacturing and up-cycling)
- Rental of electrical cars

(Source: [Circular Economy – Cirtoinno](#))

Today, more and more hotels, camping and tour operators are experimenting with new circular practices. Yet those new practices are not yet well known or shared throughout the industry. Some initiatives focus on waste and resource management tackling specific challenges (food waste, water, energy), while others create new business or marketing opportunities by collaborating in cross sectoral approaches.



Best practices

A rich and interesting catalogue of best practices in tourism sector is gathered in the Handbook “Circular Economy Best Practices in the Tourism Industry” produced by [CerTour project](#) : here are some examples that can be inspiring.

Hotel recycling soap: [Youth For Soap | Un savon qui fait du bien !](#)

Soaps are used in large quantity in hotel rooms. However they are rarely used entirely and end up being wasted. The initiative aims to collect used soaps from Manotel hotel chain’s six establishments and recycle them with a view to redistributing them free of charge to humanitarian associations.

Reducing Food waste :

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[Novotel Warsaw Case Study.pdf \(hubspot.net\)](#)

[AccorHotels](#) Eastern Europe regional leaders decided to improve the hotels' performances with smart initiatives that reduce food waste combining digital, human factor & circular economy

[Instock](#) rescues food surplus to turn it into meals: [Instock zet voedselverspilling op de kaart](#)

The Instock staff rescues from unnecessary disposal this food surplus of supermarkets which is not expired but cannot be sold anymore for various reasons. Then, Instock chefs turn it into a restaurant menu which is fresh and different everyday depending on what is available. In addition, in partnership with a brewery, they produce their own beers, one made from potato peels, one from saved bread and one from brewers' grains.

Hotel collaborates with Too Good To Go, an app created in the fight against food waste: [Samfunnsansvar | Et aktivt samfunnsengasjement | Thon Hotels](#)

Recycling

Banning plastic straws from drinks: [Hotel Metropole Monte-Carlo .pdf \(hospitality-on.com\)](#)

Recycling bottle corks into construction materials: [NH recycles and uses two tonnes of cork stoppers for the construction of their hotels | nh-corporate \(nh-hotels.com\)](#)

Giving hotel furniture a second life: [Rénovation = \(hospitality-on.com\)](#)

Instead of taking their furniture in perfectly good condition to waste depots, the hotel decided to make donations to citizens and associations, thanks to digitalisation.

Sustainability of buildings


Pullman Paris Tour Eiffel has created a 650 m² urban garden in the courtyard of the Hotel : [hospitality-on.com/sites/default/files/2019-01/potager du ppte une innovation durable septembre2015 .pdf.](#)

Radisson Hotel Group (RHG) leads sustainability in the hotel industry, installing fuel cell technology that allows Radisson Blu Hotel, Frankfurt to generate its own energy: [Présentation PowerPoint \(hospitality-on.com\)](#)

More Best practices are showed in the [Circular Economy Platform](#) (not exclusively on tourism).

Another source of inspiration for best practices is in the guidelines published by the World Tourism Organisation (an Agency of UN) in [its website](#) such as this: [Circularity in the hotel industry and competitiveness: a manual for implementing good practices](#)

EU funding sources for tourism

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There is support available to many tourism sectors and tourism operators under 15 different EU funding programmes. Together they provide more comprehensive support at EU level than would be possible under a single tourism specific funding programme.

To help tourism stakeholders find funding under the available EU programmes, DG GROW publishes a [Guide on EU funding for tourism](#). This guide gives examples of projects that have received funding under different programmes.

European Regional Development Fund promotes investment in digital solutions, in optimal and sustainable uses of environmental resources, the diversification of the tourism supply, and for cross-border cooperation in the field of sustainable tourism.

Support is also available to tourism operators and SMEs under the national recovery and resilience plans, which provide specific support for the green transition and digital transition for SMEs.

The [European Investment Bank](#) provides loans for example to hotels, the hospitality sector, cultural infrastructure, theme parks and transport infrastructure. In particular, it provides support for energy efficiency and urban regeneration.

Another relevant source is the Life programme [Circular economy and quality of life \(europa.eu\)](#)

Funding of Research & Innovation

Although tourism operators typically are not investing in R&I as in other related sectors, specific R&I needs go beyond tourism. They include, among other things:

- the development of sustainable fuels and transport technologies;
- processes and tools to reduce food waste;
- practices/technologies for efficient use of water resources (e.g. water reuse):
- energy and resource efficiency; □ circular food services and hospitality;
- reduction of disposable materials while ensuring health and safety of visitors;
- social innovation and governance models for reliable local supply chains, including local renewable energy projects;
- low-and zero-energy building technologies;
- new packaging materials; and
- development of new models for sustainable tourism.

Horizon Europe funding instruments provide support for these areas under following calls:

- Climate-neutral and smart cities mission;
- Climate, energy and mobility cluster;
- Food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment cluster;
- Culture, creativity and inclusive society cluster.

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European Calls:

ECOTOURS - MSME's support on circular tourism [Funding & tenders \(europa.eu\)](#) Italy (IT); Greece (EL); France (FR); Hungary (HU); Spain (ES); Cyprus (CY) ; deadline 10/08/2023

Horizon Europe Cluster 6 topics: Systemic circular solutions for a sustainable tourism: [Funding & tenders \(europa.eu\)](#) , deadline 22/02/2024

Other dedicated funding opportunities are open to SMEs through the FSTP scheme (Financial Support to Third Parties, also known as Cascading Grants), which provide support services and funding to small projects.

A non-exhaustive list of projects dedicated to the tourism sector follows.

The Call: COVID-19 Recovery Through Sustainable Tourism Growth and SME Support (SMP-COSME-2021-TOURSME) selected 9 projects currently active; here are the most relevant for circular economy aspects:

- Circular Economy for Regenerative tourism - CE4RT; [Home - CE4RT Project \(euproject.site\)](#)

The programme will fund 80 selected SMEs up to €8,000 each ; The five countries eligible to receive funding through CE4RT are: Finland Iceland Ireland The Netherlands Poland


- Empowering local communities turning them into laboratories for co-development of circular and sustainable tourism ecosystem – ECOTOURS; [Ecotours \(ecotours-project.eu\)](#)

The project targets local communities in Italy (Sicily: Enna, Agrigento and Trapani), Greece (Western Macedonia), France (Corsica, Bastia), Hungary (Csongrad County, Szeged), Spain (Galicia, Vigo), Cyprus (Nicosia), including a natural & cultural heritage of international significance, that are currently facing common socio-economic challenges due to the impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

- European Tourism Sustainability Monitoring 2030 - ETSM2030; [Find more about the European Tourism Sustainability Monitoring 2030 \(etsm2030.eu\)](#)

ETSM2030 aims at establishing a network of tourism SMEs (SMTEs) to increase sustainability monitoring by co-creating and co-implementing Sustainable Innovations Projects (SIP) and by boosting participation in relevant sustainable certification schemes, in particular the EU Ecolabel and EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme).

The selection of the 84 SMTEs will be made via an open call in six EU countries (Austria, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania and Slovenia)

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For the successful participation in ETSM2030 selected SMEs get reimbursed for e. g. costs for the certification and participating in training. In total, they can get up to a maximum of 7.840 €

- SMEs TRAnSition for an European Circular tourism Ecosystem – TRACE; [TRACE | Istituto di Scienze del Patrimonio Culturale \(cnr.it\)](#)

Taking into account the specific needs of the tourism industry facing the sustainability challenge, TRACE project aims to enhance and monitor the sustainability performance of SMEs in the tourism sector, boosting their awareness, development and capacity to develop and integrate sustainable innovations in their business practice, making sustainability, resilience and circularity as key factors of competitiveness in the rapidly changing global tourism market scenario. The project will address 100 European SMEs to become “champions” of sustainability and develop a dedicated sustainability plan and using a set of key indicators on sustainability and circular economy.

The TRACE Support Programme will involve directly at least 100 SMEs in 5 European countries (Italy, Belgium, Spain, Romania and Cyprus)

[TRACE Open-Call Guide-for-applicants.pdf \(cnr.it\)](#)


- CenTour project [Home - Circulartourism](#)

This project aims to accelerate and support the capacity of SMEs in tourism to uptake sustainable solutions, proposing a focus on waste in food sector, plastic free offer and rethinking the packaging, and collaborative consumption.

The project website provides a lot of resources such as handbooks, database of best practices, reports and webinars.

Links to observatories and best practices in areas relevant to the transition actions to more green, digital and resilient tourism, including:

- Eltis Urban mobility observatory: <https://www.eltis.org/>
- Circular Economy Stakeholder platform: <https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/>
- EU Food Loss and Waste prevention hub: https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food_waste/eu-food-loss-waste-prevention-hub/
- Smart tourism capitals best practices: https://smart-tourism-capital.ec.europa.eu/best-practices_en
- Handbook "[Destination: A circular tourism economy](#)" (A handbook for transitioning toward a circular economy within the tourism and hospitality sectors in the South Baltic Region)
- [Module 2: Circular Economy and Tourism - Circulartourism](#)
- [Turismo ed economia circolare - Starting4](#) (in Italian only)

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- [Circular Economy: Integrating Circular Economy Principles in Tourism \(unwto.org\)](https://www.unwto.org/circular-economy-integrating-circular-economy-principles-in-tourism)
UNWTO is supporting the shift towards a circular economy in tourism value chains through plastics within the framework of the [Global Tourism Plastics Initiative](#), and through food within the framework of the [Global Roadmap for Food Waste Reduction in the Tourism Sector](#)
- [Tools and Resources | One Planet network](#) : a repository of tools and resources aims at supporting the tourism stakeholders to advance circular economy in tourism

Standards and reporting

Standards that are specific for circular economic practices within the tourism sector, especially within accommodation, hotel restaurants and spa facilities, do not exist yet. But there are many tourism industry standards for hotels concerning sustainable tourism.

EXAMPLES: ISO and GSTC-recognized standards, BS and ETIS


ISO/TS 13811:2015 provides guidelines for developing specifications aimed at reducing the negative impacts and increasing the positive impacts of accommodation establishments on the environment. ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies. Each ISO standard is described in collaboration with interest groups through a technical committee within a specific field. A series of different approval criteria are set up as part of the ISO standard process. The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) has contributed to the development of an accommodation standard. See: <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:ts:13811:ed1:v1:en>

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) has also set up a series of standards for sustainable tourism targeting hotels and tour operators. These sustainability criteria were created to provide a common understanding throughout the world of “sustainable tourism” and are the minimum that any tourism business should aspire to reach. They are organized around four main pillars: sustainable management, socio economic impacts, cultural impacts, Environmental impacts (including consumption of resources, reducing pollution, and conserving biodiversity and landscapes). There are two sets of criteria, one that concerns the industry as such and another that focuses on the destination as a whole. See: <https://www.gstccouncil.org/gstc-criteria>

Another example of a set of common standards is the European Tourism Indicator System, ETIS. The European Commission launched ETIS in 2013 with the aim of helping destinations to monitor and measure their sustainable tourism performance by using a common comparable approach.

(Source: [Destination: A circular tourism economy](#) - A handbook for transitioning toward a circular economy within the tourism and hospitality sectors in the South Baltic Region, 2019)

Tourism companies including SMEs, can use the EU [Eco-Management and Audit Scheme \(EMAS\)](#) to evaluate, report, and improve their environmental performance in a systematic and transparent way. Tourist accommodations, including SMEs can apply for the EU Ecolabel, the European Union label of environmental excellence or another EN ISO 14024

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type I ecolabel or equivalent voluntary labels, which are independent, multi-criteria based and third-party verified.

Overview of tech-savvy SMEs that develop/offer solutions to increase circularity in the sector

Aworld : <https://aworld.org/> This startup, officially supported by the U.N. to spread the knowledge of SDGs, developed a unique personal footprint calculator to determine where you are in your sustainability journey and give you personal and actionable tips to meet your goals; it can be used by individuals and by organisations to enhance the engagement and develop virtuous daily practices: AWorld allows any organisation to engage its stakeholders and make them a part of the transition, aligning them to ESG and NetZero strategy and unlocking the power of the organization to fight climate change.

Many examples of tech-savvy solutions can be found in the World Tourism Organisation (an Agency of UN) website: [Tools and Resources | One Planet network](#)

Other ideas:


[Venturis HoReCa: repurposing waste resources for the hospitality industry | European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform \(europa.eu\)](#)

Links to sector specific online contents, including sector specific funding opportunities

(will be updated during the Up2Circ project)

- [First transition pathway for tourism \(europa.eu\)](#)
- World Tourism Organisation [Baseline Report on the Integration of Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns into Tourism Policies | World Tourism Organization \(e-unwto.org\)](#) and
- [Tools and Resources | One Planet network](#)
- Stakeholder Consultation Report [DocsRoom - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)
- Tourism business portal: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/business-portal_en

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This site can be used as a source of reference for all relevant topics related to the industry including; running a business, sourcing potential clients, finance, expanding into international markets and finding and using the digital tools needed to take your business further.

[Tools and Resources | One Planet network](#)

This repository of tools and resources aims at supporting the tourism stakeholders to advance circular economy in tourism.

The tools and resources repository includes:

- Guidelines and manuals
- Examples of projects from the sector
- Examples of solutions from the sector

Eltis Urban mobility observatory: <https://www.eltis.org/>

Circular Economy Stakeholder platform: <https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/>

EU Food Loss and Waste prevention hub: [EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/eu-portal/footer/external_links/eu_platform_on_food_losses_and_food_waste)

Tourism business portal: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/business-portal_en

Guidelines:

Handbook "[Destination: A circular tourism economy](#)" (A handbook for transitioning toward a circular economy within the tourism and hospitality sectors in the South Baltic Region – Cirtoinno project) and


[Final-Cirtoinno-handbook CRT.pdf](#)

GenTour project: <https://circulartourism.eu/>

[Increasing the Circularity of Hotel Textiles | One Planet network](#) (A guidebook that analyses the use of textiles in hotels in Copenhagen and proposes solutions to increase the circularity of textiles. It was developed as part of the local URBAN-WASTE initiative in Copenhagen)

[Rainwater and grey water recycling | One Planet network](#) "Best Environmental Management Practice in Tourism Sector - 5.7 Rainwater and grey water recycling"

[Circular Economy in Travel and Tourism - White Paper | One Planet network](#) The white paper Circular Economy in Travel and Tourism, explores how Circular Economy principles could guide a more sustainable, resilient and future-proof tourism development in line with the UNWTO One Planet Vision

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[Circularity in the hotel industry and competitiveness: a manual for implementing good practices | One Planet network](#)

[Circular Economy in Tourism in South East Europe | One Planet network](#) The paper presents circular business opportunities that might be applied in the tourism sector along the value chain and gives a review of some good practices. Topics covered include supply chain management in tourism, circular practices in tourism as a contributor to sustainable cities, sustainable waste management, challenges and opportunities for circular economy in tourism and technology trends of the future of travelling.

Projects

[Home - Circulartourism](#) The project also provides a database of Best Practices: [Database of best practices - Circulartourism](#)

Cirtoinno: Interreg South Baltic innovation project [Cirtoinno – Circular Economy Tools to Support Innovation in Green and Blue Tourism SMEs](#)

Reports

Booking.com Sustainable Travel Report 2022, downloadable from [Media Library \(booking.com\)](#)

The Report survey indicates that travelers are selecting planet-first options and looking to brands for sustainable choices and more purposeful travel

A guide for the Green Touris: [ecobnb.it](#) :

[Come Sostenere l'Economia Circolare quando Viaggi - la Guida di Ecobnb](#) (in Italian only)

[Experiences-and-Recommendations-of-the-CIRTOINNO-project_final.pdf \(crt.dk\)](#)

[Circular Economy in Travel and Tourism – a conceptual framework for a sustainable, resilient and future proof industry transition \(unwto.org\)](#)

[Circular Economy in Travel and Tourism - White Paper | One Planet network](#)