

Interreg Europe DETOCS Project

Decarbonising the EU's tourism sector

The EU must decarbonise its economy by 2050 out of necessity for climate change mitigation and adaptation. In parallel, the EU requires to increase its energy security, self-sufficiency and competitiveness, with the current energy crisis further exacerbating the situation, and the prices of fuels and electricity increasingly threatening the viability and profitability of Europe's tourism infrastructure.

Furthermore, as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic and its subsequent lockdowns and travel restrictions, Europe's tourism infrastructure has seriously declined – a situation now further exacerbated due to the severe energy crisis. The recovery of the tourism sector is necessary and crucial, now more than ever in its vulnerable state, as the tourism industry is highly valuable to the European economy.

Why DETOCS?

The recently approved Interreg Europe project, **DETOCS – DEcarbonising the TOURism Industry Post Covid-19 Support** – aims to support the recovery of EU tourism infrastructure sector following the Covid-19 pandemic, amidst the energy crisis, in a sustainable and low carbon way. In doing so, DETOCS complies with EU long-term policies for the decarbonisation of the economy.

During the project implementation, good practices for sustainable tourism will be identified and exchanged amongst partner regions in Slovenia, Greece, Malta, Finland, Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary and the Netherlands; meanwhile, project partners will aim to improve related policy in their regions through capacity building in the participating regions and the adoption of policies proven to be successful in other regions.

DETOCS contributes to EU Cohesion Policy, and specifically to the "Policy Objective 2 (PO2): A greener, low-carbon Europe", as it promotes clean and sustainable energy transition of tourism infrastructure. The four-year DETOCS project has a total budget of € 1,980,883.00, with € 1,567,416.40 provided by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).



Inside this issue

Project Background.....	1
Meet the Partners	2-4
Contact	4

Upcoming News

Check out our [project animation](#), now available online

Next partner meeting to take place on 8-9 November 2023 in Seinäjoki, Finland

Project Budget

Total Budget:	€1,980,883.00
ERDF Funding:	€1,567,416.40

Timeline

01 March 2023 – 31 May 2027



Co-funded by
the European Union



Interreg Europe DETOCS
Project



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DETOCS



Meet the Partners

The DETOCS project consortium consists of 13 project partners and 1 advisory partner from 9 different European countries. For this first edition of the DETOCS newsletter, we invite you to take a journey with us across Europe to meet our project partners:

Slovenia

The DETOCS project is lead by the **Local energy agency Spodnje Podravje (LEASP)**, located in the municipality of Ptuj (northeast Slovenia). Ptuj is the oldest town in Slovenia and is known for its historical and cultural heritage, attracting tourists due to its charming old town, well-preserved architecture, and various cultural and recreational activities. By 2022, a significant portion of Ptuj's public buildings had undergone energy renovations,

but the tourist infrastructure has lagged behind. To address this, LEASP is directing efforts toward enhancing the Local Energy Concept for the Ptuj City Municipality—the bedrock of the local energy policy strategy.

Given tourism's pivotal role in the Ptuj City Municipality, the DETOCS project presents a great opportunity to introduce fresh energy efficiency initiatives and to integrate renewable energy resources into the policy framework. Through the exchange of best practices, alongside SWOT and PESTEL analyses, novel insights will help develop a reservoir of knowledge to refine the policy instrument and its implementation, steering Ptuj's tourist infrastructure toward increased sustainability.

In order to promote the achievement of a climate-neutral Europe by 2050, the targeted policies [of the DETOCS project] will contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through new investments in energy efficiency, energy-saving schemes and sustainable renewable energy — as set in Directive (EU) 2018/2001.

Stakeholders' Meetings

Since the official project start date in March 2023, most project partners have hosted their first regional stakeholders' meetings, during which various key players in both the public and private sector gathered to:

- Introduce DETOCS;
- Identify political, economic, legal, social, natural and technological challenges and problems hindering the decarbonisation of the tourism sector;
- Identify any existing good practices in the region.

These regional stakeholder meetings allow for the valuable input of various stakeholders to be integrated into the project outcomes, ensuring the longevity of the DETOCS project.

Greece

The region of Crete in Greece is a great tourism destination with many, energy intensive accommodation facilities. Decarbonisation of tourism is therefore necessary to reduce energy cost and increase energy efficiency and competitiveness. For this purpose, two Cretan partners, **Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (CIHEAM MAICh)**, as the technical partner, and the **Region of Crete**, as the policy maker authority, will work together for the implementation of DETOCS project. At the beginning of the project both partners will map the situation in Crete developing a SWOT/ PESTEL analysis cooperating with the regional stakeholders.



Exemplar policies and good practices in Crete will be subsequently identified regarding the promotion of energy efficiency and the use of green energy technologies in tourism. The partners will visit innovative installations of green technologies in Cretan hotels together with the regional stakeholders. Throughout this process, the Cretan partners will be supported by partners from Northern and western EU countries that are more developed in the decarbonisation of their tourism industry.

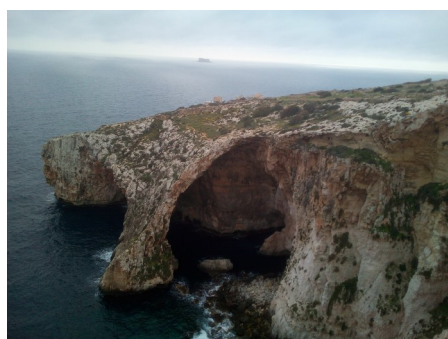
Malta

The **University of Malta** and the **Ministry for Tourism** are working together to involve different stakeholders from the tourism industry, experts and NGOs in order to provide a holistic approach to the decarbonisation process in the tourism sector.

The **Ministry for Tourism** is responsible for the tourism sector on a holistic level, for the maintenance and upkeep of tourist places, for education within this sector, the film industry, and sanitation. The Ministry is responsible for various projects, mainly regeneration projects of tourist areas, and aspires to continue strengthening the tourism sector, which is crucial for the Maltese economy. The **Institute for Sustainable Energy and the Department of Public Policy** of the University of Malta will analyse



Valletta is the capital city of Malta – a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was ruled successively by the Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs and the Order of the Knights of St John. Valletta's 320 monuments make it one of the most concentrated historic areas in the world. (Photo Credits: Malta Tourism Authority / VisitMalta)



Pictured above: Blue Grotto, Zurrieq, Malta - Natural Cave in the sea visited by around 100,000 tourists every year (Photo Credits: Charles Yousif)

existing policies and actions pertaining to carbon reduction in the tourism sector; following, together with the Ministry for Tourism, the University will involve different stakeholders from the tourism industry, experts and NGOs in order to provide a holistic approach to the decarbonisation process within the tourism sector. The University of Malta will then identify and share good practices that have significantly made an impact on the CO₂ reduction in tourist-related activities and finally propose and facilitate the implementation of policy measures and initiatives that will have a strong and long-lasting impact on the decarbonisation of the tourism sector.

In this regard, the University will leverage the potential of learning from other partner regions and equally share all outcomes with the partners and the general public; meanwhile, the Ministry will focus further on the transferring of knowledge to and from other partners, enhancing cooperation with policy responsible entities and exploring opportu-

nities for longer term cooperation beyond the lifetime of the project. The Ministry will also coordinate with its own entities, such as the Malta Tourism Authority, to further enhance the outcome of the project.

Finland

Thermopolis Ltd. is the Energy Agency of the South Ostrobothnia, a region in western Finland. Thermopolis Ltd has several tasks in the field of energy counselling and regional development, including providing energy counselling to municipalities, inhabitants and companies in South Ostrobothnia, Ostrobothnia and Central Ostrobothnia. Thermopolis is part of a national public procurement knowledge network and implements various energy and sustainable development projects in cooperation with companies and public authorities.



(Photo Credits: Jukka Risikko)

In DETOCS, Thermopolis Ltd is supporting the **Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia (RCSO)** in identifying relevant improvements to achieve emission reductions in the tourism sector to be included in the improved Regional Strategy. RCSO's tasks in-

Kick-off Meeting in Ptuj

On the 8th-9th of May 2023, the Interreg Europe DETOCS project consortium convened in Ptuj, Slovenia for the official kick-off meeting and first Exchange of Experiences event of the project, hosted by Local Energy Agency Spodnje Podravje (LEASP). During the Exchange of Experience Event, held on May 9th, DETOCS partners and their invited external regional stakeholders engaged in a series of workshops and subsequent networking event centred on existing examples and good practices within the realm of decarbonisation specifically related to the tourism industry post-Covid-19.



Exchange of Experience Event in Seinäjoki

From the 8th-9th November 2023, the DETOCS project is organising an exchange of experiences event followed by a Steering Committee meeting in Seinäjoki, Finland. The event includes site visits to the Kuortane Olympic center, which has the target to achieve carbon neutrality by 2027, and a presentation of energy efficient systems in the Hotel Alma and Kalevan Navetta. Participants will also learn about the virtual tourism projects of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences. Finally, regional partners will present findings from the PESTEL and SWOT analyses.



SWOT and PESTEL Analyses

One of the first DETOCS activities will be a preparation of templates for the PESTEL and SWOT analysis (i.e., frameworks used to analyse and monitor the macro-environmental factors for a given partner region) by each regional partner. The analyses will be prepared in collaboration between the project partners and the advisory partner, the **European Institute for Innovation - Technology (Efi-Tech)**, in order to identify and closely analyse the policy instruments addressed as well as other policies and instruments relevant for the decarbonisation of the tourism sector. For the PESTEL and SWOT analysis partners will, as part of the first stakeholders' meeting, organise a brainstorming session on current regional policies that are supporting the tourism sector in respect to their decarbonisation path. From here, good practice examples can be identified and support can be provided to weaknesses of policy instruments.

clude regional development and planning, and the council is formed by the 18 member municipalities of the region. RCSO is also owner of the regional programme of South Ostrobothnia 2022-2025, where "Wellbeing and Lifestyle Economy" plays an increasing role. This theme has the goal of increasing the visibility of tourism destinations in South Ostrobothnia, strengthening the operating environment of the tourism sector, and investing in the internationalisation, sustainability, and responsibility of the region's tourism and in the digitalisation of the customer journey.

Italy

Joining DETOCS from Italy, the **Municipality of Campobasso** is carrying out the interventions already identified in the strategic plan approved by the regional operational programme of the Molise region in the tourism sector, which points on the development of the cultural sector and on the promotion of the tourism also using the new energy efficiency technologies. These can only be achieved (beside other interventions) with transferring of good practices from DETOCS on energy efficiency in tourist infrastructure and measures that support tourism sector in lowering their greenhouse gas emissions.

Bulgaria



The **Regional Energy Agency of Pazardzhik (REAP)** is an association of local authorities from Pazardzhik province (pictured above). It was established under the Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE) Programme with the support of the Pazardzhik Regional Administration in 2005. The Agency offers support to local and regional authorities in achieving their objectives and strategic planning for the development of sustainable projects and initiative.

Throughout the DETOCS project, REAP participates as a technical partner, guiding the Bulgarian policy owner, the **Burgas Municipality**, on identification and integration of best EU practices related to energy efficiency (EE) and renewable energy sources (RES) deployment in the touristic sector, and how these best practices can be integrated into the local policy instrument and improve the

local programme. The Burgas Municipality is the largest municipality in southeastern Bulgaria on an area of 514,362 hectares, representing 0.43% of the country. The Municipality consists of 13 compound settlements - the city of Burgas, Balgarovo and 11 villages. Burgas Municipality is one of the biggest and one of the most popular tourism destinations for Bulgarians as well as international tourists with its seaside resorts, or its salt flats (pictured below).



Hungary

The primary goals of the **Central Danube Development Agency Nonprofit Ltd. (CDDA)** in Hungary, in addition to the performance of the work organisation tasks of the Central Danube Development Council, are to provide counselling to the municipalities of the area, to strengthen business and cultural relations and to provide publicity about the developments and innovations in the Area. Participation in the DETOCS project serves to achieve the objectives set out in the Operative Program (OP) – such as "The innovation and implementation of environmentally friendly (green) developments" – encouraging the use of renewable energy sources. The energy efficiency in tourism infrastructures is essential for the development of the regional tourism which is also among the main goals of the OP.

Taking part in the DETOCS project, CDDA can gain experience in new energy efficiency and renewable energy-related projects, receives more information of best practices of other EU countries, especially in relation to hotels, thermal baths and monumental buildings in the tourism sector. Stakehold-



Pictured above: Dám Pont Látogatóközpont in Hungary

ers in the project are: Hungarian Baths Association, Hungarian Hotel & Restaurant Association, Hungarian HealthTourism Association, Fejér County, Bács-Kiskun County, Tolna County, Municipality of Tamási, Municipality of Szekszárd, Municipality of Kalocsa, Körösszolg Non-profit Ltd. representing the Municipality of Kiskőrös, Aquapark Szekszárd, Jankovich Hotel (*Green Hotel Award* winner).

The Netherlands

The **Municipality of Middelburg** is the capital city of the Province of Zeeland and centrally located on the isle of Wal-



cheren in the South of the Netherlands. Tourism is a very important economic driver for Zeeland and especially for the city of Middelburg with 50,000 inhabitants. Maintaining an attractive, sustainable and lively city center is a priority. The historic city center has more than 1,100 listed buildings — including the *Het Packhuys* (pictured), which has both historical significance and a commercial function.

As most tourism and hospitality services and businesses are located in monumental or traditional buildings, Middelburg aims to find a balance between technical energy solutions, energy efficiency and preserving the historical authenticity. Together with local businesses involved, the city must identify long-term affordable solutions to accelerate the energy transition for the tourism sector. The Municipality of Middelburg will provide DETOCS stakeholders with the necessary technical information and adapt the policy instrument the “Touristic Action Plan for Middelburg 2021- 2030” with the focus on CO₂ reduction, circular economy & climate adaptation.

By the end of the DETOCS project, Middelburg will develop an integrated climate strategy and a roadmap for climate neutral tourism with the focus on CO₂ reduction in historical surroundings, as well as explore the various possibilities for virtual tourism.



Role of the Advisory Partner

In addition to the 13 project partners of the project, the DETOCS project invites 1 advisory partner—the **European Institute for Innovation - Technology (Elfi-Tech)**— to support the partners in project communication & dissemination. Additionally, Elfi-Tech supports the partnership in designing, promoting partners’ engagement in, implementing, and monitoring project activities — including the SWOT and PESTEL regional analyses.

Contact

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Project Partnership



GREEN

Local energy agency Spodnje Podravje (SI) - Lead Partner

Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (CIHEAM MAICH) (EL)

Region of Crete (EL)

Univeristy of Malta (MT)

Ministry for Tourism (MT)

Thermopolis Ltd (FI)

Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia (FI)

Municipality of Campobasso (IT)

Regional Energy Agency - Pazardjik (BG)

Burgas Municipality (BG)

Central Danube Development Agency Nonprofit Ltd. (HU)

Middelburg Municipality (NL)

The European Institute for Innovation-Technology (DE)



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