

**Interreg
Europe**



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DETOCS

DEcarbonising the TOurism Industry Post Covid-19 Support

Minutes of the event:

Exchange of experiences event with SG meeting

May 15 and 16, 2024

Location: The Waterfront Hotel, Sliema, Malta

AGENDA

Day 1, Wednesday 15.5.2024, Site visits, Weaknesses and open forum

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|----------------------|---|
| 8.30 – 9.00 | Registration and Coffee |
| 9.00 – 9.15 | Welcome Speeches Introduction to the project (UM) |
| 9.15– 9.45 | Overview of the Thematic Survey Results, Ing Krista Rizzo (UM). This is the outcome of the Eisenhower Matrix analysis of all partner regions condensed in one presentation. |
| 9.45 – 11.05 | Partners' presentations on Two Priority Weaknesses identified in every region for Experience Sharing in Group Discussion (10 minutes for each partner) |
| 11.05 – 11.30 | Networking Coffee Break |
| 11.30 – 12.30 | Group Discussion (4 groups – 2 partners per group) Questions: Which weaknesses identified in your group struck you most and why? Do you suggest any solutions? (partners and stakeholders can suggest solutions to other partners based on their experience – peer support. A list of weaknesses will be distributed |
| 12.30 – 13.00 | Feedback from groups and Conclusion |
| 13.00 – 14.00 | Networking lunch |
| 14.00 - 14.30 | Free time |
| 14.30 – 18.00 | Study visits (Visits to small, medium and large tourist establishments) Mulberries Chateau (Zabbar) – Small Hotel Hilton Malta (St Julian's) – Large Hotel Embassy Hotel (Valletta) – Medium-sized Hotel |
| 18.00 – 19.00 | Boat trip to Historical City Birgu (Vittoriosa) Visit to the Energy Efficient Maritime Museum |
| 19.00 – 21.00 | Project Dinner - 18th Century Corsair Dinner using local produce and ancient recipes. (Courtesy of the Malta Tourism Authority) |

Day 2, Thursday 16.5.2024**Solutions, Steering Group Meeting and invited stakeholders**

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|----------------------|--|
| 10.00 – 11.20 | Partner sharing of possible solutions from each region <i>Content: Each partner briefly presents two additional solutions from their region's final SWOT analysis (5 minutes per solution). Focus on showcasing potential good practices.</i> |
| 11.20 – 11.50 | Coffee break |
| 11.50 – 12.00 | Presentation by Elfl-Tech on Identifying Good Practice <i>Content: Elfl-Tech provides guidance on the criteria of a Good Practice. List of questions that will help the groups identify the good practices for presentation in Crete during the third semester.</i> |
| 12.00 -12.20 | Reporting procedures and finances - LEASP |
| 12.20 – 12.30 | Communication activities – Elfl-Tech |
| 12.30 – 13.00 | Open discussion and planning for the next Experience Exchange event in Crete |
| 13.00 – 14.00 | Lunch |

1. Introduction

The third exchange of experiences event for the DETOCS project was held in Sliema, Malta, on May 15th and 16th, 2024, bringing together DETOCS partners and a diverse group of stakeholders from all regions. The primary aim was to address key weaknesses within DETOCS regions concerning energy sustainability in the tourism sector. The agenda was centred around identifying weaknesses, sharing insights from a joint thematic survey, and engaging in dialogue to explore solutions. Additionally, participants embarked on study visits to hotels in Malta, offering firsthand insights into the implementation of various energy efficiency measures.

On the second day of the meeting, partners and stakeholders shifted their focus to discussing potential good practices and providing a platform for partners to showcase successful initiatives. The gathering concluded with detailed discussions covering project implementation, reporting, communication, and management during the steering group meeting.

2. Welcome by hosting partners and introduction of the project by University of Malta

The Exchange of Experiences event began with a warm welcome from Mr. Brian Borg, Assistant Director from the Ministry for Tourism and Public Cleanliness and Prof. Ing. Charles Yousif of the University of Malta. Prof. Yousif greeted everyone, setting a friendly atmosphere. He presented the DETOCS project, explaining its goals and the topics being discussed during two-day event. Prof. Yousif stressed how working together and sharing knowledge can help address tourism challenges.

3. Overview of the Thematic Survey Results

The first presentation of the day was delivered by Ing. Krista Rizzo, Project Support Officer from the University of Malta. She provided a comprehensive overview of the joint thematic survey results. These findings are derived from the application of the Eisenhower Matrix to data collected from all partner regions. The presentation distilled this analysis into a clear and accessible format, emphasising key insights, trends, and strategic priorities identified across various regions, including similarities and peculiarities for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Some of the threats identified were high costs such as the maintenance of older buildings with retrofitting challenges, the limitations of availabilities of financial incentives/schemes, bureaucracy in the economic tourism sector, limited geographical spaces with a high population demand, lack of coordination/information sharing and decision-making processes, resistance to change, waste separation, lack of digital expertise as well as guest behaviours and their respective preferences. On the other hand, there were many new opportunities for green technologies. These included smart heating, solar energy, spatial planning, solar cities

with PV systems as well as a necessary change in the energy use – resulting into energy efficient buildings.

4. Partners' Presentations on Key Weaknesses

Partners presented two priority weaknesses. Each partner was asked to briefly outline their most urgent and important weaknesses, identified in collaboration with their stakeholder groups and deemed most relevant to be addressed by the DETOCS project. These presentations aimed to provide a clear understanding of the key challenges faced by each region and to facilitate a focused discussion on potential solutions. Dr Anne Marie Thake presented the two weaknesses for Malta.

5. Group Discussion

After partners and stakeholders learned about the weaknesses from different regions, they were divided into four groups to discuss these weaknesses and explore possible solutions.

The four group discussions focused on the following points:

1. Which weaknesses identified in your group struck you most and why?
2. Do you suggest any solutions? (partners and stakeholders can suggest solutions to other partners based on their experience)

Division in groups:

Group 1:

- i. South Ostrobothnia, Finland
 - Lack of digital skills in SMEs
 - The insufficient availability of work force.
- ii. Campobasso, Italy
 - Public transportation with limitations in infrastructure and lack in transportation options leading to private use transportation.
 - Energy efficiency bureaucracy about communities and installation of renewable energy sources on accommodation facilities. This could also lead to infrastructure challenge.

Weaknesses:

- The working group discussed in detail how excessive bureaucratic and analytic procedures tend to limit the interventions that are permitted in historical buildings. Whereas the historical value of sites needs to be respected in entirety,

it is also highly important to optimize the right intervention levels to address decarbonization objectives.

- Campobasso spoke about lack of urban spatial planning and this weakness was shared by most of the other partners within the working group.
- The working group discussed how the concept of innovation at times does not translate into practical ideas at the business level. Efforts need to be undertaken to assess the tourism chain and to identify more practical solutions aimed towards tangible decarbonization targets.
- A thorough discussion was undertaken on the importance of training techniques which focus on decarbonization practices. The working group identified that training on sustainable tourism needs to be further supported.
- The working group identified that the industry lacks the creation of good green job opportunities. Businesses need to engage in better planning and in the implementation of effective green job solutions.
- Netherlands highlighted that there is a general lack of technical workforce who is effectively able to implement technical solutions in support of decarbonization.

Potential solutions or similar experiences:

- The working group identified that the tourism industry requires better monitoring techniques which act as a fundamental platform to address numerous gaps in relation to decarbonization milestones.
- Finland proposed the introduction of free carbon calculators that need to be tailored to help the sector with proper measurement of carbon footprint within the value chain.
- Measurable and tangible indicators are key to measure sustainable development within the tourism sector. Companies in Finland make use of numerous measurable indicators to monitor their operations.
- Netherlands focused on a critical demarcation between the impacts generated by tourists and the impacts generated by visitors within their municipality. Netherlands receives high influxes of tourists which translate into visitors when they visit certain municipalities. Tourists stay at least on night within the destination whereas visitors do not stopover within the locality/destination. Visitors are at times considered to have higher implications on the locality notwithstanding their short stay. In view of this, proper investment in data collection especially on flows of tourism and visitors are highly important and proposed visitor management techniques need to be formulated while respecting carrying capacity levels.
- Campobasso spoke about the importance of CSR initiatives. An example was shared as a best practice within the group. The example focused on giving the energy to the community by having different companies investing in renewables and rather than keeping it all for themselves, they would distribute back to communities.

Group 2:

- i. Crete, Greece
 - Insufficient interest of hotels' owners and managers to mitigate and adapt their enterprises to climate change.
 - Insufficient availability of the necessary workforce and experts in low carbon energy technologies in Crete.
- ii. Burgas, Bulgaria
 - Lack of initiatives which aim at increasing awareness and understanding the importance of using sustainable RES by touristic sites.
 - The sector needs more training and capacity building activities. Professional guides and tour guides should be trained in the field of environmental and sustainable tourism.

Discussion

Since the first two weaknesses for Crete and Bulgaria were similar challenges and potential solutions they were collectively discussed

- Insufficient interest of hotels' owners and managers to mitigate and adapt their enterprises to climate change.
- Lack of initiatives which aim at increasing awareness and understanding the importance of using sustainable RES by touristic sites.

Solutions and Initiatives

Malta Chamber of Commerce's Approach:

The Malta Chamber of Commerce is part of the Enterprise Europe Network (ENN) & they provide grants for SMEs such as the E-energy grant (approximately €10k, making a 5% difference). The way they have tackled increasing awareness and interest is by:

- Contacting SMEs directly
 - Continuous engagement with SMEs, not just a one-time effort.
- Training and Education Emphasis:
 - Educating SMEs on how CO2 emissions link to business profits and showing how changes can result in financial savings and increased profits.
 - Using the energy efficiency grant to balance the ROI (Return on Investment).
 - Helping SMEs understand the relationship between energy consumption and extreme weather events.
 - Providing training and education to hotel and guest house operators to highlight the connection between CO2 emissions and their business operations.

Hand-Holding Approach:

- Offering ongoing support and making applications simple and straightforward.

Challenges in Renovations for SMEs benefiting from Grants:

A challenge encountered is that in peak season it is difficult to stop operations to conduct renovations. Even if the funds are available through grants. Especially for smaller operators it is more difficult, they cannot shut down parts of the business.

Proposed Solution:

Two independent guest houses can come to an agreement to transfer guests to each other during their renovation periods.

There was also a suggestion that loss of business to conduct a renovation should be covered by the fund

Other Points discussed around these weaknesses:

- Energy audits can provide financial benefits, and in Malta for non-SMEs, energy audits are compulsory for enterprises with over 250 employees.
- Encourage Sharing knowledge by business operators because they believe that what they are implementing is working
- Monitoring of savings and using this to promote energy-efficient practices to other businesses.
- Oblige businesses who benefit from grants to educate others, explain about the technologies implemented and promote them by highlighting the savings and improvements.
- Energy co-operatives – for those lacking roof space

Since the second two weaknesses for Crete and Bulgaria were similar challenges and potential solutions were also collectively discussed

- Insufficient availability of the necessary workforce and experts in low carbon energy technologies in Crete.
- The sector needs more training and capacity building activities. Professional guides and tour guides should be trained in the field of environmental and sustainable tourism.

Group 3 (led by Dr. Anne Marie Thake):

- i. Malta
 - Insufficient interest/support from the corporate sector in view of high costs and limited take-up from companies.
 - Lack of wide-spread technical expertise in IT-related sustainable technologies.
- ii. Central Danube, Hungary

- Old buildings and outdated building services that can lead to high-cost emissions, energy costs as well as having the challenge of buildings under monumental protection.
- Failure to train staff after renovation has been carried out.

1. Old buildings and outdated building services that can lead to high-cost emissions, energy costs as well as having the challenge of buildings under monumental protection.

Weaknesses:

- Old city centres are usually very busy, full of business activities and full of tourists all year round.
- Very difficult to incorporate energy efficient technologies due to old structures resulting in building engineering constraints.
- Physical limitations to transform old buildings into zero energy buildings.
- No solar panels are allowed to be installed on the roofs or on the facades.
- Roofs lack adequate space.
- PV structures themselves create an eyesore.

Solutions:

- Improving the energy performance of buildings by installing heat pumps (heating and cooling).
- Flexibility of use. Encourage the use of certain buildings in order to make their operations more energy efficient.
- Better EU funding schemes for renovation projects.
- Sponsorship agreements.
- Innovative green financing and green loans.
- Capital costs spread over a number of years.
- More investments as regards the installation of PV systems in other areas outside the city centre.
- Community PV projects and public private partnerships.
- Capping visitors at historical buildings, especially in certain peak hours.

2. Failure to train staff after renovation;

Weaknesses:

- Most staff do not have the knowhow to run the equipment efficiently, after renovation.

Solutions:

- Struck a deal with energy servicing companies, who have the ability and experience in the sector.
- Service companies are able to spread the initial capital costs over a period of years.
- Service providers should train the personnel in charge of running the equipment.

- More digitalised and online training courses for personnel.

Malta

1. Insufficient interest/support from the corporate sector to accelerate the implementation of policy goals towards decarbonisation.

Weaknesses:

- Lack of awareness on the impact of climate change on the country.

Solutions:

- Introduction of a system of rewards rather than penalties. For example, tax rebates.
- Provide training of personnel and technical support.
- Increase education and local awareness, through educational campaigns.
- A vigorous climate change impact assessment.
- Better funding schemes.

2. Lack of technical expertise in IT-related sustainable technologies within the tourism sector for decarbonisation initiatives.

Weaknesses:

- Small country with a large tourism sector.
- Workforce that lacks basic IT skills.
- Unsuitable financial support.

Solutions:

- Analysis of data. Dissemination of information through collaboration between various entities.
- The creation of a strong database incorporating modern innovative technologies.
- Knowledge share of good practices across the tourism industry.
- Replication of successful case studies in the sector.
- More collaboration between all stakeholders and other entities involved.
- Case study using AI technologies for improvements – reduction of food waste generated from the tourism industry. The food waste is constantly monitored and the data gathered is analysed, in order to save money and reduce waste.
- Accessibility to knowledge and useful information for the operators in the industry made easier.
- Better government/EU support schemes, financial aid structures and incentives to acquire the expertise.

Group 4:

- i. Middelburg, Netherlands
 - Limited access to innovation technologies for small business including the bureaucratic barriers
 - Insufficient focus on adapting infrastructure to future climate conditions
- ii. Ptuj, Slovenia
 - Older buildings and infrastructure (under heritage protection) in the tourist sector may lack compatibility with modern energy-efficient technologies, making it challenging and costly to retrofit existing structures.
 - Long and difficult administrative procedure (bureaucracy burden due to lot of documents needed for receiving support is sometimes too exhaustive and difficult for applicants)

Overall, the group discussion was based on the subject matter of the preservation of heritage buildings vis-a-vis high cost. The most important solutions that were flagged in all of the weaknesses identified were those around having a more pro-active approach of communication, interaction and promotion between different entities. All partners in the group agreed that there needs to be an effective communication and visibility of the existing work being carried out in view of energy savings and cost effectiveness. Thus this encourages to visualise success in the field of decarbonisation. Moreover, the need of implementing an effective manifest together in having established grants and subsidies could also facilitate the process of updating existing regulations in be in line with the requirements of the green transition as well as serve as a platform of reach to the general public.

Debriefing and Sharing of Discussions (All groups)

The Meeting convened by the respective groups identifying both the main important weaknesses and solutions of high priority. Some targeted the importance of one-stop shops in both public/private sectors, an effective communication with energy information contact points, energy consultants as well as relevant expertise. Others also saw the benefit of introducing energy audits and hotel feedback, being extended to distribution to other different hospitalities in their respective countries. Overall, all partners agreed on the need of having a mindset targeting the change in management methodologies for an effective sustainable energy-driven country.

6. Study visits

After lunch, the partners embarked on an engaging series of study visits. The first stop was at The Mulberries Wellbeing Chateau, a small-scale hotel known for its zero-waste materials construction, solar-thermal water heating system, intelligent water

management systems, and other environmental measures, which together encompass the energy, water, food and waste nexus.

The second stop was at Hilton Malta, a large scale hotel that also implements various environmental measures, the most notable being its efficient heating and cooling sea water system and intelligent Building Management System (BMS).

The third stop was in the old city of Valletta at The Embassy Valletta Hotel, a medium-sized hotel. Similar to the Hilton, it has integrated an efficient heating system, intelligent BMS, and water management system among other efforts. It has been granted the Green Key Certification.

The final visit included an energy efficient boat transport trip to Bormla and a visit to the energy efficient Maritime Museum that was recently renovated.

7. Partner Sharing of Solutions from Regions

On the second day, partners and invited stakeholders began by learning about potential solutions from various regions, which could become good practices. Each region presented two solutions, some of which were already recognized as good practice examples.

Burgas, Bulgaria

The partners presented their project of “Solar Cities” creating a process for implementing individual PV installations and at a later stage for other RES Projects. This project is located in a distinguished resort near the Black Sea.

Bulgaria Solution 1: Project SolarCities

Description:

Project SolarCities aims to support the energy transition of Burgas and Sofia by implementing measures to ease the decision-making process for individual photovoltaic (PV) installations and other renewable energy sources (RES) projects. This initiative focuses on:

- Introduction of RES technologies.
- Easing the decision-making process.
- Raising awareness about the potential of RES energy.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Results:

- Creation of an accurate, reliable tool for companies, citizens, and institutions to make informed decisions about RES installations.
- Development of a digital model of roofs to identify suitable spaces for PV installations.

- Establishment of a one-stop-shop energy office in Burgas for planning and implementing RES projects.

Applicability:

The project can be replicated in other urban and touristic regions to map solar energy potential on building roofs, thus addressing similar challenges and weaknesses.

Website for Reference: <https://burgas.solarcities.bg/>

Bulgaria Solution 2: Strategy for Sustainable Environmental Development of Albena Resort

Description:

Albena Resort implemented a new concept in 2017 focused on eco-friendly and environmental measures, managing the land, hotels, restaurants, bars, infrastructure, and beach.

- The resort comprises 30 hotels on the beach, effectively a small city with 10,000 beds.

Sustainable Practices:

- It is almost energy independent at the moment.
- Measures include an anaerobic installation for waste management.
- Utilizes only its own water sources, including mineral water springs underneath the property.
- Uses thermal water for heating.

Marketing and Promotion:

- Marketed heavily towards German tourists. Showcasing results to German tourists has led to increased patronage.
- Each room showcases energy use to promote awareness.
- Known as the "Greenest Resort on the Black Sea Coast."

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Results:

- More than 50% of energy obtained from RES, including:
 - 1.5 MW of roof PV installations.
 - 2 MW of biogas installations.
 - 1.5 MW of solar heat installations.
- Introduction of 14 boiler systems with automatic heat control.
- 600 kW thermal pump installation.
- Investment in electric vehicles since 2018, totalling more than €380K.
- Green parking initiatives and a ban on cars inside the resort.
- New solar installations for heating water, replacing conventional systems.

All measures are documented and available for review.

Applicability:

This approach can be replicated in other tourist sites and resorts that manage overall infrastructure, promoting integrated green tourism.

Campobasso

The partner's intervention was made on the priorities emanating from the Eisenhower Matrix Report. Campobasso put forward the use of e-bikes and e-scooters/vehicles free of charge in the respective city. Campobasso is also opting in promoting the awareness of the existing bureaucracy about energy communities and installation of renewable energy source on accommodation facilities.

Campobasso Solution 1: Management of Public Transport and Tourist Infrastructure

Challenges Addressed:

- Public transport management and tourist infrastructure improvements.

Implemented Solutions:

- Free supply of electric bikes and scooters for tourists.
- Facilitated supply of electric vehicles for tourists traveling to distant municipalities.
- Development of an Intermunicipal Urban Strategic Mobility Plan (PUMS) for the Campobasso area, including 14 small municipalities.

Key Achievements:

- Purchase of 20 electric bikes through the Dynamob2.0 project.
- Replacement of old buses with electric vehicles.
- Development of cycleways in the municipalities.
- Installation of electric vehicle charging systems.
- Renovation of the Campobasso terminal station to serve travellers better.

Campobasso Solution 2: Awareness and Bureaucracy about Energy Communities and Renewable Energy Sources

Challenges Addressed:

- Awareness and bureaucratic hurdles related to energy communities and the installation of renewable energy sources in accommodation facilities.

Implemented Solutions:

- Formation of Renewable Energy Communities to facilitate the use of renewable energy sources and bypass bureaucratic issues related to landscape constraints.
- Public administration making its renewable source plants available to energy communities to encourage their creation and expansion.
- Engagement with stakeholders to inform and support the establishment of energy communities.

Key Achievements:

- The first energy community in Molise initiated in Fossalto, with local businesses and citizens joining as members.
- Recognition by the GSE Energy Services Manager for the initiative.

Central Danube

The partner's focus was on quality profitable operation of spas and hotels. Central Danube is aiming at introducing the concept of a "green spa", targeting appropriate tenders for projects concerning old hotel buildings. Moreover, emphasis is also being made on training of staff after renovation and extending the external maintenance company.

Hungary Solution 1: Targeted Tenders for Spa and Hotel Services

Challenges Addressed:

- Energy tenders are often not tailored for tourism perspectives.
- Tenders need to integrate tourism services and energy developments to reduce CO2 emissions and improve energy efficiency.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Integration of tourism services and energy in one tender.
- Reduction in CO2 emissions.

Applicability:

- Customizable tenders for each EU country to address specific needs in tourism and energy sectors. Support schemes need to be tailor made for sector.

Hungary Solution 2: Appropriate Tenders for Old Hotel Buildings

Challenges Addressed:

- Outdated building services in old hotel buildings causing high CO2 emissions and operating costs.

- Tenders should subsidize comprehensive renovations including modern energy systems, efficient building engineering, and improved insulation.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Amount of fossil and renewable energy used.
- Energy cost savings.
- Flexibility and complexity of tenders.

Applicability:

- Relevant for old hotels in city centres across various regions.

Hungary Solution 3: Training and Maintenance Post-Renovation

Challenges Addressed:

- Lack of staff training on new equipment post-renovation.
- This reduces/negates the effectiveness of implemented measures

Potential Solutions:

- Short training sessions are needed for users (companies) after refurbishments. This is cheap compared to the investment to implement the equipment.
- Use of external maintenance companies could ensure efficiency of new systems.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Successful user training.
- Achievement of predicted energy savings.

Applicability:

- New technologies can be unfamiliar, therefore training and maintenance support are critical.

Crete

The partner's objective is to instigate the concept of financing clean energy investments where hotels can achieve stellar subsidies for the installations of clean energy technologies in their enterprises.

Challenges Addressed:

- Energy cost is a small fraction of total operating costs (around 4-10%), leading to low interest for hotel owners to embark on energy investments.
- Cash-flow difficulties and borrowing challenges from banks due to pandemic and economic crises in Greece.

- Lack of perceived importance of sustainability for development and profitability.
- Insufficient information and awareness about climate change impacts.

Potential Solutions:

- Increasing the use of solar energy and other sustainable technologies. Small to medium and medium to large hotels can net zero energy by combining PVs and heat pumps.
- Leveraging European structural funds and state subsidies for financing energy projects. State subsidy is approx. 40-50%.
- Promoting awareness and training for hotel owners and managers on the benefits of sustainable practices for them to be mobilised. An idea would be to oblige exchange of information by people who carried out such projects.

Malta

The Energy and Water Agency (EWA) presented “The Guest Project”, targeting energy efficiency particularly in guest houses. Furthermore, to make such operations of guesthouses more sustainable, EWA also introduced energy audits and aided in the implementation of any recommendations being taken in the accommodation sector.

The Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) made a presentation on the “Technical Support Instrument (TSI) Project” introducing a set of sustainable indicators namely those in waste separation, water and energy consumption, accommodation establishments, installation of solar/ PV capacity, renewable energy inventories.

Malta Solution 1: Guest Project

Purpose: To make the operation of guesthouses more sustainable through energy and water audits and implementing recommended improvements.

Participants: 28 guesthouses, with the majority being retrofits of houses of character and farmhouses, and 64% family-run.

Project Design:

- Developed in collaboration with guesthouses through focus groups.
- Simplified application process via an online form.
- Energy audits conducted at no cost by EWA (Energy & Water Agency).
- Provision of 'Welcome Packs' to guests promoting energy and water conservation.
- Single point of contact for communication and support throughout the project.

Findings:

- Common issues included lack of proper design, inadequate insulation, and misconceptions about energy use.
- Only 37% engaged a building services specialist, relying instead on salespersons and tradesmen.

A number of Best Practices uncovered and Improvement Opportunities which could result in up to 10% annual savings in electrical consumption were described. For example:

- Reducing flow on water faucets.
- Adjusting water heater temperatures.
- Limiting AC temperatures.
- Repairing or replacing deteriorated insulation on AC units.
- Painting roofs with solar reflective paint.

Guest Impact: Guests often exhibit careless energy and water usage, such as setting extreme AC temperatures and bypassing room key cards to keep ACs running.

Barriers to Investment:

- Limited time and technical knowledge among guesthouse owners.
- Restricted financial means and lack of awareness about available financial schemes.
- Bureaucratic processes and the potential loss of business during upgrades.

Ongoing Support and Future Plans

Continued Support:

- EWA provides ongoing support through dedicated phone and email contacts.
- Updates on financial aid and eco certification opportunities.

Future Events:

- An event for all guesthouses is planned for November 2024 to build on the outcomes of the GUEST Project.

Best Practice Sharing:

- Sharing of best practices on the Impawatt Energy Efficiency website as part of the 'EU Life EnergyEfficiency4SMEs' project.

Malta Solution 2: Overview of the Technical Support Instrument (TSI)

Objective:

- Enhance Malta's tourism sector through improved statistics and robust mechanisms for sustainability and digital advancements.

Key Stakeholders:

- Ministry for Tourism

- Malta Tourism Authority (MTA)
- National Statistics Office (NSO)
- EU Commission
- OECD

Major Milestones:

1. Assistance Granted: Malta secured assistance through TSI.
2. Request Approval: Approval of the request for technical support under the DG Reform initiative.
3. OECD Collaboration: Partnership with the OECD to strengthen tourism statistics and data compilation.

Sustainability Indicators:

- The OECD is aiding Malta in creating a system of indicators to measure and monitor the sustainability of tourism, ensuring long-term viability.
- These indicators will serve as benchmarks for Malta's progress towards sustainable tourism practices.
- The indicators will also inform policy decisions, helping to shape a sustainable future for Malta's tourism.

EU Commission and OECD Partnership: Provides guidance, expertise, and support to align Malta's tourism strategies with international best practices.

The sustainable indicators are based on 5 key policy issues:

1. Optimize tourism's contribution to Malta's economy
2. Target quality/valued visitors
3. Protect and enhance natural and cultural heritage
4. Foster community well-being
5. Promote a thriving workforce

Some examples of the indicators proposed, and the changes being considered for Renewable energy and waste & water management in the tourism sector were shown.

Middleburg, Netherlands

Partner's objective is to mark its innovation on the ground by extending its solar panel installation to rooftops, including those in monumental buildings.

Netherlands Solution 1: Practical Information and Hands-On Support

Challenges Addressed:

- Limited access to innovative technologies for small businesses.

- Bureaucratic barriers hindering implementation.

Implemented Solutions:

- Providing practical information and hands-on support to small businesses.
- Helping businesses navigate through bureaucratic processes to adopt new technologies.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Level of investment.
- Return on Investment (RoI) in years.
- Energy savings achieved.

Applicability:

- The solution is highly applicable to other regions to support small businesses in adopting sustainable practices.

Example of Innovation: Solar Panels as Rooftiles in Monumental Buildings

- Combining solar technology with traditional architectural aesthetics.
- Installing solar panels designed to look like traditional roof tiles, preserving the historical appearance of buildings while providing renewable energy.

Slovenia

This partner introduced 3D pro-virtual walks in its region. To the partner's viewpoint, this creates new opportunities for businesses in the tourism sector to showcase their offering to the general public. To Slovenia, this creates an ideal platform for the flourishing of culture tourism with key performance indicators. Slovenia is also aiming at introducing contact point RES free expert assistance with customer satisfaction. In turn, this shall create jobs as well as reducing substantive carbon emissions.

Slovenia Solution 1: 3Dpro - Virtual Walks

Description:

3Dpro, owned by the Institution of Mediapro, is a pioneering platform in Slovenia for 3D digitalization. It offers virtual walks, 3D scanning, drone filming, digital reconstructions, and VR/AR adaptations to showcase cultural heritage and tourism offerings. The platform allows for virtual tours of cultural sites, aiding in their preservation and making them accessible to a wider audience online.

Example: <https://3dpro.si/virtualni-sprehodi-3d-skeniranje-in-snemanje-z-droni-za-varstvo-kulturne-dediscine/>

Challenges:

- Lack of physical experience.
- Social isolation.
- Emotional connection.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Addressing physical accessibility limitations.
- Preservation of cultural heritage.
- Continuous evaluation and improvement.

Slovenia Solution 2: Contact Point RES

Description:

In collaboration with BORZEN d.d., a prominent Slovenian energy company, seven Local Energy Agencies in Slovenia have established a dedicated contact point to advance the use of renewable energy sources (RES). The office in Ptuj is set to open on June 6, 2024.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Customer satisfaction.
- Job creation.
- Reduction in carbon emissions.

Finland

Presented its "SeAMK Project" that aims towards improving digital skills in tourism businesses. The objectives of the project is to assist participants in redesigning their own websites and e-commerce facilities, improve search engine optimisation on their websites, promote the use of active social media as well as creating building online services.

Finland Solution 1: SeAMK Project - Improving Digital Skills in Tourism Businesses

Description:

The SeAMK project aimed to enhance the digital business skills of tourism entrepreneurs and their staff in South Ostrobothnia. Baseline tests were conducted initially to tailor the training to the participants' needs.

Challenges Addressed:

- Lack of digital skills in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Implemented Solutions:

- Redesigning websites and e-commerce platforms.
- Improving search engine optimization (SEO).
- Increased use of social media.
- Building online appointment services.
- Introducing analytical tools.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Improved digital presence and efficiency in business operations.

Applicability:

- The project can be transferred to other regions with minor modifications.

Finland Solution 2: SeAMK & Sedu Project - Participatory Multi-Professional Training Pathway

Description:

This project provided brief education and training to quickly integrate the workforce into the labour market. It aimed to enhance skills in the hospitality, catering, tourism, and events sectors, making these fields more attractive career options and retaining skilled labour.

Challenges Addressed:

- Availability of workforce.

Implemented Solutions:

- Wide participation in training programs, leading to increased employment.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Successful employment outcomes for participants.

Applicability:

- The training approach can be extended to other regions with minimal modifications to suit local needs.

8. Identifying Good Practice

After hearing about the solutions, participants listened to a presentation by Madeline Langlois from Elfi-Tech about good practices, including what they are and how to identify them. She provided detailed guidance on the criteria for determining a Good Practice. Additionally, she shared a list of questions designed to help the groups identify and evaluate good practices. This guidance will assist the groups in preparing their presentations for the upcoming meeting in Crete during the fourth semester.

Partners group photo



Day 1 Meeting



Group discussions on Day 1



Study visits



Day 2 Meeting

