Sustainable Tourism
Draft Action Plan Summary

**Version from 05 June 2024**

A. Executive Summary

The overarching goal of the Sustainable Tourism Partnership is **to advocate for sustainable tourism practices** by **raising awareness and educating stakeholders, citizens, and policymakers** about both its benefits and challenges. It aims to **capitalize on the economic, social, and environmental opportunities** presented by sustainable tourism to foster a **balanced and resilient recovery, promote inclusivity, and drive innovation.**

Moreover, it pays specific attention to supporting cities in implementing sustainable tourism practices and driving positive change at both local and EU levels. It identifies and tackles urban issues by fostering **collaborative processes** of co-creation and co-implementation among Member States, regions, cities, the European Institutions, and other stakeholders.

The Action Plan focuses on streamlining access to EU funding, promoting combined financing (Better Funding), enhancing the knowledge base on urban issues, and facilitating the exchange of best practices (Better Knowledge).

The Sustainable Tourism Partnership is composed of **29 members, including 9 cities, 3 regions, and one national authority.** It was approved in October 2022, started its work in December of the same year, and is expected to implement its work by the end of 2025. To develop its Action Plan, the Partnership used an Ex-Ante Assessment study as a foundation, structured its work under four **Working Groups** (WGs) focused on **Environment, Development (2 WGs), and Unbalanced Growth**, and organized regular management and content meetings.

All UAEU Partnerships aim to contribute to **Better Knowledge, Better Funding, and Better Regulation** by applying multilevel and multi-stakeholder cooperation processes at the EU level.
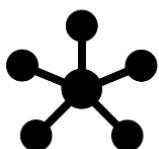
Have a look at the dynamic Miro Board Infographic here:
https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVKCSLjX0=/?share_link_id=489551391524

B. Summary of Actions
Action 1
Guidelines for Enabling Climate-Friendly and Resilient Urban Destinations

Brief Description:
This action focuses on developing guidelines for urban destinations to address climate change through mitigation and adaptation strategies. It aligns with the Glasgow Declaration, emphasizing measurement, decarbonization, regeneration, collaboration, and financing.

Main Objectives:
- Develop comprehensive guidelines for creating climate action plans in urban destinations.
- Enhance governance mechanisms to include all stakeholders.
- Promote climate-friendly tourism offers and better tourist behavior.
- Empower DMOs and local communities to actively participate in climate action.
- Foster innovation in sustainable tourism and increase visibility and uptake of sustainability tools.

The Challenge:
Urban destinations face a lack of governance mechanisms and knowledge to address climate change effectively. There is a need for better engagement of local communities, empowerment of Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), and development of resilience plans. Additionally, there is a need for capacity-building, innovation in sustainable tourism, and enhanced public awareness and behavior towards climate-friendly tourism practices.

Outputs:
- Guidelines for climate-friendly urban destinations.
- A webinar to introduce the guidelines.
- Training sessions based on the findings.
- Dissemination activities across urban destinations.
- Peer reviews among project partners.

Implementation Strategy:

Phase 1: Preparation
- Design a survey tool to collect information.
Phase 2: Analysis
- Identify urban destinations with existing climate action plans and analyze gaps and issues through problem trees.
Phase 3: Dissemination
- Organize a webinar to present the guidelines.
- Conduct training sessions and local dissemination activities.
- Perform peer reviews to ensure quality and relevance.

Completion Date: 31/12/2025

Action 2

Support for Destinations to Enable the Use of Sustainability Certifications for the SMEs Tourism Transition

Brief Description:
This action aims to promote the use of sustainability certifications among SMEs in the tourism sector by developing good practices, case studies, and a comprehensive handbook for Destination Management and Marketing Organizations (DMMOs). It aligns with the upcoming Green Claims legislation and focuses on empowering DMOs, involving local entrepreneurs.

Main Objectives:
- Generate good practices and case studies for using sustainability certifications in tourism SMEs.
- Develop a pool of credible and transparent certifications.
- Raise awareness and promote certification use among tourism stakeholders.

The Challenge:
Tourism SMEs face several challenges in adopting sustainability certifications, including insufficient empowerment of DMOs to implement sustainable management tools and a lack of local/regional certification schemes. There is also a need for collaboration on harmonizing sustainable tourism statistics and indicators, as well as funding and incentives to support the green transition of SMEs.

Outputs:
- Handbook for DMMOs on good practices and sustainability certifications for greening SMEs.
- A webinar to introduce the findings.
- Training sessions based on the findings.
- Dissemination activities in urban destinations.
- Peer reviews among project partners.

Implementation Strategy:

Phase 1: Preparation
- Design a survey tool to collect information.
Phase 2: Analysis
- Conduct a survey to analyze current practices and experiences.
- Identify financial tools for supporting SMEs' transition and EU funding schemes.
Phase 3: Dissemination
- Compile findings into a digital handbook.
- Organize a webinar to present the handbook.
- Conduct training sessions and local dissemination activities.
- Perform peer reviews to ensure quality and relevance.

Completion Date: 31/12/2025

Action 3
Developing Competences for Tourism Professionals and Local & Regional Authorities in Digital Touristic Services & Products

Brief Description:
The goal of this action is to develop key competencies in tourism professionals, maximizing the impact and added value of digital tools. This involves creating a comprehensive toolkit that lowers barriers to accessing knowledge and funding, and highlights challenges in the tourism industry. The action targets local authorities, tourism professionals, digital service/product developers, and national tourism authorities.

Main Objectives:
- Create a shared understanding and consistent practices in sustainable tourism through digital integration.
- Establish a tourism academy and stakeholder support platform to facilitate accessibility of knowledge and skills.
- Advocating for Common Data Standards by promoting the adoption of common data standards in tourism to enhance collaboration and efficiency.

The Challenge:
The tourism sector faces a lack of standardized competencies and knowledge among professionals, particularly at the intersection of sustainable tourism and digital products. Additionally, existing knowledge and skills are not easily accessible.

Outputs:
- Toolkit/E-handbook: A flexible digital tool providing solutions, best practices, funding opportunities, and expert contacts.
- Two workshops per partner during survey creation and solution mapping phases.
- Awareness Campaign: Promote the toolkit and raise awareness about the importance of common data standards in tourism.

Implementation Strategy:

Phase 1: Preparation
- Introduction to digital touristic products/services for stakeholders
- Constitute local stakeholder groups to participate in the survey.

Phase 2: Analysis
- Define target groups, create and translate the survey, and conduct workshops for survey preparation.
- Conduct workshops to develop solutions, culminating in the creation of the toolkit.

Phase 3: Dissemination
- Regularly update the toolkit, measure its success, and adapt it to stakeholder needs.

Completion Date: 31/12/2025

Action 4
More Resilient and Sustainable Destinations through Diversification of Tourism Offer

Brief Description:
This action aims to transform urban tourism by diversifying the tourism offer across time, space, and activities. It addresses the need for resilience and sustainability by decongesting popular destinations, redistributing tourist flows, tackling seasonality, and activating different urban assets through a diversified tourist offer.

Main Objectives:
- Promote diversification across time, space, and activities to extend the tourism season, balance tourist flows geographically, and cater to different visitor profiles.
- Build the tourism sector's capacity to withstand external shocks and ensure long-term competitiveness.
- Foster multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance structures to support tourism diversification.
- Raise awareness among local communities and stakeholders about sustainable tourism practices.

The Challenge:
The COVID-19 pandemic exposed structural vulnerabilities in the tourism ecosystem, including high seasonality, overtourism, and uneven geographical distribution of tourists. Furthermore, the sector faces ongoing external shocks such as economic crises, geopolitical tensions, and climate change, necessitating a resilient approach.

Outputs:
- A comprehensive guide for urban authorities and stakeholders compiling good practices, recommendations, and case studies on fostering a diversified tourism offer.
- Two dedicated workshops to test draft recommendations and explore good practices.
- Three videos to raise awareness about sustainable tourism among local communities.

Implementation Strategy:

Phase 1: Preparation
- Design a survey to collect information on existing diversification practices.
- Conduct desk research on relevant studies, reports, and EU-funded projects.

Phase 2: Analysis
- Identify good practices and develop recommendations.

Phase 3: Dissemination
- Organize conferences and workshops to present findings and recommendations.

Completion Date: 31/12/2025

Action 5
Destinations Accessible for All

Brief Description
This Action aims to ensure that tourism destinations are accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities and special needs. It focuses on adapting tourism infrastructure, services, and facilities to accommodate diverse visitor requirements, thereby promoting inclusivity and equal enjoyment of tourism experiences.

Main Objectives:
- Identify and address barriers to accessibility in tourism destinations.
- Provide accurate and reliable information on accessibility features for travelers.
- Promote awareness and understanding of accessibility issues among tourism stakeholders.

The Challenge:
Tourism destinations suffer from a lack of accessibility, and the limited availability of information on accessibility features and services hinders travel planning and decision-making. Additionally, existing legislation and policies on accessibility require better implementation and enforcement at the destination level.

Outputs:
- Handbook for creating an accessible environment in urban destinations.
- Presentation of best practices for accessible tourism in urban destinations.
- Workshops on implementation and promotion of accessible tourism.
- Promotional videos raising awareness of accessibility issues in the local community.

Implementation Strategy

Phase 1: Preparation
- Conduct a survey and desk research to gather information on existing accessibility practices in urban destinations.

Phase 2: Analysis
- Establish a one-stop shop for accessibility information for tourism stakeholders.
- Provide training programs for tourism workers and guides on accommodating diverse accessibility needs.

Phase 3: Dissemination
- Organize dissemination activities, such as workshops and conferences, to promote awareness and share best practices.

Completion Date: 31/12/2025

Action 6
Strategies on Protection of Local Retail as an Asset for Tourism

Brief Description:
This Action aims to address the issue of 'monoculturalisation' in city centers caused by tourism, which negatively impacts local economies and retail diversity. By identifying and promoting good practices, the action seeks to preserve the authenticity and vibrancy of historical city centers while supporting a diversified and inclusive local economy.

Main Objectives:
- Raise awareness among tourists about socially and environmentally responsible behaviors.
- Implement regulations to protect the authenticity of city centers and support the local retail economy.
- Provide incentives for the establishment and promotion of traditional crafts and trades.
- Counter seasonality trends in tourism by securing stable local jobs in retail.

The Challenge:
The monoculturalisation of city centers due to tourism growth diminishes local retail diversity, leading to limited authenticity and vibrancy in historical city centers dominated by tourist-oriented businesses. There is a lack of awareness among tourists about socially responsible behaviors and a need for regulations to protect the health of local retail economies.

Outputs:
- Report on good practices in sustainable tourism linked to local retail.
- Two to three online webinars to present identified good practices.
- Catalog of business promotion in city centers, desirable activities, and themed streets.

Implementation Strategy:

Phase 1: Preparation
- Conduct a survey and desk research to gather information on existing accessibility practices in urban destinations.

Phase 2: Analysis
- Analyze survey results and compile best practices into a report.
- Organize webinars to present identified good practices and disseminate report results.
- Create and distribute a catalog of business promotion in city centers.

Phase 3: Dissemination
- Organize dissemination activities, such as workshops and conferences, to promote awareness and share best practices.
- Leverage expertise from relevant stakeholders and experienced cities in the field.

Completion Date: 31/12/2025

Disclaimer:

Authors: Sustainable Tourism Partnership

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Contact: urbanagenda@urban-initiative.eu