Circularity and Tourism for Sustainable Development in Greece

Directorate for Strategic Planning, Ministry of Tourism of the Hellenic Republic

Side event: Tourism and circularity for sustainable development in the Mediterranean

Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference
Nicosia, 5–7 October 2022
National Pact for Sustainable Tourism 2030
Main objectives

- Promote Greece as a sustainable tourist destination
- Integrate tourism into the Government’s overall plan for sustainable development
- Create a sustainable culture in the tourism sector
National Pact for Sustainable Tourism 2030
Focus on circular economy

- Water and waste management
  - Clean water and sanitation
- Electromobility and congestion relief
  - Replacement incentives, charging networks, car sharing, flows management
- Energy sector
  - Renewable energy penetration, energy efficiency
- Education
  - Development of green and digital skills for tourism professionals and raising awareness of the public
- Digital transformation
  - Digitalisation of procedures and services, data management
Under RRF funding, Greece is establishing a National Observatory of Sustainable Tourism Development, to collect data at national level, monitor sustainable tourism development and provide data to support evidence-based policy making.

**KEY OUTCOMES**

- Publication of an Annual Tourism Sustainability Report to present - inter alia - the progress in sustainable tourism development
- Building a network with data providers, through the signing of MOUs, to establish a lasting cooperation and ensure regular updates of the database.
- Creation of a digital platform and a website displaying major sustainable tourism indicators.
The establishment of DMMOs and their respective Tourism Observatories is also funded by RRF. The project’s objectives include:

- The creation of a governance framework for the efficient and effective management and operation of destinations to facilitate cooperation among stakeholders and competent bodies, and
- The establishment of Local/Regional Sustainable Tourism Development Observatories to enable the provision of necessary data for the integrated planning of tourism strategies.

Local and Regional Observatories will:

- conduct market studies and analyses
- shape policy proposals for the area of responsibility
- promote the local/ regional thematic tourism product
Research and Monitoring Centre for coastal and maritime tourism in the Eastern Mediterranean

Greece and the UNWTO cooperate to establish a Research and Monitoring Centre for Coastal and Maritime Tourism in the Eastern Mediterranean, to be situated in Greece. Extensive consultation has been conducted so far with stakeholders from local, national, international and Mediterranean relevant bodies. Countries of the Mediterranean have been invited to participate and there has been a very high response; technical meetings are ongoing. Next steps: completion of networking and development of a charter.

- Develop a coherent methodological framework for measuring sustainability in coastal and maritime tourism
- Monitor the sustainable development of coastal and maritime tourism in the area
- Provide relevant, timely and reliable data on a regular basis
Intergovernmental coordination
Building resilience to combat future crises

- As COVID pandemic demonstrated, dealing with global crises requires concerted international action.
- Greece, both at EU level and as the UNWTO Commission for Europe Chair, stressed the importance of a common vaccination certificate.
- The adoption of the EU Digital COVID Certificate decisively contributed to restore movement within the EU and between the EU and third countries.
- Shared standards and alignment of practices can’t be overrated to strengthen resilience of the tourism ecosystem.
Strengthening resilience, sustainability and competitiveness

✓ A lesson learned from the pandemic is that to cushion the impact on the tourism industry, we need to prioritise measures that leverage funds to support employment, ease taxation and provide liquidity.

✓ Close collaboration of the private and public sector ensures alignment of objectives, facilitates the smooth functioning of the industry, and a swift recovery.

✓ Combating seasonality and differentiating the source markets' portfolio is a first-class tool for strengthening resilience.
Promoting a sustainable tourism framework & fostering circularity

- Modernize the institutional framework and the respective legislation to adapt to the shift of tourism demand and international competition and mega-trends.
- Engage tourism companies in greener practices by promoting schemes which support assessing, tracking, reporting and reducing environmental footprint.

- Support green tourism products with low environmental footprint through a wide range of labels, to offer tailor-made quality experiences:
  - Label for Agritourism Businesses
  - Winery Open to the Public Label
  - Accessible Tourism Destination Label and so on
Boost green investments
Leveraging funds and providing incentives

- In times of crises and constrained public budgets, investment is a prerequisite to a competitive tourism sector.
- To trigger investments, governments have to consider the challenges & barriers that investors face.
- The new “Investment Incentives Law” supports projects relating to the circular economy and sustainable development and technologies that contribute to environmental protection and the energy upgrading, through a simple framework that allows the business community to plan, develop and implement their initiatives.
- Eight out of ten investments made in Greece currently are tourism investments, namely investments in infrastructure and hotels.
Promoting circular economy at local level
Strong cooperation of the public and private sector

Circular economy

Under the Incircle EU Programme, the city of Rethymnon has undertaken 2 pilot actions, which focus on sustainable mobility, sustainable energy and sustainable waste management.

Sustainable destination

The Greek Government, the Southern Aegean Region and TUI embarked on a cooperation scheme to develop in Rhodes island a beacon for the sustainable destination of the future.

Berth allocation programme

The Municipal Port Fund of Thira has launched a scheduling application for arrivals and departures of cruise ships visiting the island of Santorini, to better manage tourism flows.

Sustainable mobility

Greece and Volkswagen Group have set to transform the island of Astypalea into a model island for climate-neutral mobility.
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