



BEST PRACTICES

FROM THE 2022 EUROPEAN
DESTINATIONS OF EXCELLENCE
COMPETITION



EUROPEAN DESTINATIONS
OF EXCELLENCE



Title:

BEST PRACTICES FROM THE 2022 EUROPEAN
DESTINATIONS OF EXCELLENCE COMPETITION

This report has been prepared in 2022 for the European Commission,
DG Growth Internal market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

Key Subjects:

Exchange of best practices, innovative and sustainable
tourism measures


March 2022

This report has been commissioned by the European Commission and prepared by
Scholz & Friends Agenda Berlin GmbH European Office. The views and propositions
expressed herein do not necessarily represent any official view of the European
Commission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. GENERAL BACKGROUND.....	6
2. PURPOSE OF THE BEST PRACTICES FROM THE 2022 EUROPEAN DESTINATIONS OF EXCELLENCE COMPETITION	6
3. PRESENTING BEST PRACTICES	8
3.1 EDUCATION	8
3.1.1. Environmental education through initiatives; Almassora (Spain)	8
3.1.2. "Seeds grow in the hands of rural women"; İhsaniye (Turkey).....	8
3.1.3. Science-based reports for climate adaption; Kotka (Finland)	9
3.1.4. Outdoor museum dealing with climate change; Kula (Turkey).....	9
3.1.5. LEADER Transnational Cooperation (TNC) project; Kozard (Hungary).....	9
3.1.6. Flower festival, ecological competition and garden competition; Kaštela (Croatia)	10
3.1.7. Nature Urbane festival; Varese (Italy).....	10
3.2 URBAN PLANNING	11
3.2.1. Developing the network of urban spaces; Alexandria (Romania).....	11
3.2.2. SMART cycling resting areas; Čakovec (Croatia)	11
3.2.3. Sustainable transportation along the Danube; Vukovar (Croatia).....	12
3.2.4. Public transport free for all; Saaremaa (Estonia).....	12
3.3 SUSTAINABLE ENERGY/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	13
3.3.1. Tourism ecosystem; Gürsu (Turkey).....	13
3.3.2. An exceptional skiing hill; Ventspils (Latvia).....	13
3.3.3. Reliable renewable energy; Thisted (Denmark).....	14
3.4 ECOLOGICAL CONSERVATION	15
3.4.1. Recovering endangered species; Çeşme (Turkey)	15
3.4.2. Sustainable tourism offers in Wied il-Mielah; Gharb (Malta).....	15

3.4.3. 'Belt in Balance' project; Middelfart (Denmark).....	15
3.5 SUSTAINABLE CULTURE	17
3.5.1. An open-air gallery; Vukovar (Croatia).....	17
3.5.2. Recovery of cultural heritage for sustainable development; Alba Iulia (Romania)	17
3.5.3. Pioneering sustainable festivals; Saaremaa (Estonia).....	18
3.5.4. A sustainable and climate adaptable Cross-Border Area; Ardino (Bulgaria).....	19
3.5.5. Atop the trees; Rogla-Zreče (Slovenia).....	19
3.6 SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY/RESPONSIBILITY	20
3.6.1. Citizen involvement in ecological practices; Cahul (Moldova).....	20
3.6.2. Civic participation; Gharb (Malta).....	20
3.6.3. A Collective Career Center; Gürsu (Turkey)	20
3.6.4. Innovative strategies for community development; Cahul (Moldova)	21
3.6.5. Strategic partnerships as best practice for change; Himmerland (Denmark)	21
3.6.6. Sustainable mobility infrastructures in; Kamnik (Slovenia).....	22
3.6.7. KAMKOLO, sustainable biking; Kamnik (Slovenia).....	22
3.6.8. Factory Cemex promoting environmental protection; Kaštela (Croatia).....	22
3.6.8. Cross-sectoral collaboration for sustainable tourism; Kula (Turkey).....	23
3.6.9. Vestre Skole as interactive space; Middelfart (Denmark).....	23
3.6.10. Pedestrianisation for a better city; Zejtun (Malta)	24
3.7 SPREADING THE FLOW	25
3.7.1. Measures to reduce seasonality in tourism; Almassora (Spain).....	25
3.7.2. 'In the Footsteps of the Shepherds' in Velika planina; Kamnik (Slovenia)	25
3.7.3. Diversifying tourism seasons; Kotka (Finland).....	26
3.7.4. A sustainable tourism offer; Ventspils (Latvia)	26
3.8 DATA COLLECTION/RESEARCH	27
3.8.1. Measuring the sustainability of a tourist destination; Almassora (Spain)	27
3.8.2. Private sector support for sustainable tourism; Middelfart (Denmark)	27

3.9 SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH DIGITALISATION..... 28

3.9.1. Implementing climate adaptation and oriented measures; Almassora (Spain)28

3.10 SUSTAINABLE GASTRONOMY/AGRICULTURE 29

3.10.1. Ecological clean food; Ardino (Bulgaria)29

3.10.2. Entrepreneurship for locally grown agricultural products; Gürsu (Turkey)30

3.10.3. KochArt - The good things are so close to hand; Kitzbühel (Austria).....30

3.10.4. Agriculture technology for farming; Kozard (Hungary).....30

3.10.5. Gourmet tourism for growth; Vinkovci (Croatia).....31

3.10.6. Making visitors appreciate local sustainability; Zejtun (Malta).....31

3.10.7. Ecological conservation to save the bees; Zejtun (Malta).....31

3.10.8. Culinary Branding; Rogla (Slovenia).....32

1. GENERAL BACKGROUND

The European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) is an EU initiative implemented by the European Commission. Its aim is to recognise and award smaller destinations that have implemented successful strategies to boost sustainable tourism through green transition practices.

EDEN was first introduced by the European Commission in 2007 as an initiative to reward non-traditional, emerging sustainable tourism destinations in Europe. It used to be run under a different theme each year and was based on national competitions. The initiative has been redesigned and updated in line with the European Green Deal and is set to contribute to the recovery and resilience of tourism destinations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The EDEN initiative aims to:

- **showcase the best achievements in sustainable tourism and green transition practices across smaller European destinations**
- **promote the development of sustainable tourism in destinations, bringing value to the economy, the planet and the people**
- **establish a framework for participating destinations to exchange best practices and create opportunities for cooperation and new partnerships**

2. PURPOSE OF THE BEST PRACTICES FROM THE 2022 EUROPEAN DESTINATIONS OF EXCELLENCE COMPETITION

In 2021, the European Commission launched the competition for the 2022 European Destination of Excellence. Destinations in EU countries and COSME countries with populations between 25,000 and 100,000 inhabitants are eligible to apply. 43 destinations from 18 countries submitted their applications. Middelfart (Denmark) was selected as the 2022 European Destination of Excellence title.

The 2022 collection of best practices has been derived from the applications the destinations submitted to the competition. The report showcases the selection of best practices in sustainable tourism and solely presents and relies on the data that the cities have submitted in their applications.

The purpose of this document is to enhance and facilitate the exchange of best practices in promoting innovative and sustainable measures and initiatives for tourism destinations. The report aims at raising awareness about sustainable initiatives, tools, measures and projects, sharing the best practices implemented by destinations and strengthening peer-to-peer learning and sustainable development of tourism.

3. PRESENTING BEST PRACTICES

3.1 Education

3.1.1. Environmental education through initiatives; Almassora (Spain)

Almassora has prioritised the conservation, protection, and respectful knowledge of natural resources in the development of tourist activities and use, with the aim of becoming an ecotourism destination located in the heart of the Mediterranean east of Spain. Therefore, the municipality of Almassora has put an emphasis on projects of good sustainability practices such as the 'Aula Natura' and 'Tree Day'. Both constitute meeting points for the dissemination of biodiversity in the natural environment of the river Mijares and for replanting vegetation in the less favoured areas in the city. Moreover, through the environmental awareness campaign 'Almassora in action', the initiative 'Darremur organic' was created as an environmental programme to promote waste recycling and local consumption of fruit and vegetables among the town's schoolchildren. For all these efforts, in 2019 Almassora was awarded by the Environmental Forum Foundation and the Spanish Ministry with the national prize 'Sustainable City' – 'Ciudad Sostenible' in Spanish-, as the official recognition of the city of Almassora for its environmental education projects and its sustainable tourism destination.

Find out more at: <https://www.almassora.es/es/articulos/programa-de-educacion-ambiental-darremur-organic>

3.1.2. "Seeds grow in the hands of rural women"; İhsaniye (Turkey)

The Joint Programme "Seeds grow in the hands of rural women", implemented by the Ministry of Industry and Technology in partnership with Zafer Development Agency, İhsaniye District Governorship and District Agriculture and Forestry, provides training in agricultural techniques, improved seeds and time-saving machinery, while also granting loans. Women's cooperatives help boost agriculture and savings in the rural İhsaniye. 36 women were trained for more than 302 hours on 10 different topics. 6 women were employed at the end of the project. The programme, funded under the Social Development Supports Programme, intends to support and involve vulnerable groups within the principles of decent work.

Find out more at: <http://www.dogerhurhaber.com/kadin-gozuyle-afyonkarahisar-projesi-ihسانيye-doger-etabi/4692/>

3.1.3. Science-based reports for climate adaption; Kotka (Finland)

With the support of specialists in the field of sustainable tourism, meteorology and carbon footprint, Kotka's destination management organisation (DMO) is working on a report on climate adaptation and mitigation from tourism perspective. The science-based report generates valuable information for destination-level tourism management and individual companies on how to adapt their business to climate change. Effective climate change mitigation and adaptation in the tourism sector are important for the vitality of the city and its local communities. Since the impact of climate change is similar in other destinations, the report is done in cooperation with another area in the province helping both to benefit from the results.

Find out more at: https://kotkamills.com/wp-content/uploads/kotkamills_sustainability-report_ENG_20190828.pdf

3.1.4. Outdoor museum dealing with climate change; Kula (Turkey)

Serving as an outdoor museum exhibiting the effects of current climate change, Kula gives visitors the opportunity to see how climate change can affect the environment. To raise awareness, in cooperation with Izmir Geography Community, online information presentations have been carried out for students with regards to the European Geography Week and World Environment Day. For the International Day for Disaster Reduction 2021, an online session was held to raise awareness of climate change.

Find out more at: <https://www.wur.nl/en/project/Reconstruction-and-Modelling-of-landscape-dynamics-and-climate-change-near-Kula-Gediz-Basin-Western-Turkey.htm> and <https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/disasterreductionday>

3.1.5. LEADER Transnational Cooperation (TNC) project; Kozard (Hungary)

Kozard and its Finnish (Lapland) and Estonian (Lake Peipsi area) partners joined in a LEADER Transnational Cooperation (TNC) project for green transition. They have built an ecological training centre in Kozard to promote eco-tourism and develop new strategies

for a new agriculture and food production based on the restoration of agro-ecosystems. The eco-centre is now a preferred training and meeting place for biodiversity farmers and for young, school-age nature lover.

Find out more at: <https://slidetodoc.com/the-leader-in-europe-the-leader-in-hungary/> and https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/leader_tnc-guidance.pdf

3.1.6. Flower festival, ecological competition and garden competition; Kaštela (Croatia)

The Flower festival is an opportunity to showcase the diversity and richness of Kaštela's spring season. The Flower festival has a long tradition for 20 years. In addition, the ecological competition of educational institutions and the competition for the most beautiful garden are being held in Kaštela. The objective of all these competitions during spring is to raise awareness of the importance of a clean and healthy environment. These initiatives have been encouraged by the Tourist Board, the town, associations and schools.

Find out more at: <https://www.kastela-info.hr/fr/flower-festival> and https://issuu.com/tzkastela/docs/kastela_cvace_en

3.1.7. Nature Urbane festival; Varese (Italy)

The NATURE URBANE is a landscape festival in the city of Varese that aims to become a pathway for change and is created with the goal to develop a model city that strives for seamless and symbiotic integration of nature, culture and urbanisation. The festival promotes and educates visitors about their surroundings and the territory itself with the landscape at the core of its programme. By raising awareness in an interactive fashion, Varese is aiming to make citizens and visitors alike to feel a sense of responsibility and inclusion in the process.

Find out more at: <https://www.natureurbane.it>



3.2 Urban Planning

3.2.1. Developing the network of urban spaces; Alexandria (Romania)

The project 'Reconfiguration of the road and the pedestrian traffic in the central area of the Municipality of Alexandria – Road Passageway' is part of the general context of sustainable development, economic and social, in the regional, county, and local policies and programmes. It aims to upgrade the accessibility of the city centre of Alexandria with the help of the underground road passages. The municipality seeks to reduce traffic congestion in the city centre surface by reconfiguring the subterranean spaces related to the central area of the city, using an underground parking for the underground passage, thus clearing up a significant number of square meters of the above- ground space, usually occupied by vehicles. Additionally, there are plans to make central area "greener" through the redeveloping of the central park, an investment that is intended to have a recreational, educational, and aesthetic impact and that will eventually increase of the city centre's attractiveness.

Find out more at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345939127_SMART_CITIES_ORASUL_INTELIGENT_Shaping_the_Cities_of_Tomorrow_PROCEEDINGS_OF_THE_SMART_CITIES_CONFERENCE_7th_Edition_2019/download

3.2.2. SMART cycling resting areas; Čakovec (Croatia)

Čakovec is ideal for cycling and hiking tourism, and thanks to government funding, local authorities have introduced a project titled 'SMART bicycle resting areas', to develop cyclo-tourist infrastructure.

These stops for cyclists are on a strategic cycling road, and equipped with rest spaces, information panels, charging station kiosks powered by solar panels or batteries, stands with integrated



© Turistička Zajednica Grada Čakovca

pumps, among other appliances for cyclist to use when stopping at the resting areas.

Find out more at: <http://www.total-croatia-cycling.com/news/728-cakovec-to-receive-three-smart-resting-areas-for-cyclists>

3.2.3. Sustainable transportation along the Danube; Vukovar (Croatia)

In addition to cultural heritage, history, and gastronomy, Vukovar possesses sustainable and developmental tourist products. One of them are modern electro solar waterbuses, which use renewable energy sources and are completely nature and environment friendly.

Find out more at: <https://www.thedubrovniktimes.com/news/croatia/item/3934-croatia-launches-the-first-electric-solar-tour-boat-in-south-east-europe>

3.2.4. Public transport free for all; Saaremaa (Estonia)

To reduce the carbon footprint produced by tourism and to ensure that their public transport infrastructure is being fully utilised, the public transport for both residents and tourists is free. While the bus is not a substitute for a tour throughout Saaremaa and it does not go to all the available tourist attractions, it does provide a duplication of utilisation that is often neglected. By offering free public transport, Saaremaa is integrating their visitors into the community in an innovative and climate friendly fashion.

Find out more at: <https://visitsaaremaa.ee/en/plan/transportation/>

3.3 Sustainable Energy/Resource Management

3.3.1. Tourism ecosystem; Gürsu (Turkey)

Gürsu was the first to implement green energy applications in Turkey to develop the tourism ecosystem. The overall goal, on the one hand, is to contribute to the EU Green Deal and circular economy targets and, on the other hand, to provide a sustainable and quality experience for visitors. Ericek Pond dam was established in order to maintain a balanced irrigation regime throughout the year. Thus, risks such as water shortage and drought that may arise from climate change have been reduced. Activities for a closed-loop irrigation system, which will feed the entire Gürsu plain continue.

Find out more at: <http://resor-project.eu/assets/docs/outputs/Curriculum-Final-Version.pdf> and <https://www.dailysabah.com/life/travel/turkish-city-included-in-european-destination-of-excellence-shortlist>

3.3.2. An exceptional skiing hill; Ventspils (Latvia)

Consisting of construction debris and useless street soil material, the Snow Hill “Lemberga Hūte” is unique in that, by giving a second life to useless material, a sustainable object is created - by arranging the environment and ensuring active recreation throughout the year for both locals and city guests. Every summer since 2005, when the Ski Hill was first open to visitors, its height has been gradually increased and now it is reaching 58 m. At the top of the hill visitors can enjoy a wonderful view of the city and the sea.

Find out more at:
<https://www.lembergahute.lv/en/about>



© Ventspils Administration

3.3.3. Reliable renewable energy; Thisted (Denmark)

Thisted is self-sufficient in renewable electricity and almost in renewable heat. This is in large part due to both purposeful investment and allowing the destination to participate in the research and development of renewable energy sources. To contribute to this and the greater expansion of sustainable energy sources, Thisted now hosts the national test centre for large wind turbines. In turn, through using an almost 100% renewable energy source for the residents and tourists that come to visit, Thisted is playing a large role in supporting and preserving its natural environment.

Find out more at: <https://stateofgreen.com/en/partners/thisted-municipality/>

3.4 Ecological Conservation

3.4.1. Recovering endangered species; Çeşme (Turkey)

The mastic tree, which grows in Çeşme in Turkey, is a very important agricultural product for Çeşme and Izmir. However, the mastic trees in the Aegean district of Çeşme were endangered due to tourism pressure. Thus, the Municipality has aimed to increase the number of mastic trees in the region in a cooperation between the state, the private sector, and an NGO. In five years, the number of mastic trees has increased from 300 to 20,000. It is expected that the reforested trees will become productive in 10 years, turning into a significant source of income for the local people of the region.

Find out more at: <https://www.haberhurriyeti.com/haber/4955234/cesmenin-pirlanta-agaclari-hizla-cogaliyor>

3.4.2. Sustainable tourism offers in Wied il-Mielah; Gharb (Malta)

The area of Wied il-Mielah in Gharb Gozo, known mostly for its geology, was declared a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and declared as a Special Protection Area (SPA). Due to the presence of typical coastal plant communities and its cliffs, which also house important breeding and nesting area of seabirds, Gharb has created sustainable tourist offers, offering the exploration of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Pathways across Europe with the collaboration of 4 other Mediterranean countries.

Find out more at: <https://mappae.eu> and <https://mappae.eu/country/malta/> and <http://maltawildplants.com>

3.4.3. 'Belt in Balance' project; Middelfart (Denmark)

With the 'Belt in Balance' initiative, Naturpark Lillebælt (Little Belt Natural Park) aims to promote and advance research into the marine and coastal environment of the Little Belt. The project is a collaboration between several institutions focusing on 'The Little Belt' that contains the world's largest concentration of small whales – the porpoise. The research that is for the benefit of residents, visitors, clubs and associations is a five-year project conducted by three municipalities in collaboration with research institutions and supported by many volunteers provided by two other foundations. The project's



© Middelfart

ambitions include four areas: 1. Promoting new outdoor experiences in Denmark's marine and coastal areas. 2. Investing in improved marine environment and better conditions for animals by reducing pollution and noise. 3. Promoting knowledge about the Little Belt with the conducted research on the effects on sea creatures. 4. Providing access and spreading awareness of knowledge and research to residents, tourists and clubs and associations. As part of the multi-sector collaboration, 'Visit Lillebælt', 'Visit Kolding' and 'Destination Lillebælt' are all initiatives implemented with the aim to create a sustainable tourism destination. The project's overall goal is to give visitors and residents the opportunity to acquire a deeper understanding, fascination, and enjoyment of what goes on below the sea's surface and at the same time to boost tourism by evoking a desire to visit the coast and the sea.

Find out more at: <https://www.visitlillebaelt.com/little-belt/events/lillebaelt-nature-park-gdk1079422> and <https://www.visitlillebaelt.com> and <https://www.visit-kolding.com>

3.5 Sustainable Culture

3.5.1. An open-air gallery; Vukovar (Croatia)

In addition to cultural and natural heritage, which is beautifully presented through various projects and created into a tourist product, Vukovar is also an open-air gallery. Every year, world-famous Street art artists gather at the VukovArt festival and slowly create a new visual identity of the city, urban, modern, different, beautifully invigorating. The mural route is intended for bicycle visitors and spans for 12 kilometres providing a combination of sports, recreation, and cultural content. To make the paths more accessible to tourists, paths were GPS tracked and marked with signs containing a QR code with downloadable GPS map.



© Filip Mrvelj-Hrvatska

By implementing such solutions, the gallery was adapted to the needs of the modern tourists. During the COVID-19 pandemic the project team considered new solutions to adapt to the situation – development of a new form of digital tourism through creation of on-line VukovART gallery and VR tour. The finished application contains all 33 artworks shot in 360° view. The gallery is available as a desktop or mobile app and adapted to use with VR glasses on mobile phones.

Find out more at: <https://vukovart.com/en/art-harbour/>

3.5.2. Recovery of cultural heritage for sustainable development; Alba Iulia (Romania)

The Alba Carolina Citadel in Alba Iulia is the largest fortress in Romania, which has been standing for more than 300 years, however, it harbours vestiges of three fortifications, dating back to as many different epochs, as every fortress built here has embraced a

previous one: the Roman castrum, the medieval fortress and the Alba Carolina Citadel. The restoration works (co-financed by European funds) have also considered to valorise its exceptional cultural heritage. Now the citadel is an open-air stage for cultural festivals and concerts, whereas the municipality has also developed promotion and marketing tools based on new technologies for this historical spot: digital campaigns to promote innovative tourism offers, physical and digital maps of the Citadel, virtual guides in Principia Museum, VR tours in the Citadel, etc. All these measures aim to transform the Citadel into a tourism hotspot and sustainable source of income for the city.

Find out more at: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/projects/romania/rehabilitation-of-alba-iulias-urban-heritage-transforms-the-city-and-its-economy

3.5.3. Pioneering sustainable festivals; Saaremaa (Estonia)

The “I Land Sound” can be regarded as a sustainable festival pioneer. The festival, which takes place annually in the summer hosts a variety of musicians and artisans for both residences and visitors to enjoy. The festival has a strict set of values ranging from recycling and local produce to nature and cleanness. By placing such values at the centre of the festival’s concept it can be a sustainable concept for future festivals as well. At the festival, an emphasis is placed on using ceramic utensils, industrial scrap for signage



© Johannes Hõimoja

and no bottled water (only tap water). The festival acts as a multiplayer, informing and educating visitors about environmental protection and awareness.

Find out more at: <https://ilandsound.ee>

3.5.4. A sustainable and climate adaptable Cross-Border Area; Ardino (Bulgaria)

“Ardino and Didymoticho connected in the past and the future” (ARDICO) is a venture at the Bulgarian-Greek border aimed at improving access to some of the most important ancient monuments in the municipalities of Ardino and Didymoticho. The main goal of the project is to preserve and protect the cultural and historical heritage in the ancient provinces of the Rhodopes and Evros, including the development of tourism in the border region - cultural, historical, and eco-tourism, as well as achieving economic growth and market optimisation. Through the implementation of ARDICO the tourists and visitors of the two municipalities Ardino and Didymoticho will have the opportunity to get to know the culture and the heritage of the Thracians, their customs, and crafts. The approaches to two important historical monuments – the Devils bridge in Ardino and the fortress of Didymoticho will be rehabilitated and upgraded. The construction activities, festivals and other activities envisaged in the project will significantly improve the access of visitors and tourists to the two sites and will present to people from the two border communities to learn that they are not only related by wars and battles but have a common livelihood.

Find out more at: <http://www.greece-bulgaria.eu/approved-project/71/>

3.5.5. Atop the trees; Rogla-Zreče (Slovenia)

The Treetop Walk on Rogla is a circa 560m long, 37m high walkway that allows tourists and residents to experience and enjoy the nature of Rogla mountain in a non-intrusive and sustainable way. The entire walk, including the observation tower is wheelchair and pram friendly.

Find out more at: <https://www.rogla.eu/en/what-to-do/3253>



© Tomo Jeseničnik

3.6 Social Sustainability/Responsibility

3.6.1. Citizen involvement in ecological practices; Cahul (Moldova)

“EcoCahul - Cetățean implicat pentru un oraș curat!”, which offers more than 900 bins free of charge to the inhabitants and organised an information campaign about waste. As part of the project, every year during spring and autumn, Cahul City Hall and citizens conduct sanitation campaigns of green spaces and river Frumoasa. Likewise, there is a contest, “The cleanest neighborhood”, in which all residents of the city can participate.

Find out more at: <https://eu4civilsociety.md/en/news/eco-cahul-ceta-ean-implicat-pentru-un-ora-curat>

3.6.2. Civic participation; Gharb (Malta)

The Gharb Council has sought way to promote local traditions while encouraging citizens to take a more active role within society. For that reason, the city organises several information sessions and seminars throughout the year to continue to cultivate its focus on active citizenship. It is an encouragement for locals to participate in designing their society and to contribute for sustainable change.

Find out more at: <https://activecitizensfund.mt/acf-fund>

3.6.3. A Collective Career Center; Gürsu (Turkey)

A Collective Career Center was established in to provide training, mentoring and career services for unemployed women, young people and other disadvantaged groups with the goal to acquire a profession, establish a business or employment. Around 1,200 citizens were provided with employment opportunities since August 2020. In cooperation with vocational foundations, the “My profession; My Future” project was developed to give young people vocational skills trainings with guaranteed employment in the renewable energy sector. Moreover, a Science and Technology Workshop was established for more than 3,000 children aiming to assist them in their social integration as immigrants (especially Syrian refugees) and to increase schooling rates. Through educational measures like social awareness, vocational training, internship and green energy investment mentoring, Gursu carries out activities to contribute to green transition practices at Gursu Green Energy

facilities. Efforts are made to spread green energy and energy efficiency in the region. High school and university students, that are “Neither in Education nor in Employment” have their internships here and receive vocational training.

Find out more at: <http://www.kollektifkariyer.com/hakkimizda> and <https://en.gursu.bel.tr/Projelerimiz-Detay/604/INTERNSHIP%20OPPORTUNITIES%20FROM%20THE%20COLLECTIVE%20CAREER%20CENTER/>

3.6.4. Innovative strategies for community development; Cahul (Moldova)

Through the ‘Community Development Strategy’, Cahul Municipality intent to enhance the involvement of citizens in the process of initiating, developing, promoting, and approving draft decisions and economic, social, environmental, infrastructure and good governance projects. This plan applies the LEADER approach, a local development method associated with local accountability, which idea is to mobilise the energy and resource of people and organisation and encourage partnerships between the public, private and civic sectors at micro-region level.

Find out more at: https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/Moldova-Case-Study_LEADER-approach_Report-EN.pdf

3.6.5. Strategic partnerships as best practice for change; Himmerland (Denmark)

Due to the strategic partnerships between public and private actors, leading to a high level of involvement of residents, tourists, the DMO and the municipalities and local authorities in the sustainable agenda, Himmerland as a unique starting point can become a pioneer for sustainable destinations. Since the co-creation of initiatives ensures a high level of knowledge sharing and long-term cross-municipal efforts, Himmerland has taken the responsibility to ensure and facilitate continuous actions and involvement through Green Talks, environmental certifications or information to visitors and the local tourism businesses. Promoting the involvement of the entire value chain enhances collaborations across various industries related to sustainable development. Moreover, it has a positive effect on local economy, employment, and the destination as a place to live or visit. Close collaborations between municipal entities, local tourism businesses, citizens and tourists, under consideration of their various needs and challenges, have made and will make a change in Himmerland.

Find out more at: <https://www.destinationhimmerland.eu/Sustainable-holiday> and <https://www.destinationhimmerland.dk/projekt/next-step-himmerland> and <https://www.greentourismorganization.dk/en/map-details/destination-himmerland?h=1598840282>

3.6.6. Sustainable mobility infrastructures in; Kamnik (Slovenia)

The use of public and sustainable mobility infrastructures is highly prioritised by the municipality of Kamnik to reduce harmful effects of fossil-fuel led transportation systems that place hazard on air and noise pollution, greenhouse emissions and the energy consumption in the surrounding natural ecosystem. The basis for its sustainable mobility agenda lies in the 'Integrated Transport Strategy' launched in 2016 that is actively involving local inhabitants in all stages of the process, leading to the improvement of the cost-effectiveness ratio whilst meeting the criteria of improving local living conditions.

Find out more at: <https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MzI/Dokumenti/Transport-Development-Strategy-of-the-Republic-of-Slovenia-Until-2030.pdf>

3.6.7. KAMKOLO, sustainable biking; Kamnik (Slovenia)

Kamnik Municipality has further inspired the construction of cycling infrastructures and cycling stops by introducing a public bicycle rental system named KAMKOLO, giving life to the local projects »E-easy on bicycle« and »Gorenjska cycling network«. Cycling infrastructures and cycling stops are connecting the surrounding areas and the municipal borders.

Find out more at: <https://kamkolo.si/> and <https://www.visitkranj.com/en/gorenjska-culture-and-cycling-trail> and <https://www.gko.si/en/> and <https://authenticbiking.com/biking-tours/>

3.6.8. Factory Cemex promoting environmental protection; Kaštela (Croatia)

As part of the Kaštela's industry that is still working, the factory Cemex has introduced numerous eco projects and various workshops works for the preservation of environment, air, sea and employment of the local population. As a means of long-term support of the eco-school project, Cemex supports and enables activities for primary school students. The students are prompted to develop awareness for the importance of environmental

protection, proper waste disposal and rational water/energy consumption. As part of this cooperation, students and their teachers can participate in joint actions carried out by Cemex such as olive harvesting in the reclaimed part of the mine. Moreover, they can partake in field classes in the cement factory, educational workshops and other activities. The goal is to encourage children to learn more about topics related to sustainable development and environmental protection.

Find out more at: <https://www.globalcement.com/magazine/articles/910-cemexs-most-energy-efficient-plant-in-the-world-and-croatias-only-well-cement-producer-sv-juraj> and https://sunce-st.org/en/vijesti_en/sunce-stops-waste-incineration-in-cemex-factories-court-has-adjourned/

3.6.8. Cross-sectoral collaboration for sustainable tourism; Kula (Turkey)

Community-led initiatives related to sustainable tourism projects and activities resulted in strengthened local economies. Within the scope of administrative and structural reforms in 2018, collaboration and stakeholder protocols were made with various institutions and organisations. One of the institutions cooperating with Kula-Salihli Geopark is the Turkish Geomorphology Association. Inclusive and sustainable geo-tourism mainly depend on public, private, university collaboration and partnerships. Like the other UNESCO Geoparks, Kula is focusing on 10 key areas: Natural Resources, Geological Hazards, Climate Change, Education, Science, Culture, Women, Sustainable Development, Local and indigenous Knowledge and Geoconservation.

Find out more at: <https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/kula-salihli> and <https://kulasalihligeopark.com/en/hakimizda/> and <http://jd.org.tr/tr/icerik/turkish-society-geomorphology>

3.6.9. Vestre Skole as interactive space; Middelfart (Denmark)

In Middelfart Municipality, Vestre Skole is being converted from a traditional town-centre primary school to a modern primary school and a modern shared space in the centre of the town – Byens Rum – with the aim to be an attractive, modern primary school and simultaneously inviting social space and central hub. It should be seen as a place for pupils, visitors and citizens of the town that displays a strong sense of co-ownership. Byens Rum will consist of multiple areas with different urban spaces: LaBYrinten, Klimatorvet,



© Middelbart

Tumleskoven and Klimahaven. Vestre Skole is simultaneously intended to be a central communication space for discussing the towns' climate change initiatives. Moreover, it should serve as a science and technology centre for environmental challenges and solutions that can be implemented in the daily lives of residents and visitors. Tourists visiting the school will be given an authentic insight into a modern primary school and the opportunity to meet locals in a space that promotes community and co-creation.

Find out more at: <https://vestreskole-middelfart.aula.dk>

3.6.10. Pedestrianisation for a better city; Zejtun (Malta)

Around the year, local authorities organise free walks for tourists to encourage exercises and to admire the locality, and recently turned various narrow streets in the city centre into pedestrian ones.

Find out more at: <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/zejtun-likely-to-be-first-town-to-have-car-free-zones.892660> and <https://lovinmalta.com/news/in-plans-zejtun-could-soon-prioritise-pedestrians-over-cars-in-landmark-pilot-project/>

3.7 Spreading the Flow

3.7.1. Measures to reduce seasonality in tourism; Almassora (Spain)

Seasonal tourism is the great challenge for destinations in the Mediterranean. In the case of Almassora, authorities have developed a tourism plan focused on creating “soft” products with high added value, environmental respect, and sustainable criteria. One of the main tourist developments is the ‘Birding Comunitat Valenciana’, a programme which provides a network of different service providers that offer all sort of experiences and services to travellers who visit the Region of Valencia for the fascinating activity of birdwatching. Additionally, Almassora is preparing ‘Birding Almassora’, a smart app to promote nature tourism through the natural area of Millars. The application offers a narration on the natural values of the environment, as well as 360-degree photos and geolocation of both the existing cycling route, as well as bird watching. The programme aims to reduce the footprint of tourism, to expand the options for ecotourism in the region, as well as to conserving the local environment, while contributing to the local community. It constitutes an example of balanced tourism and economic development with a positive effect on local economy.

Find out more at: <https://birding.comunitatvalenciana.com/en/birding-comunitat-valenciana>

3.7.2. ‘In the Footsteps of the Shepherds’ in Velika planina; Kamnik (Slovenia)

As Velika planina is an extremely popular tourist destination for locals and foreign visitors, Kamnik was able to solve the problem of increasing massive tourism by establishing learning paths as part of the ‘In the Footsteps of the Shepherds’ project. The initiative aims to direct visitors from official, to slightly more secluded routes to limit the negative consequences of mass tourism footprint. Additionally, the Municipality pays special attention to the organisation of education and workshops regarding green development schemes and practices for residents and local tourist guides. The project ‘Kamnik, a city in the lap of the mountains: A digital display of pastoral heritage in the city’ pursues the goal of promoting the preservation of cultural heritage and natural habitats whilst offering year-round visitation opportunities. Visitors are welcome to experience the pastoral life of Velika Planina while staying in the centre of Kamnik. Kamnik’s objective is to further limit the overcrowding in the protected natural habitats located high in the mountains while

still offering a quick access and return to some of the most picturesque alpine areas.

Find out more at: <https://www.visitljubljana.com/en/visitors/stories/welcome-to-a-unique-alpine-pasture-near-ljubljana-velika-planina/> and <https://visitkamnik.com/en/activities/hiking>

3.7.3. Diversifying tourism seasons; Kotka (Finland)

Since summer is the main tourism season in Kotka, the local destination management organisation (DMO) has tried to reduce seasonality by a marketing campaign for the winter season. This way, local companies can create more income throughout the year and are not only dependent on the summer season. The main target group of the campaign was southern Finland. The campaign highlights that tourists do not have to travel far to enjoy new experiences but can do so in surrounding areas which helps reduce the carbon emission of travelling. The campaign was executed across digital channels.

Find out more at: <https://www.visitkotkahamina.fi/en/visit-kotka-hamina-fi/see-and-do/>

3.7.4. A sustainable tourism offer; Ventspils (Latvia)

To reduce the impact of seasonality, the city provides all-season objects, such as the Water Adventure Park, the Ice Hall, the Planetarium and Observatory, the Concert Hall "Latvia", among others. Ventspils' varied offer is in continuous expansion, with many of the attractions being bestowed with sustainability awards such as the Concert Hall Latvia, as well as ecotourism alternatives in specially protected nature territories (SPNT) such as the Būšnieku lake and the Staldzene Steep Coast. Additionally, Ventspils is one of the greenest locations in Latvia, and it was declared the 2012 European municipality of the year in Latvia.

Find out more at: https://issuu.com/visitventspils/docs/ventspils_brosura_2021-eng
<https://www.portofventspils.lv/en/invest-in-ventspils/quality-of-life/>
<https://www.visitventspils.com/en/start/>

3.8 Data Collection/Research

3.8.1. Measuring the sustainability of a tourist destination; Almassora (Spain)

To model Almassora's processes and urban functions, the city authorities use the metabolic approach to urban phenomenon, which provides a tool to better understand city functioning in terms of urban metabolism, from the transformation of resources (input) and the efficiency of the different urban functions of the city, until waste generation (output). Thus, urban metabolism approach can be useful as a planning tool to design strategies to reach sustainability.

Find out more at: <https://www.witpress.com/elibrary/wit-transactions-on-the-built-environment/179/36605>

3.8.2. Private sector support for sustainable tourism; Middelfart (Denmark)

To keep moving destination development in a sustainable direction, Middelfart is working on a project run by the Centre for Regional Tourism Research. The town is trying to investigate how Danish companies can contribute to a development strategy for the tourism industry that promotes cooperation and measures the effects of sustainable regional development in rural districts in economic, social and environmental



© Middelfart

terms. The project will generate knowledge on a variety of topics to inform the tourism industry and public authorities what types of access, areas for action, and measurement indicators are particularly useful. Considering these aspects will help the administration to enhance its work in promoting sustainable development in rural districts. The project will result in a report that will highlight data sources for recommended parameters and can supplement the existing national tourism balance sheet. Hence, in the future, the report will not only include sales figures but also present social, economic, and environmental effects.

Find out more at: <https://crt.dk/en/>

3.9 Sustainability Through Digitalisation

3.9.1. Implementing climate adaptation and oriented measures; Almassora (Spain)

Almassora council adopts measures to improve the effects on the climate by promoting the use of low-emission activities, such as the mobile eco-park service, which is an improved management of household waste in the city. Similarly, the elimination of obsolete lighting and the implementation of low-consumption LED technology aims to enhance the sustainable use of energy consumption in municipal public spaces.

Find out more at: <https://cdn.digitalvalue.es/almassora/assets/5f0d4a013686490100ae1f69>

3.10 Sustainable Gastronomy/Agriculture

3.10.1. Ecological clean food; Ardino (Bulgaria)

In August 2021 the Municipality of Ardino organised the “Festival of Clean Foods”, with an exhibition of organic food from the Rhodopes, as well as a rich folklore programme. The main goals of the festival are the promotion of the ecologically clean production of food, fruits, and vegetables in the Rhodopes region while providing a space for cultural exchange between participants from different regions of the Rhodopes, the country and abroad, as well as encouraging the exchange of good practices in the production of clean food.

Find out more at: <https://ardino.bg/aktualno/novini/festivalat-na-chistite-hrani-ot-rodopite-ardino-2021-s-bogata-i-raznoobrazna-programa>



© Guner Shukri Mumun

3.10.2. Entrepreneurship for locally grown agricultural products; Gürsu (Turkey)

“Women’s Production Center from Soil to Table” is an initiative by Women Entrepreneurs and Producers Cooperative of Gürsu where second-rate fruit and vegetable products are processed and transformed into value-added products. This has a positive effect as it prevents the loss of agricultural products with an annual value of TRY 10 million. Gürsu Women Entrepreneurs and Producers Cooperative was established and cooperates closely with the Gürsu municipality to increase the agricultural added value. The group focuses on Local Product Manufacturing, Production of Dried Products from Endemic Fruits and Vegetables Growing in the Region, Restaurant Services Consisting of Local Homemade Meals and carrying out Gastronomy Workshops. Another organisation partnering with farmer cooperatives in Gursu and Gursu Municipality is Gursu Fruit and Vegetable Processing and Export Cooperative. Together, they manufacture, and export agricultural products of the district based on good agricultural practices. A tile and handicraft workshop were established by Afra Hatun Association. Its female members produce and sell tile handicrafts with the Gök Sığırkuyruğu Flower motif and local food products.

Find out more at: <https://www.gursu.bel.tr/Projelerimiz/?banner=6> and <http://www.afrader.org.tr>

3.10.3. KochArt - The good things are so close to hand; Kitzbühel (Austria)

Koch Art is an association of 20 restaurateurs from the Kitzbühel Alps who use regional and high-quality produce in their menus. For more than 13 years, the goal of KochArt has been the creation of sustainable synergies between agriculture and restaurants throughout the region. The purpose is to maximise regional added value by educating the population and guests of the region, making them aware of local products and their quality. Members of the KochArt association are only restaurants, who live and promote the philosophy of regional sourcing.

Find out more at: <https://www.kochart.tirol>

3.10.4. Agriculture technology for farming; Kozard (Hungary)

Progressive young farmers introduced pollinator (honeybee and bumble bees) and small-wild game (rabbit, pheasant, grey partridge) habitat development by using sophisticated

smart agriculture technology in 2015. The new agriculture quickly gained high popularity among tourists. It has led to beautiful green wheat fields, spring yellow oil rape fields, lovely purple clover fields, surrounded by dark blue delphinium, rye, and barley on five hectares parcels. As a result, former large scale industrial farms were successively replaced by new, friendly rural landscapes.

Find out more at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212567114001518>

3.10.5. Gourmet tourism for growth; Vinkovci (Croatia)

The Panonnia Gourmet is cross-border project implemented to promote regional gastronomic tourism as an alternative and innovative form of tourism. The project will include brand and product development - EatPannonia Brand –, the inauguration of refurbished gastronomy centres, a bio garden, and an educational component - the Gourmet Academy programme that provides thematic knowledge to stakeholders. Panonnia Gourmet primarily seeks to make better use of the potentials that come from the traditional production of the agri-food sector, through the elaboration of a joint gastronomic offer, capacity growth and overall attractiveness of the cross-border region.

Find out more at <https://projekt.grad-vinkovci.hr/pannonia-gourmet/en/homepage/>

3.10.6. Making visitors appreciate local sustainability; Zejtun (Malta)

To make tourists appreciate the sustainable environment of Zejtun more, the local council has implemented a walk from between two chapels in the Misraħ Strejnu area. Throughout this designated walk, various tourist attractions have been inserted to demonstrated and showcase the localities sustainability efforts. Tourists can now visit a vineyard, a hydroponic farm and a dairy farm to enjoy local produce along a picturesque walking route.

3.10.7. Ecological conservation to save the bees; Zejtun (Malta)

The local council in Zejtun has transformed the Luqa Briffa Garden into a sustainable botanical garden (it was originally a botanical garden before being transformed into a park). The botanical garden serves both to conserve and protect indigenous trees and shrubs as well as an apiary that is designed to help and protect the Maltese bees, which

are at risk of going extinct. Zejtun is designing its urban landscape while taking the past into consideration when deciding what the next best move should be.

Find out more at: <https://www.zejtunlocalcouncil.com/luqa-briffa-garden->

3.10.8. Culinary Branding; Rogla (Slovenia)

The “Tastes of Rogla” is a branding initiative designed to bring together and preserve the culinary traditions of the destination. In doing so, this brand is helping to preserve authentic, local and sustainable culinary traditions that are passed down through the generations. The dishes that are included in this brand are produced with locally grown products from local farmers and growers.

Find out more at: <https://www.term-zrece.eu/en/what-to-do/cuisine/tastes-of-rogl>



**EUROPEAN DESTINATIONS
OF EXCELLENCE**



**SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM PIONEER**