StarGrowth
Sustainable Growth in Tourism

June 2024

Handbook for SMEs on Sustainability and Digitalisation

The Handbook summarises relevant initiatives, guidelines, good practices, main players and providers of sustainable, digital and innovative solutions and opportunities for tourism SMEs in partner countries.

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Handbook for SMEs on relevant initiatives and practices

1. Introduction

The comparative report of tourism SME's needs, aims to analyse common issues and differences among the partner countries, regarding specific needs of tourism SMEs for their transition to sustainability and digitalisation. It focuses on the good inspirational practices of green and digital transition implemented by SMEs in five key countries: Cyprus, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, and Italy. The primary goal is to provide 90 selected and funded SMEs with actionable insights and examples of sustainable and innovative initiatives that they can adopt in their operations.

Tourism is a vital economic sector for many countries, contributing significantly to GDP and employment. However, it also poses considerable challenges, particularly in terms of environmental impact and the need for technological advancement. As the world faces the pressing issues of climate change and rapid digital transformation, the tourism sector must evolve to meet these challenges. Sustainable tourism and digitalization are no longer optional but essential components for the future resilience and competitiveness of tourism SMEs.

Scope and Objectives

The report aims to highlight and disseminate best practices in sustainable business management and digitalization within the tourism sector. These practices have been meticulously selected through extensive bibliographic research conducted by project partners in each of the five countries. The examples included in this report serve as a rich source of inspiration for other SMEs looking to undertake similar initiatives.

By showcasing these practices, the report seeks to:
- Inspire SMEs: Provide concrete examples of how sustainability and digitalization can be integrated into tourism business models.
- Promote Knowledge Sharing: Facilitate the exchange of ideas and strategies among tourism SMEs across different regions.
- Encourage Collaboration: Highlight the importance of networks and collaboration in achieving sustainable and digital transformations.
- Support Policy Implementation: Assist policymakers in understanding the practical applications of green and digital strategies within the tourism sector.

Methodology

Each partner country has contributed to the report by identifying examples of sustainable business management and digitization practices within their respective countries. The process involved comprehensive research and analysis to ensure the selected practices are relevant, impactful, and replicable. In total, 23 practices in sustainability and 19 in digitalization were identified across the five countries.

The report is structured to provide a detailed overview of these practices, categorized by country.

Structure of the Report

Sustainable good practices: Each country's section begins with an overview of the structures involved in sustainable tourism. This includes a brief description of the organizations or SMEs implementing these practices. The sustainability area is further broken down into the following sub-sections:

Overview of the Structures: Describes the type and scale of the tourism enterprises involved.

Marketing Tourism Strategy: Explains the marketing approaches adopted to promote sustainable tourism.

Sustainable Practices Adopted: Details the specific sustainability practices implemented by the SMEs.

Resources of the Territories: Highlights the utilization and preservation of local resources in promoting sustainable tourism.

Networks and Collaboration: Discusses the role of partnerships and collaborative efforts in enhancing sustainability initiatives.

Digital-related good practices: The digitalization area focuses on the innovative digital practices adopted by tourism SMEs. This section is organized into the following sub-sections:

Description of the Practices: Provides an overview of the digital solutions implemented.

Activities and Strategies in the Digitalization of Processes: Details the activities and strategic approaches taken to digitize business processes.

Digital Solutions: Describes the specific digital tools and technologies employed by the SMEs.

At the end of each country-specific section, a comprehensive list of all the good practices identified is provided. This compilation serves as a valuable reference for other SMEs looking to adopt similar sustainable and digital practices.

2. Good practices on sustainability

The first section of the report is dedicated to the good practices identified in the field of sustainability. Paragraphs are divided per country, and each country report has the same structure with the same paragraphs targeting the overview of the structure, the marketing tourism strategy, the sustainable practices adopted, the resources of the territory and networks and collaborations with local stakeholders.

2.1 Greece

2.1.1 Overview of the structures

The practices identified showcase a variety of structures, predominantly hotel resorts and boutique hotels, alongside an innovative cultural tourism initiative. Each practice demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainability through various strategies:

- **Eco-Friendly Accommodations**: Hotels like Aristi Mountain Resort & Villas, Dexamenes, Nefeli Hotel, and Kinsterna Hotel emphasize environmental conservation and sustainable operations, often receiving international recognition for their efforts.

- **Sustainability Reporting**: Cactus Hotels lead by example with their comprehensive annual sustainability reports, setting a standard for transparency and accountability in sustainable tourism.
- **Heritage Conservation**: Carpe Diem highlights the importance of preserving historical architecture while integrating modern sustainability practices.
- **Cultural and Eco-Tourism**: Soulouksina offers an innovative approach to tourism, combining cultural experiences with sustainable transportation options.

2.1.2 Marketing tourism strategy

On this section there are data only for the structure "Cactus hotel". These are the strategies adopted:

Certification and Quality Assurance:

Establishing a sustainability program based on strict criteria from certification and quality assurance standards. This ensures that the hotel's efforts are recognized and trusted by customers and stakeholders.

Service Upgradation:

Continuously improving the quality of services offered to guests. This involves regular evaluation and enhancement of facilities, amenities, and customer service to stay competitive and meet evolving customer expectations.

Environmental and Community Respect:

Implementing actions that respect and minimally impact the environment and local community. This includes adopting eco-friendly practices, reducing waste, conserving resources, and supporting local traditions and customs.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):

Shaping corporate responsibility to support sustainable development. By engaging in CSR activities, the company enhances its reputation and performance, creating a competitive advantage. CSR initiatives might include community development projects, charitable contributions, and sustainable tourism practices.

Reputation Management:

Leveraging corporate social responsibility to build and maintain a positive reputation. A strong reputation attracts more customers who are increasingly conscious of environmental and social impacts.

Digital Marketing:

Utilizing digital platforms to promote sustainability efforts and attract eco-conscious tourists. This includes maintaining an informative and engaging website, active social media presence, and online marketing campaigns that highlight the sustainable and community-friendly aspects of the business.

Customer Engagement:

Engaging with customers to promote sustainable practices. This can involve educating guests about the importance of sustainability, encouraging eco-friendly behaviors during their stay, and providing opportunities for guests to participate in local community activities or environmental conservation projects.

1.1.3 Sustainable practices adopted

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

A prominent trend is the adoption of energy-efficient technologies and renewable energy sources. For instance, Aristi Mountain Resort & Villas and Dexamenes Seaside Hotel have made significant strides in reducing their carbon footprint. Aristi Mountain Resort uses heat pumps to reduce oil consumption and has switched to LED lighting, which significantly lowers energy usage. Similarly, Dexamenes Seaside Hotel generates almost 90% of its electrical energy in-house, showcasing a commitment to self-sufficiency and sustainability.

Reuse and Upcycling of Materials
Another notable practice is the reuse and upcycling of existing materials during renovations. Dexamenes Seaside Hotel serves as a prime example by transforming old wine tanks into a beachfront retreat without extensive new construction. The hotel reused concrete blocks, reclaimed bricks, and old pipelines, demonstrating how upcycling can be effectively integrated into sustainable tourism.

Water Conservation
Water conservation measures are integral to the sustainable practices of these SMEs. Kinsterna Hotel and other establishments prioritize water resource management by implementing systems such as drip irrigation, flow control devices, and the reuse of towels and linens. These measures not only reduce water consumption but also promote a culture of responsible water use among staff and guests.

Local Sourcing and Community Engagement
Sourcing local products and engaging with the local community is a common theme. For example, Dexamenes Seaside Hotel uses locally sourced food and materials, hires staff from the surrounding area, and educates them on sustainability matters. Kinsterna Hotel also supports the local economy by employing local staff and using produce from their estate gardens. This trend not only supports local businesses but also reduces the carbon footprint associated with transporting goods.

Waste Management and Recycling
Effective waste management practices are evident in these SMEs. Kinsterna Hotel follows a comprehensive waste compost protocol and separates kitchen food residues for animal feed. Additionally, they adhere to strict recycling protocols for towels and linens and have a system in place for managing kitchen and garden waste. These practices minimize waste and promote a circular economy.

Eco-Friendly Transportation
Providing sustainable transportation options is another key practice. Both Aristi Mountain Resort and Dexamenes Seaside Hotel offer electric cars and vans, reducing reliance on fossil fuels. Moreover, the electric bike tours in Crete highlight a shift towards promoting low-emission transportation alternatives for tourists, enhancing their experience while minimizing environmental impact.

Sustainable Architecture and Design
Maintaining architectural integrity and using sustainable building materials are essential elements. For instance, the renovation of traditional buildings using local materials, as seen in

several hotels, reflects a commitment to preserving cultural heritage while incorporating modern eco-friendly practices. This approach not only reduces environmental impact but also offers guests an authentic and sustainable experience.

Environmental Education and Staff Training
Educating staff and guests about sustainability is crucial for these SMEs. Ongoing training on environmental practices ensures that staff are knowledgeable and committed to sustainability goals. For example, both Dexamenes Seaside Hotel and Kinsterna Hotel emphasize staff education and engagement in their sustainability initiatives.

2.1.4 Resources of the territories

The tourism SMEs in Greece that have adopted green and digital transitions are situated in areas rich with natural and cultural resources. These resources are integral to the unique experiences they offer and contribute significantly to their sustainable tourism practices. Below is an overview of the main resources of the territories where these exemplary practices are found.

Aristi Mountain Resort & Villas:
Natural Resources: The resort is located in the mountainous region of Zagori, known for its stunning landscapes, including the Vikos Gorge, one of the deepest gorges in the world, and the crystal-clear Voidomatis River. The area's rich biodiversity includes numerous flora and fauna species, making it a prime location for nature-based activities such as hiking, bird watching, and eco-tours.
Cultural Heritage: The region is also noted for its traditional stone-built villages and arched stone bridges, which reflect the area's long-standing architectural traditions and history. The preservation of these cultural elements adds to the authenticity and charm of the visitor experience.

Dexamenes Seaside Hotel:
Natural Resources: Located on Kourouta Beach in the Peloponnese, this hotel benefits from its prime beachfront position, offering direct access to the sea and a serene coastal environment. The area is characterized by sandy beaches, clear waters, and a mild Mediterranean climate, ideal for beachgoers and water sports enthusiasts.
Cultural Heritage: The hotel itself is a testament to industrial heritage, as it was converted from old wine tanks dating back to the 1920s. The preservation and repurposing of these historical structures provide a unique cultural experience for visitors, highlighting the region's winemaking history.

Kinsterna Hotel:
Natural Resources: Situated in the region of Monemvasia in the Peloponnese, Kinsterna Hotel is surrounded by lush gardens, vineyards, and olive groves. The estate grounds are home to over 290 species of flora, contributing to the region's rich biodiversity and offering guests an immersive natural experience.
Cultural Heritage: The hotel's main building is a meticulously restored Byzantine-era mansion, reflecting the region's historical and architectural heritage. Monemvasia itself is a medieval fortress town with cobblestone streets, historical buildings, and panoramic views of the Aegean Sea.

Archanes Village:

Natural Resources: Located near Heraklion in Crete, Archanes is surrounded by fertile plains with vineyards and olive groves, contributing to the area's agricultural richness. The town's location at an altitude of 400 meters provides a pleasant climate and scenic views.

Cultural Heritage: Archanes boasts a history of over 5000 years, with numerous archaeological sites from the Minoan period. The village has been recognized for its well-preserved traditional architecture and vibrant community life, with colorful houses and flower-filled streets.

Episkopi Village:

Natural Resources: Episkopi is an inland village located close to Episkopi Beach, providing a mix of coastal and rural environments. The surrounding landscape includes vineyards, olive groves, and hills, making it suitable for agricultural activities and nature walks.

Cultural Heritage: The village is listed as a traditional settlement with preserved old houses and many historic churches, reflecting its cultural and historical significance. The traditional architecture and serene environment attract visitors interested in cultural tourism and heritage exploration.

2.1.5 Networks and Collaboration

Greek SMEs are increasingly recognizing the importance of collaboration with local actors and initiatives to enhance their sustainable and cultural tourism offerings. Although detailed data on specific initiatives and collaborations are available for only a few structures, a general overview can still be drawn from these examples.

Collaborative Framework and Entrepreneurial Approach

Greek tourism SMEs, such as the Carpe Diem Hotel, do not operate in isolation. They adopt an entrepreneurial approach to sustainable tourism that emphasizes the integration of sustainability within a broader ecosystem of like-minded businesses. This collaborative framework is pivotal for the viability of sustainability practices. By forming networks with other green companies that share similar values concerning sustainability, cultural tourism, and bioeconomy, these SMEs create a supportive environment that enhances their individual and collective impact.

Affiliation with Green Networks

The affiliation with networks of green companies allows these SMEs to offer visitors a comprehensive and immersive experience of the surrounding territories. Such networks facilitate access to the rich historical heritage, landscapes, gastronomy, and traditions of Greece. The collaborative efforts ensure that tourists are not just passive consumers but active participants in the preservation and promotion of local culture and sustainability.

E-Bike Tours and Local Economic Support

Another notable initiative is the promotion of e-bike tours, which directly support local businesses. By encouraging tourists to engage in eco-friendly activities, these SMEs contribute to the economic growth of local communities. This form of sustainable tourism not

only reduces the environmental footprint but also ensures that the economic benefits of tourism are distributed within the community, fostering local development and well-being.

Positive Impact on Local Communities
Through their collaborative initiatives, Greek tourism SMEs enhance the overall well-being of the destinations they operate in. By supporting sustainable businesses and engaging visitors in eco-friendly activities, these SMEs help preserve the environment and promote the socio-economic health of local communities. This approach ensures a positive impact that benefits both the tourists and the local population.

2.1.6 Greek Sustainable practices

Good Practice n° 1 - Aristi

Name of the structure:	Aristi Mountain Resort & Villas
Country:	Greece
Website:	www.aristi.eu

Brief description of the structure:	It is a hotel, based in Zagorochoria in Epirus, which respects the environment and is committed to nature. That is why it was included among the 21 most ecological accommodations on the planet, according to a National Geographic list.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Zagorochoria, Epirus, Greece
Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	--
Main sustainable actions\ initiatives adopted:	One of the most important innovations is that at Aristi Mountain Resort & Villas the visitor can find a charging point for electric cars. In addition, the function of the building is completely compatible with nature. With the heat pumps that have been installed, the use of oil has been significantly reduced, while the lighting is done everywhere with economy lamps and LEDs. It is no coincidence that Aristi Mountain Resort & Villas has won the World's Leading Eco - Lodge Award 2020/2018/2017, at the World Travel Awards.
Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	Zagorochoria is a beautiful mountainous region in Epirus. Located on the western side of Greece, Zagorochoria is, in fact, a complex of 46 picturesque villages nestled in the heart of nature. These beautiful villages stand out for their trademark traditional architecture, wild natural landscape, and rustic setting. You can visit Zagorochoria for holidays or do a day trip from Ioannina, the largest town in Epirus.

	Thanks to its location, Zagorochoria Greece is a popular autumn and winter holiday destination in Greece. Over the years, Zagorochoria has emerged as a top alternative destination for extreme sports and activities, such as rafting in Voidomatis river, horse riding, and trekking. The most impressive place in Zagorochoria -and also an ideal place for hiking- is hands down Vikos Gorge. It is the second deepest (!) gorge in the world after the Grand Canyon.
Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc.)	--
Further comments	--

Good Practice N.2 - Dexamenes Seaside Hotel

Name of the structure:	Dexamenes Seaside Hotel
Country:	Greece
Website:	www.dexamenes.com

Brief description of the structure:	Dexamenes is a Greek hotel, nased in Kourouta, western Greece, that excels in sustainability matters.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Kourouta, Ilia region, western Greece
Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	--
Main sustainable actions\ initiatives adopted:	In order to build the Dexamenes Seaside Hotel, an extensive transformation was not necessary in terms of construction — considering the existing cluster of 1920s wine tanks were already in existence. Respecting the integrity of the buildings' industrial heritage was simple in the conversion into a beachfront retreat: reuse and repurpose existing site materials where needed, make new interventions with local materials, and keep most of the structure as is. During the renovation of the premises most materials were upcycled, including blocks of concrete reused as steppingstones, coffee tables and chairs. Reclaimed bricks were used to create the floor of

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	the restaurant and courtyard and old water pipelines exist as handrails.
	There has also adopted a program of counting water that is consumed and chose to landscape the area with local plants that need minimal watering. Furthermore, the hotel produces almost 90% of its electrical energy in-house. In addition, sustainable means of transport are on offer with electric cars and vans.
	Moreover, the raw ingredients of the food come from local producers and follow the seasonality. Meanwhile, single-use plastics are avoided and only certified ecological materials are used for the cleaning and maintenance of the premises. In addition, the people working in the hotel are almost all from the surrounding area and they are educated constantly on sustainability matters. Another touch that makes the difference is the staff uniforms. These are clothes made with 100% natural materials and made in Greece with fair fees for the tailors who participated in their production.
Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	Kourouta is a coastal settlement of the Regional Unit of Ilia at an altitude of 5 meters. Kourouta is located on the west coast of the Peloponnese in the Ionian Sea, at a distance of 6 km SW of Amaliada and 20 km NW of Pyrgos.
	It is a well-known summer resort for its sandy beach, water activities and its sunset. It has many leisure and entertainment centers. There are also several small hotel units, rooms to let, campsites, restaurants as well as bike paths that connect Kourouta with Palouki.
Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc.)	--
Further comments	--

Good Practice N.3 – Nefeli Hotel

Name of the structure:	Nefeli Hotel
Country:	Greece
Website:	www. skyros-nefeli.gr

Brief description of the structure:	Nefeli Hotel in Skyros Island, stands out for its green character.

Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Skyros Island, Greece
Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	--
Main sustainable actions\ initiatives adopted:	In order to build the Dexamenes Seaside Hotel, an extensive transformation was not necessary in terms of construction — considering the existing cluster of 1920s wine tanks were already in existence. Respecting the integrity of the buildings' industrial heritage was simple in the conversion into a beachfront retreat: reuse and repurpose existing site materials where needed, make new interventions with local materials, and keep most of the structure as is. During the renovation of the premises most materials were upcycled, including blocks of concrete reused as steppingstones, coffee tables and chairs. Reclaimed bricks were used to create the floor of the restaurant and courtyard and old water pipelines exist as handrails. There has also adopted a program of counting water that is consumed and chose to landscape the area with local plants that need minimal watering. Furthermore, the hotel produces almost 90% of its electrical energy in-house. In addition, sustainable means of transport are on offer with electric cars and vans. Moreover, the raw ingredients of the food come from local producers and follow the seasonality. Meanwhile, single-use plastics are avoided and only certified ecological materials are used for the cleaning and maintenance of the premises. In addition, the people working in the hotel are almost all from the surrounding area and they are educated constantly on sustainability matters. Another touch that makes the difference is the staff uniforms. These are clothes made with 100% natural materials and made in Greece with fair fees for the tailors who participated in their production.
Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	Kourouta is a coastal settlement of the Regional Unit of Ilia at an altitude of 5 meters. Kourouta is located on the west coast of the Peloponnese in the Ionian Sea, at a distance of 6 km SW of Amaliada and 20 km NW of Pyrgos. It is a well-known summer resort for its sandy beach, water activities and its sunset. It has many leisure and entertainment centers. There are also several small hotel

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Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc.)	--
Further comments	--

Good Practice N.4 – Kinsterna Hotel

Name of the structure:	Kinsterna Hotel
Country:	Greece
Website:	www.kinsternahotel.gr

Brief description of the structure:	Kinsterna Hotel is located in the village of Agios Stefanos, 7 km southwest of Monemvasia in the southern Peloponnese
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Monemvasia, southern Peloponnese, Greece
Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	--
Main sustainable actions\ initiatives adopted:	Kinsterna Hotel, based in Monemvasia, Peloponnese, practices work towards benefiting and caring for the environment; from small things, such as procuring products only from its region and using organic linen and bed sheets, to several larger-scale initiatives as listed below. Furthermore, at the hotel, the visitor will find more than 290 flora species on the estate grounds. The staff is committed to the planting and growth of endemic trees and plants, for the benefit of the climate, the environment and local biodiversity. As a responsible enterprise, Kinsterna Hotel is one of the luxury sustainable hotels in Greece that will always protect the environment and nature in connection with its estate activities. Its historical mansion operates using sustainable hotel practices that draw inspiration from Kinsterna's existing practices and actions.

	In effect, this means that they save on nature's resources and strive to minimise environmental impact; continually seek new knowledge & technology that ensures increased environmental protection; incorporate initiatives and products that save energy and water; ensure a high degree of recycling and waste minimisation by following a waste compost protocol and separation of kitchen food residues for feeding the stable animals; have a water resource management and preservation system in place, offering naturally filtered water from the two springs located on the property; inform employees on how to care for the environment; encourage they suppliers to live up to their environmental-conscious level; hire staff locally, accounting for 70% of their employees, thus reinforcing the region's economic development; use local, natural building materials: slate, cypress wood, pebbles, marble, old hand-made tiles and ceramics, and reeds from nearby wetlands; use their own produce in their kitchen: estate garden fruits and vegetables, herbs, wine, olive oil; have natural, ecological sheets and linens; follow a program for recycling towels and linen; have a composting system for kitchen and garden waste; adhere to Green Key's criteria at all times, following up on inquiries and actively working with the scheme's recommendations.
Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	Kinsterna Hotel is located in the village of Agios Stefanos, 7 km southwest of Monemvasia in the southern Peloponnese and is built on the edge of the "Ibrahim Bay" estate. The fertile grounds of the estate, now 25 acres in size, includes perennial olives, citrus trees and especially the old orange grove that produces the famous oranges of Monemvasia, fruit trees that have been there since the beginning of the 19th century (and those that had disappeared, replaced by local varieties), imposing cypress trees, oversized historic century-old eucalyptus trees, orchards with horticultural, ornamental and aromatic plants and herbs. Monemvasia, known to the Franks as 'Malvasia', is a historic town in the eastern Peloponnese, in the province of Epidaurus Limiras, in the prefecture of Laconia. It is best known for its medieval fortress, on the homonymous 'Rock of Monemvasia', which is a small island connected by a bridge to the current beach of the settlement. The surviving buildings and structures of the castle include defensive structures of the outer wall and several small Byzantine churches.

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Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc.)	--
Further comments	--

Good Practice N.5 – Cactus Hotel

Name of the structure:	Cactus Hotels
Country:	Greece
Website:	www.cactushotels.gr

Brief description of the structure:	"Cactus Hotels", is a group of hotels located in a rural area on the north coast of Crete. Since 2016 they have been the first accommodation group of hotels in Greece to regularly publish a yearly sustainability report which describes in detail all policies and measures taken towards sustainability.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Crete, Greece
Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	Cactus Hotels sustainability program is based on a set of criteria set by the certification and quality assurance standards that the hotel holds. The main concern, in a highly competitive environment of the tourism industry, is the continuous upgrading of the services provided to our customers. In every action in this direction Cactus Hotels ensure that it is done with absolute respect and minimal impact on the environment and the local community. A key pillar for supporting sustainable development is shaping corporate responsibility. Corporate social responsibility creates a competitive advantage to enhance the company's reputation and performance.
Main sustainable actions\ initiatives adopted:	Water saving procedures are given the utmost priority. Water saving and rational management of water resources but primarily the cultivation of a new culture regarding water management is considered imperative. Technically, there are some measure like the installation of flow control devices, staff training, growing specific species of plants which adapt to local climate, the irrigation of greens with the drip method, the installation of sanitary

ware with authorized amounts of water consumption (toilets, showers, faucets with low water flow), the policy of reusing towels and bedding in the rooms.

Helping to protect the environment they follow environmentally friendly practices in the use of chemicals and cleaners which are purchased from a certified supplier who sells biodegradable products according to European Regulations. The in-house Alternative Management system includes the record the amount of chemicals collected, the secure storage of these based on international and national standards, staff training on the correct use of chemicals, the check the minimum incidence of those on health and environment, the existence of an incident record, the existence and notification instructions for emergency situations, a detailed service report and control of suppliers.

Concerning polluting waste, each year the hotels collect toner, burnt cooking oil and used batteries in partnership with a licensed collection company for recycling purposes.

The hotels have earned the most important international certifications of eco-sustainability, and despite the fact that they are structures that essentially offer a product intended for mass tourism, they have been awarded all over the world as a good example of hotel sustainability.

Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	Cactus Hotels are found at the sea-side village of Stalis, between Malia and Hersonissos on the cove of a large sandy beach on the north coast of Crete. Stalis offers a quieter atmosphere than the one of the neighboring Malia and Hersonissos, making it ideal for families and couples alike, however it still offers a vibrant and lively holiday spot accompanied by its numerous cafes, tavernas, stores and super markets that run parallel to the sandy beach. Stalis is the ideal area that can serve as a starting point to daily excursions, day trips to cities and towns nearby. It is just 35 kilometers away from the Nikos Kazantzakis International Airport and 37 kilometers from the merchant port of Heraklion.
Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc.)	--

Further comments	--

Good Practice N.6 – Carpe Diem

Name of the structure:	Carpe Diem
Country:	Greece
Website:	www.carpediemhotel.gr

Brief description of the structure:	"Carpe Diem" is a boutique hotel which is currently operating for the first year. It is located in the heart of the historical village of Archanes, south of the Cretan capital city Heraklion. The owners renovated one of the oldest mansions of the village, built in the 19th century by a prominent family of winemakers.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Crete, Greece
Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	
Main sustainable actions\ initiatives adopted:	Following the world trends according to which one of the comparative advantages sustainability in hotels is to be architecturally eco-conscious, the owners of the hotel kept the spirit of the house, the original materials (stone and wood), and designed a traditional yet modern small hotel where authentic Cretan hospitality is offered through care given to personal relations with the guests which feel at home. The workforce that composed the renovation team was made up of small local artisans who preserve ancient skills. Products served are exclusively produced locally, and technical services are externalised on the local market. Moreover, concerning the economic management of the enterprise Carpe Diem has adopted the most modern hydric and heating system, following SCP regulations minimizing wastes and pollutants.
Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	Archanes is a small vibrant town with meticulously restored old houses and pleasant squares. An agricultural town with a long history of 5000 years and important archaeological sites, while excavations conducted in the last 50 years have brought to light a lot of sites dating back to the Minoan period. Archanes is so close to Heraklion in time and in distance, and so much pleasure too. You pass through Kato

	Archanes and climb a short distance to the main (Epano) Archanes village. Arhanes Village is surrounded by endless vineyards and cool springs and the town itself is full of colorful houses, and vibrant flowers that decorate the yards and the streets. This rural settlement has deep roots in Minoan antiquity and a long wine-producing tradition. At an altitude of 400 meters, Archanes embraces a fertile plain with olive groves and vineyards, from where the locals have always produced olive oil and some of the best wines of the island. Archanes has won awards - 2nd best-restored village in Europe and 1st in long-term development prospects. Streets have been newly stone-paved, and there are more splendid displays of blooming flowers, fruit trees, and plants in the yards, terraces, and balconies of the houses - a walk around the back streets is a pleasure as a result.
Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc.)	Carpe Diem Hotel does not operate in isolation, but adopts the entrepreneurial approach to sustainable tourism according to which sustainability to be viable must be inserted in an environment where other businesses follow similar paths: for this reason, it has a dedicated green team and is affiliated with a network of green companies which share the same concept of sustainability, cultural tourism and bioeconomy, enabling visitors to have the possibility of experiencing in parallel the surrounding territory rich in historical heritage, landscapes, gastronomy and traditions.
Further comments	--

Good practice n° 7 - Soulouskina

Name of the structure:	Soulouksina
Country:	Greece
Website:	www.soulouksina.com

Brief description of the structure:	"Soulouksina" is a brand-new cultural e-bike experience permeated with sustainability.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Episkopi, Crete, Greece

Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	
Main sustainable actions\ initiatives adopted:	This electric bike tour is more than a simple tour across almost thirty kilometres of Cretan countryside. The guide is also a story-teller, who will inform tourists about the history of the villages crossed, of the heritage encountered, of the landscapes appreciated. The tour is enriched with visits to farms, monasteries, old cafes and old mansions, and culminates with a dinner which the participants themselves have the opportunity to take part in cooking exclusively traditional recipes with fresh local products. Services offered are exclusively performed in the open nature and have zero negative impact on the environment. The company has invested in the purchase of latest generation all-electric bicycles that allow tackling even challenging climbs with no emissions, and caters to a tourism market share that plans its holidays exclusively on the basis of the sustainability of the chosen destinations and activities. Electric bikes produce minimal carbon emissions, offering a green alternative to traditional transportation methods and contributing to the fight against climate change. Moreover, electric bikes are energy-efficient modes of transportation, requiring less energy to operate than conventional vehicles, thus promoting energy conservation.
Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	Episkopi is an inland village 3 кm from the sea but the seaside which is close to the settlement is кnown as Episkopi beach. It is also listed as a traditional settlement of the Crete island, with preserved old houses and many churches.
Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc.), if applicable Provide links	By opting for e-bike tour, directly support local businesses, thereby boosting economic growth in communities. In addition, by supporting sustainable businesses and engaging in eco-friendly activities, visitors can contribute to the overall well-being of destinations, leaving a positive impact on local communities and the environment.
Further comments	--

2.2 Bulgaria

2.2.1 Overview of the structures

The practices identified in Bulgaria showcase a diverse range of structures committed to green and digital transitions within the tourism sector. These structures include a luxury hotel, an innovative restaurant, and a pioneering food tech company. Each of these practices exemplifies unique approaches to sustainability and digital advancement.

- **Hospitality Sector:** Represented by the Kempinski Hotel Grand Arena Bansko and the zero-waste restaurant, this sector highlights practices focused on environmental sustainability and social responsibility within the tourism industry. The hotel's certification by EarthCheck underscores a structured approach to sustainability, while the restaurant's zero-waste policy and social employment initiatives demonstrate innovative and inclusive practices.
- **Food Technology Sector:** The biodegradable coffee cup manufacturer falls under this category, illustrating how advanced technology and digital processes can lead to sustainable product innovation. This company's focus on creating eco-friendly alternatives to common products emphasizes the role of technology in achieving green goals.

2.2.2 Marketing tourism strategy

Bulgaria showcases a diverse array of activities and strategies aimed at promoting sustainable tourism, with significant efforts directed towards environmental responsibility and social sustainability. Here are the key approaches observed across the selected practices:

Environmental and Social Sustainability Initiatives:
Kempinski Hotel Grand Arena Bansko: This hotel has implemented a comprehensive "Environmental & Social Sustainability Policy" that highlights its commitment to reducing environmental impact and supporting local communities. Such policies often include energy-saving measures, waste reduction, and engagement in local cultural and social initiatives to attract eco-conscious travelers.

Zero-Waste Food and Catering Services:
Restaurant "Blagichka – Zero Waste": This establishment emphasizes minimal carbon footprint and zero waste practices in its food and catering services. By sending organic waste to a nearby composter, the restaurant not only minimizes waste but also contributes to soil health and reduces landfill usage. This strategy appeals to environmentally aware tourists looking for sustainable dining options.
Sustainable Product Innovation:
Cupffee Ltd.: Focused on efficiency and sustainability, Cupffee Ltd. produces edible coffee cups, which not only reduce waste but also offer a unique and eco-friendly product. This innovation promotes sustainability by reducing single-use plastic and paper waste, appealing to eco-friendly tourists and businesses.
The common thread among these practices is a strong commitment to sustainability, which serves as a major promotional strategy for tourism in Bulgaria. By adopting environmentally

friendly policies and innovative waste management solutions, these businesses attract tourists who prioritize sustainability and eco-conscious living. These initiatives not only enhance the appeal of individual establishments but also position Bulgaria as a forward-thinking destination for green tourism.

2.2.3 Sustainable practices adopted

The tourism sector in Bulgaria has seen a notable shift towards sustainability, with businesses implementing various initiatives to minimize their environmental footprint while promoting social responsibility. The following examples highlight how different entities within the industry are pioneering sustainable practices:

Kempinski Hotel Grand Arena Bansko
Local Empowerment and Fair Trade: This hotel emphasizes the importance of employing and empowering local employees, thereby supporting the local economy. It prioritizes sourcing sustainable products and services locally, adhering to Fair Trade principles. This practice not only ensures high-quality offerings but also fosters a stronger, more resilient local community.
Stakeholder Engagement: The hotel actively involves its staff in promoting environmental and social sustainability. By encouraging staff to communicate their commitment to these principles to guests, suppliers, and contractors, the hotel cultivates a culture of sustainability that extends beyond its immediate operations.

Restaurant "Blagichka – Zero Waste"
Zero Waste Catering: This restaurant has adopted a zero-waste philosophy, striving to offer food and catering services with minimal carbon footprint. By focusing on reducing waste at every stage of the process, the restaurant sets a benchmark for sustainable dining.
Youth Training Programs: The restaurant organizes training programs for young people from homes and sheltered housing. These programs aim to develop essential cooking skills, teach efficient shopping practices, and promote the selection of quality and affordable food. By doing so, the restaurant not only addresses food waste but also empowers disadvantaged youth with valuable life skills.
Employment of Disadvantaged Youth: By employing disadvantaged young people in their kitchen, the restaurant provides job opportunities and support to vulnerable groups, fostering social inclusion and economic stability.

Cupffee Ltd.
Zero Waste Production: Cupffee Ltd. has designed its production process to be entirely zero waste, ensuring that no industrial waste is generated. The process produces only clean steam and the pleasant aroma of freshly baked cookies.
Material Repurposing: Any leftover materials from the production of edible cups are repurposed to create additional products such as stirrers. This innovative approach not only eliminates waste but also maximizes resource utilization, contributing to a circular economy model.

2.2.4 Resources of the territories

The structures listed can also count on a diverse array of attractions that draw tourists from all over the world. These resources are grouped into the following categories:

Natural Resources
Mountain Ranges:
The Pirin Mountains near Bansko are a UNESCO World Heritage site, offering stunning natural landscapes and a variety of outdoor activities such as hiking, skiing, and nature walks.
Vitosha Mountain, located near Sofia, provides a scenic backdrop for the capital and is a popular spot for hiking, skiing, and other outdoor recreational activities.

Mineral Springs:
Bansko is notable for its numerous natural mineral springs, which are not only a significant natural resource but also a major attraction for health and wellness tourism.

Cultural Heritage
Historical Sites and Ancient Cities:
Bansko Old Town: This area is renowned for its well-preserved houses dating from the 13th to the 19th century, reflecting the rich architectural and historical heritage of the region.
Plovdiv: As one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in Europe, Plovdiv offers a wealth of historical and cultural sites. Notable landmarks include the Ancient Theatre of Philippopolis, a Roman Odeon, a Roman Aqueduct, and the Roman Stadium.

Museums and Folklore:
Bansko and other regions have numerous museums that showcase the local history, art, and folklore traditions. These institutions help preserve and promote the rich cultural tapestry of Bulgaria.

Cultural Events and Festivals:
Plovdiv, the European Capital of Culture in 2019, hosts a variety of cultural events such as the International Plovdiv Fair, which attract tourists and highlight the city's vibrant cultural scene.
Modern Urban Resources

Innovation and Startups:
Sofia, the capital city, is a hub for innovation and startups, providing ample opportunities for business tourism and entrepreneurial activities. The city's rich cultural heritage, combined with modern urban amenities, makes it a significant draw for visitors.
These diverse resources contribute to Bulgaria's appeal as a tourist destination, offering a unique blend of natural beauty, historical depth, and modern urban dynamism.

2.2.5 Networks and collaboration
The networking and collaborations among tourism SMEs in Bulgaria reflect a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to community engagement and sustainability. The following key elements characterize these practices:

Community Engagement: SMEs like Hotel Bansko actively participate in organizing and supporting local events and festivals. This involvement enriches the cultural fabric of the community and enhances the tourist experience by offering unique and locally rooted activities.

Local Sourcing and Partnerships: Establishments such as Restaurant "Blagichka – Zero Waste" and Cupffee Ltd. prioritize local sourcing, partnering with local producers and service providers. This not only ensures high-quality and fresh products but also supports the local economy and fosters sustainable agricultural practices.

Educational and Promotional Initiatives: Through training sessions, workshops, and participation in promotional events, these SMEs contribute to raising awareness about sustainability, healthy living, and environmental responsibility. Their educational efforts help cultivate a more informed and engaged community.

Strategic Alliances: Collaboration with local authorities and municipalities is a common thread among these SMEs. These alliances facilitate regulatory support, access to resources, and alignment with broader regional development goals, ensuring that the businesses can thrive while contributing to sustainable tourism.

Media and Outreach: Engagement with online media and other promotional platforms enables these businesses to reach a wider audience, share their sustainability efforts, and inspire others to adopt similar practices.

2.2.6 Bulgarian Sustainable practices

Good Practice N.1 - Kempinski Hotel Grand Arena Bansko

Name of the structure:	Kempinski Hotel Grand Arena Bansko
Country:	Bulgaria
Website:	https://www.kempinski.com/en/bansko

Brief description of the structure:	Kempinski Hotel Grand Arena Bansko is committed to achieving best-practice environmental and social sustainability and has partnered with EarthCheck, the world's leading Benchmarking and Certification provider. It has a "Silver" Certificate from EarthCheck (accredited certification body by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council) for 2020.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Kempinski Hotel Grand Arena Bansko is a luxury resort hotel in the most popular mountain resort of Bulgaria, Bansko, situated on the border to Pirin National Park (a UNESCO World Heritage Site).
Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	The hotel has adopted an "Environmental & Social Sustainability Policy".

Main sustainable actions\initiatives adopted:	Employing and empowering local employees, and wherever possible sustainable products and services are sourced locally in accordance with Fair Trade principles. Encouraging staff to present their commitment to environmental and social sustainability to all key stakeholders including guests, suppliers and contractors. *
Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	Bansko is reach in natural resources and cultural heritage sites and is a well-known destination for tourists seeking an enriching experience. The surrounding Pirin Mountains are world heritage listed and are of great significance to the local people and Bulgaria's tourism. Among its resources are lots of natural mineral springs, Bansko old town which presents well preserved houses from XIII – XIX c., lots of museums, preserved folklore traditions, etc.
Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc)	The hotel is among the organisers of lots of summer festivals and collaborates with local actors and associations, as well as with the local municipality.
Further comments	N/A

Good Practice N.2 - Restaurant "Blagichka – Zero Waste"

Name of the structure:	Restaurant "Blagichka – Zero Waste"
Country:	Bulgaria
Website:	https://blagichka.com/za-blagichka

Brief description of the structure:	The first restaurant with zero waste in Bulgaria which employs disadvantaged youth people.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	The restaurant is located in the capital of Bulgaria – Sofia.
Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	Offering food/catering with minimal carbon footprint and no waste. Sending to the composter that is next to the establishment all the organic waste that remains at the end, including the tea and coffee. In less than 2 months it breaks down there and turns into compost.

Main sustainable actions\ initiatives adopted:	Offering food/catering with minimal carbon footprint and no waste. Organization of trainings for young people from homes and sheltered housing, aiming to develop their cooking skills, planning their shopping for the week, how to choose quality and affordable food, etc. Employing disadvantaged young people to work in the kitchen of the restaurant.
Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	The restaurant is in Sofia - the capital of the country. It is rich in both natural resources and cultural heritage. It's located at the food of Vitosha Mountain, and has a rich culltural heritage, being and areas of human habitation since at least 7000 bc. It is a popular tourist destination. The capital provides lots of startup and innovation opportunities.
Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc.)	Collaborations with local partners such as local fruit and vegetable producers, dairy and butchers, etc. Organization of trainings for healthy food Collaborations with online media, etc. Participation in events for promotion of the zero waste policy
Further comments	N/A

Good Practice N.3 - Cupffee Ltd.

Name of the structure:	Cupffee Ltd.
Country:	Bulgaria
Website:	https://cupffee.me/en

Brief description of the structure:	A food tech company creating biodegradable coffee cups – a fully organic alternative to all disposable cups. The company has adopted the highest level of automation and digitalisation in their processes.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	The company is in Plovdiv, Bulgaria - the industrial center of the Balkans.
Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	In pursuit of efficiency and sustainability.

Main sustainable actions\ initiatives adopted:	The production process does not generate industrial waste – just clean steam and a tasty aroma of freshly baked cookies. The leftover materials from the production of cups are utilized as ingredients for other edible products. The production process is designed to be zero waste and environmentally conscious. The company generates no pollution and no industrial waste. Any excess materials are repurposed to create stirrers, ensuring that every aspect of their process contributes to a healthier planet.
Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	The city of Plovdiv is rich in history, culture and traditions, built around 7 hills. It is a cultural hub; it was the European Capital of Culture in 2019. It's an ancient city (Philippopolis) and there is evidence of habitation in the area dating back to the 6th millennium BCE. There are many preserved cultural sites such as the ancient Theatre of Philippopolis, a Roman Odeon, a Roman Aqueduct, the Roman Stadium, etc. The city hosts a variety of events, such as the International Plovdiv Fair, etc.
Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc.)	The company collaborates with local actors, incl. local authorities, local producers and service providers.
Further comments	N/A

2.3 Cyprus

2.3.1 Overview of the structures

Below is a general overview of the sustainability practices identified, categorized by the type of structures:

Resort-Based Initiatives

- Nissi Beach Resort, Ayia Napa

This resort is dedicated to maintaining the natural beauty of its surroundings. It implements a comprehensive sustainability policy that aims to prevent, reduce, and eliminate pollution, thereby minimizing its adverse environmental impacts.

• Aliathon Resort

Established in 1992, Aliathon Resort has been at the forefront of sustainability within the tourism industry. The resort's operations are guided by a comprehensive sustainability program and an integrated Environmental Policy.

Non-Profit Organizations
• Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative (CSTI)

CSTI is a non-profit, non-governmental organization founded in 2006. It was created through a partnership involving UK tour operators, Cypriot environmental NGOs, the Cyprus Tourism Organization, travel agents, and local village producers.

The sustainability practices in Cyprus reflect a blend of efforts from both resort-based structures and non-profit organizations. Resorts like Nissi Beach and Aliathon have integrated comprehensive sustainability policies into their operations, focusing on reducing environmental footprints and adopting innovative technologies. Meanwhile, CSTI exemplifies a collaborative approach, bringing together various stakeholders to promote sustainable tourism practices across the region

2.3.2 Marketing tourism strategy

These practices highlight the island's commitment to environmental stewardship, cultural preservation, and community engagement, serving as inspirational models for other regions. Here's a comprehensive overview based on the practices of key entities in Cyprus:

Nissi Beach Resort

Employee Training and Development: A central aspect of Nissi Beach Resort's strategy is the ongoing training of its employees. The focus is on environmental, health, and safety issues, ensuring that the staff is well-equipped to improve operations and manage emergencies efficiently.

Resource Consumption Audits: The resort conducts monthly audits of its resource consumption levels. This proactive approach helps ensure that the resort stays on track with its sustainability goals and continuously improves its environmental management system.

Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative (CSTI)

Collaborations and Projects: CSTI works closely with both local and international organizations and stakeholders in the tourism industry to develop and implement projects. These projects aim to:
Demonstrate the benefits of sustainable tourism on the environment, society, and economy.
Protect the natural environment.
Promote local culture and traditions.
Foster strong links between local suppliers, hoteliers, and tour operators.
Education and Awareness: CSTI places a significant emphasis on educating and informing stakeholders about sustainability issues, highlighting the importance of sustainable tourism practices.

Aliathon Resort

Corporate Social Responsibility and Workforce Training: Aliathon Resort prioritizes corporate social responsibility and the sustainability values inherent in it. A key strategy

involves the training and development of its workforce, enhancing their skills and competencies to increase productivity and sustainability awareness.

Diversity and Inclusion: The resort embraces and values the diversity of its staff. It views diversity as a dynamic asset that brings numerous benefits to the organization. The inclusive culture at Aliathon encourages employees to share ideas on enhancing sustainability practices further.

The main activities and strategies in promotional tourism in Cyprus are characterized by a strong emphasis on sustainability education, stakeholder collaboration, employee development, and resource management.

2.3.3 Sustainable practices adopted

This section provides a general overview of the main sustainable actions and initiatives adopted by tourism SMEs in Cyprus, based on the practices of Nissi Beach Resort, CSTI (Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative), and Aliathon Resort.

- Nissi Beach Resort

Nissi Beach Resort has undertaken significant measures to enhance energy efficiency. The resort has installed LED lighting throughout its premises, which not only reduces energy consumption but also lowers operational costs. In addition to this, energy-efficient air conditioning and heating systems have been implemented, contributing to a reduction in the overall energy usage of the resort. A noteworthy future initiative is the planned installation of photovoltaic panels by the end of 2023. This initiative aims to harness solar energy, further decreasing the resort's carbon footprint and moving towards renewable energy sources.

- Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative (CSTI)

CSTI has launched several key projects and initiatives that focus on sustainability and environmental conservation. These projects include:

PREVENT: This initiative aims to improve the predictability of extreme weather events over the Mediterranean region, helping businesses prepare for and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Women Entrepreneurs in Rural Tourism: This project supports women in rural areas to start and grow businesses in tourism, promoting gender equality and economic development.

Make Hotels Greener: Aimed at encouraging hotels to adopt greener practices, this initiative provides guidance and support for implementing sustainable measures.

Plastic Waste Free Islands Med IUCN: This project focuses on reducing plastic waste in the Mediterranean islands, promoting recycling and sustainable waste management practices.

- Aliathon Resort

Aliathon Resort has adopted a comprehensive environmental management policy focused on minimizing the environmental impact of its operations. Key strategies and initiatives include:

Pollution Prevention Program: This program aims to prevent pollution by implementing measures that reduce emissions, waste, and other environmental pollutants.

Compliance and Improvement: The resort ensures compliance with all relevant environmental legislation and regulations, while also striving for continual improvement in environmental

Environmental Management System: The resort has established an Environmental Management System that incorporates measures to improve environmental performance across all business units. This system ensures that environmental considerations are integrated into the resort's overall strategies, policies, and practices.

2.3.4 Resources of the territories

No relevant data emerged about these aspects for SMEs identified on Cyprus

2.3.5 Networks and collaboration

The practices identified have shown a commendable commitment to integrating sustainability into their operations, reflected through active collaboration with local actors and participation in various initiatives. The following provides a general overview of these efforts:

1. **Prioritizing Local Products and Suppliers**

Companies in the tourism sector, particularly hotels, have embedded a policy to prioritize products from the local community. This initiative aims to ensure the quality and safety of their offerings while reducing CO_2 emissions by avoiding long-distance transportation. By supporting small business suppliers, these companies not only enhance the local economy but also promote environmental standards in production and packaging. This approach helps preserve local traditions and customs, maintaining jobs within the community.

2. **Collaborations with CSTI (Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative)**

CSTI plays a pivotal role in fostering sustainable tourism practices in Cyprus. With a diverse membership that includes key players from the tourism industry and academic institutions, CSTI's activities are geared towards stimulating sustainable entrepreneurship and environmental preservation. By participating in EU-level projects, CSTI ensures that local tourism practices align with broader sustainability goals, thereby amplifying their impact.

3. **Community Engagement and Charitable Support by Aliathon Resort**

The Aliathon Resort exemplifies the integration of business operations with community support. Its community policy highlights several initiatives, such as supporting charitable programs, providing a safe and inclusive workplace, and protecting the environment. The resort's management acknowledges the potential impact of tourism on the local community and thus actively promotes the purchase of sustainable local products. By doing so, they contribute significantly to the community's well-being and economic stability.

2.3.6 Cyprus Sustainable practices

Good Practice N.1 – Nissi Beach

Name of the structure:	Nissi Beach

Country:	Cyprus
Website:	https://nissi-beach.com/

Brief description of the structure:	Ayia Napa, Cyprus' Nissi Beach Resort, prides itself on preserving the area's natural beauty. The resort minimises its adverse effects on the planet and promotes sustainable practices through a comprehensive sustainability policy that actively works to prevent, reduce, and eliminate pollution.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Ayia Napa (SE part of the island)
Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	A key part of the hotel's environmental management system is the ongoing training of employees on environmental, health, and safety issues - enabling the improvement of operations, emergency preparedness, and management oversight. The hotel team audits its resource consumption levels monthly to ensure they are on track with its goals
Main sustainable actions\ initiatives adopted:	Nissi Beach Resort has implemented several energy-efficient measures, including LED lighting and energy-efficient air conditioning and heating systems. Additionally, the hotel plans to install photovoltaic panels by the end of 2023 to further reduce its carbon footprint.
Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	--
Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc.)	The hotel policy, as stated in its environmental management documentation gives priority to: **Products from the local community,** ensuring the quality and safety of our products, avoiding transport, and helping to reduce CO2 emissions. **Small business suppliers to enhance the local community and economy**, who operate environmental standards in regard to production and packaging and who help and are present in the local community, and act to help maintain jobs and local traditions and customs **Products that are made from recycled products**, are sustainably produced, energy efficient and water saving, delivered in less packaging and bear a Fair Trade/Organic/FSC/MSC label.
Further comments	--

Good Practice N.2 - Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative

Name of the structure:	Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative
Country:	**Cyprus**
Website:	**https://csti-cyprus.org/**

Brief description of the structure:	The Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative (CSTI) is a non-profit nongovernmental organisation. It was established in 2006, following a 2-year long project of the Travel Foundation that created a partnership of UK leading tour operators, environmental Cypriot NGOs, the Cyprus Tourism Organization – CTO (Deputy Ministry of Tourism as of JAN19), Cyprus Travel Agents and small village producers, their communities and associations.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	The whole of Cyprus
Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	CSTI collaborates with organisations and stakeholders of the tourism industry in Cyprus and abroad to develop projects which aim to: - Demonstrate the benefits that sustainable tourism has to the environment, the society and the economy of the island and to protect the natural environment - Promote local culture and traditions - Develop close links between local suppliers and hoteliers / tour operators - Educate and inform with regard to sustainability issues
Main sustainable actions\ initiatives adopted:	Important projects and initiatives launch by CSTI include: PREVENT: Improved Predictability of Extremes over the Mediterranean from Seasonal to Decadal Timescale**s** Women Entrepreneurs in Rural Tourism Make Hotels Greener Plastic Waste Free Islands Med IUCN
Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	--
Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local	CSTI has numerous members mostly from the tourism industry and local universities. Th members are shown on https://csti-cyprus.org/our-members/

festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc.)	CSTI activities are diverse, aim to stimulate sustainable entrepreneurship, preserve the environment, and participate in EU level activities and projects.
Further comments	--

Good Practice N.3 Aliathon Resort

Name of the structure:	Aliathon Resort
Country:	Cyprus
Website:	https://www.aliathonresort.com/

Brief description of the structure:	Aliathon Resort, since its establishment in 1992, has been a pioneer in sustainability. Our ongoing commitment to reducing our carbon footprint, as well as, implementing innovative technologies and practices, have been elemental to our success. As the tourism industry shifts towards eco-friendliness, Aliathon aims to lead by example by implementing the best possible practices while maintaining our commitment to quality. Our comprehensive sustainability programme covers all the resort's activities, processes and services, and it aims to reduce our environmental footprint and our continuous environmental improvement. In this course, the organisation has incorporated the Environmental Policy into its existing policies. This addition serves as a guiding framework for our daily operations, emphasising the importance of consistency, transparency, and adherence to legal mandates and regulations.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Paphos district (SW of the island)
Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	Aliathon prioritises corporate social responsibility and sustainability values. Its workforce is a key focus, and they ensure they undergo appropriate training to enhance their skills and competencies, leading to increased productivity. Additionally, they emphasise educating employees on the sustainable practices pursued and achievements. also, to learn from these practices but also to share their ideas on how we can enhance our sustainability further. Aliathon values the diversity of its staff and respects each individual. It embraces the dynamic nature of diversity, we see the numerous benefits it brings.

Main sustainable actions\ initiatives adopted:	Key strategies and environmental management policies include: - Minimisation of the impact of the operations on the environment with a pollution prevention program. - Compliance with all relevant environmental legislation and regulations and with other requirements to which the hotel subscribes. - Protect the environment through continual improvement of environmental performance. All business units take into account the effects that our activities have on the environment. - Continually improve our environmental performance. - Provide all necessary means for the implementation of the Environmental Management System. - Incorporate in our strategies, policies and practices, measures aiming on the improvement of environmental performance.
Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	--
Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc.)	Within its community policy the Aliathon Resort recognizes that its business has an important role to play in supporting and contributing to the local residential and business community. The locals and the Aliathon are committed to being good neighbours by: Supporting charitable programs. Providing a safe, diverse and supportive workplace. Protecting the environment. Contributing to the community Hotel management is aware of the impact of tourism on the local community and therefore promotes the purchase of sustainable local products wherever possible. The hotel encourages and influences its suppliers to take part in its environmental protection initiatives, to understand its purchasing policy, and to provide products and services that have minimum adverse impact on the environment and the community.
Further comments	--

2.4 Italy

2.4.1 Overview of the structures

In the context of sustainable tourism practices in Italy, the identified structures mainly comprise agriturismos and eco-friendly accommodations. These structures emphasize the integration of sustainability with tourism, focusing on eco-friendly operations, local resources, and environmental education. The practices identified in Italy can be grouped into two main categories: agriturismos and eco-friendly bed and breakfasts.

Agriturismos

Agriturismos in Italy are rural accommodations that offer visitors an immersive experience into sustainable living, organic farming, and traditional Italian hospitality. The identified agriturismos share common characteristics in their approach to sustainability and tourism:

- Agriturismo La Cerra: This farmhouse accommodation offers a holistic rural tourism experience by combining sustainable living with traditional Italian hospitality. It is situated in a scenic location, providing an authentic experience with locally sourced food and eco-friendly practices.

- Il Vigno: An organic agriturismo that emphasizes sustainability in every aspect of its operations, from organic farming to eco-friendly accommodations. Il Vigno showcases how agriturismos can integrate sustainability into their core activities.

- Casa Wallace: Another sustainable agriturismo that offers eco-friendly accommodation and a range of activities focused on organic farming and environmental education. Casa Wallace emphasizes the educational aspect of sustainability, aiming to raise awareness among its guests.

- Sant'Egle: An award-winning eco-friendly agriturismo known for its luxurious yet sustainable accommodations and commitment to environmental stewardship. Sant'Egle exemplifies how agriturismos can balance luxury with sustainability, providing a high-quality experience that respects the environment.

- Eco-Friendly Bed and Breakfasts
  Eco-friendly bed and breakfasts in Italy offer a blend of sustainability and comfort, focusing on minimizing environmental impact while providing a unique and comfortable stay for guests:
- L'Essenza: Located in Sardinia, this eco-friendly bed and breakfast offers a unique blend of sustainability and comfort. L'Essenza demonstrates how accommodations can incorporate eco-friendly practices into their operations while ensuring a pleasant and memorable stay for guests.

2.4.2 Marketing tourism strategy

In Italy, tourism SMEs have adopted a variety of innovative and sustainable activities and strategies to promote tourism. The primary focus is on integrating eco-friendly practices, organic and local food experiences, educational tours, and wellness tourism. Here's an overview of the main activities and strategies employed:

Eco-friendly Lodging and Accommodations
Several establishments, such as Il Vigno and Eco B&B L'Essenza, offer eco-friendly lodging options. These accommodations are designed to minimize environmental impact, using sustainable materials and energy-efficient systems. By providing a green stay, these SMEs attract environmentally conscious travelers looking for sustainable tourism options.

Organic Food Experiences
Promoting local and organic food is a common strategy. La Cerra and Il Vigno, for example, provide organic food experiences that highlight the region's culinary heritage. These experiences often include farm-to-table dining, organic food tastings, and cooking classes, offering tourists a taste of authentic and sustainable local cuisine.

Educational Tours on Sustainable Practices
Education is a key component in the promotional strategies of these SMEs. Casa Wallace offers vineyard tours and sustainability workshops that educate visitors on organic wine production and sustainable agricultural practices. Il Vigno also conducts educational tours focusing on sustainable agriculture, helping tourists understand and appreciate eco-friendly farming techniques.

Agritourism Activities
La Cerra and Casa Wallace promote agritourism, engaging tourists with hands-on experiences like farm tours and wine tasting events. These activities not only provide entertainment but also educate visitors about sustainable farming and winemaking processes. Agritourism helps bridge the gap between tourists and the agricultural community, fostering a deeper appreciation for sustainable practices.

Wellness Tourism
Wellness tourism is another significant trend among Italian tourism SMEs. Agriturismo Sant'Egle focuses on wellness by offering organic spa treatments, yoga retreats, and workshops on sustainable living. These activities cater to tourists seeking relaxation and rejuvenation in an eco-friendly environment, blending wellness with sustainability.

Nature and Cultural Tours
Nature and cultural tours are integral to the promotional strategies of these SMEs. Eco B&B L'Essenza, for instance, organizes nature tours that showcase the local biodiversity and natural beauty. By integrating nature-based activities, these businesses emphasize the importance of environmental conservation while providing tourists with immersive experiences in the natural landscape.

2.4.3 Sustainable practices adopted

Here is a general overview of the main sustainable actions and initiatives adopted:

Certification and Recognition

- EU Ecolabel Certification: Several SMEs, such as La Cerra, Casa Wallace, and Agriturismo Sant'Egle, have achieved the prestigious EU Ecolabel certification. This recognition is awarded to businesses that meet high environmental standards throughout their lifecycle, from raw material extraction to production, distribution, and disposal.

- Organic Certification: Il Vigno is certified organic by the Institute for Ethical and Environmental Certification (ICEA), highlighting its commitment to maintaining organic farming practices.

- Legambiente Turismo Certification: L'essenza is certified by Legambiente Turismo for its exemplary environmental management practices.

Sustainability Strategies

- Comprehensive Sustainability Strategies: SMEs like La Cerra, Casa Wallace, and L'essenza have developed detailed sustainability strategies. These strategies focus on key areas such as energy conservation, waste reduction, and water management. By addressing these critical aspects, these businesses not only reduce their environmental footprint but also promote a culture of sustainability.

- Energy Efficiency: The use of renewable energy sources is a common practice among these SMEs. For instance, Agriturismo Sant'Egle utilizes geothermal and solar energy for heating and electricity, significantly reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

- Waste Reduction and Recycling: Extensive recycling and composting programs are implemented by Agriturismo Sant'Egle, demonstrating a proactive approach to waste management. Similarly, other SMEs focus on waste reduction as a core part of their sustainability strategies.

Environmental Impact Assessments
- Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) Studies: Il Vigno conducts PEF studies to understand and minimize its ecological impact. These studies help the business identify areas for improvement and implement more sustainable practices.

Training and Education
- Sustainability Training: Providing sustainability training for staff and guests is a notable initiative adopted by Il Vigno and L'essenza. By educating employees and visitors on sustainable practices, these SMEs foster a broader understanding and commitment to environmental stewardship.

Renewable Energy and Organic Farming

- **Renewable Energy:** The adoption of renewable energy sources, such as solar and geothermal energy, is a significant step towards reducing carbon emissions and promoting energy efficiency.

- **Organic Farming Practices:** Organic farming is another key initiative, particularly for La Cerra and Casa Wallace. By avoiding synthetic chemicals and adopting organic practices, these SMEs contribute to healthier ecosystems and sustainable agriculture.

2.4.4 Resources of the territories

Italy's diverse landscapes and rich cultural heritage provide a strong foundation for tourism SMEs to leverage in their green and digital transitions. The main resources of the territory across various regions of Italy include agricultural wealth, historical sites, and distinctive cultural heritage. Here is an overview of these resources based on the practices observed:

Rich Agricultural Land:
Several regions in Italy, such as La Cerra and Agriturismo Sant'Egle, are characterized by their fertile agricultural land. These areas not only support traditional farming practices but also produce a variety of high-quality agricultural products. This agricultural richness is integral to the local economy and tourism, as it allows for the promotion of farm-to-table experiences and agritourism.

Natural Resources:
Italy's regions are abundant in natural resources. For instance, the area of Il Vigno is well-known for its olive oil and wine production. These natural products are not only significant for local consumption but also attract tourists interested in culinary tourism and authentic regional experiences.
Similarly, L'essenza's natural beauty, including its beaches and forests, provides a serene and attractive environment for visitors seeking nature-based tourism.

Historical Sites and Cultural Heritage:
The country's rich historical background is evident in the numerous historical sites scattered across various regions. Casa Wallace and La Cerra, for instance, are regions where historical sites are prominent. These sites not only tell the story of Italy's past but also add to the cultural depth that attracts tourists.
Cultural heritage related to significant historical figures, such as Michelangelo's birthplace near Il Vigno, further enriches the tourism potential by offering unique and personalized historical experiences.

Cultural Traditions and Festivals:
Cultural traditions play a crucial role in the tourism appeal of Italy. L'essenza is notable for its unique cultural traditions which, coupled with its natural beauty, make it a popular destination. Festivals, traditional crafts, and local events are part of the vibrant cultural tapestry that tourists find appealing.
Places like La Cerra and Agriturismo Sant'Egle maintain and promote cultural practices linked to their agricultural heritage, adding to the authentic experience for visitors.

Renowned Vineyards and Culinary Heritage:

Italy's reputation for wine and food is bolstered by regions such as Casa Wallace, which is famous for its vineyards. These vineyards not only contribute to the local economy but also serve as a major draw for wine tourism.

The culinary heritage linked to traditional farming and food production methods adds an extra layer of appeal, providing tourists with an opportunity to engage in immersive culinary experiences.

2.4.5 Networks and collaboration

These initiatives not only promote sustainability but also enrich the cultural and natural heritage of their respective regions. Here's an overview of the main initiatives and local actors involved:

Collaboration with Local Farmers' Markets:

La Cerra and **Agriturismo Sant'Egle** both emphasize their involvement with local farmers' markets. This collaboration supports local agriculture, reduces carbon footprints associated with food transport, and provides fresh, organic produce to guests. These markets serve as platforms for promoting regional food culture and sustainable agricultural practices.

Participation in Regional Food Festivals:

La Cerra, **Casa Wallace**, and **Agriturismo Sant'Egle** actively participate in regional food festivals. These events celebrate local culinary traditions and bring together producers, chefs, and tourists. Participation in these festivals helps to boost local economies, promote gastronomic tourism, and foster a deeper appreciation for regional food heritage
.

Nature Walks and Educational Workshops:

La Cerra and **Agriturismo Sant'Egle** organize nature walks and educational workshops. These activities aim to educate tourists about local flora and fauna, sustainable living practices, and the importance of environmental conservation. They provide immersive experiences that connect visitors with nature and local traditions.

Partnerships with Local Artisans:

Il Vigno and **L'Essenza** work closely with local artisans. By promoting traditional crafts and providing a market for handmade goods, these collaborations help to preserve cultural heritage and support the local creative economy. Guests have the opportunity to learn about and purchase unique, locally made products.

Community and Eco-tourism Events:

Il Vigno hosts community events focused on sustainability, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility for the environment. These events often include workshops, discussions, and activities that promote eco-tourism and sustainable practices.

Support for Environmental Education and Conservation Projects:

Casa Wallace supports local environmental education programs, contributing to the awareness and knowledge of sustainable practices among the local population. L'Essenza participates in conservation projects, demonstrating a commitment to preserving natural resources and biodiversity.

Collaboration with Local Wine Producers:
Casa Wallace works with local wine producers and participates in regional food and wine festivals. This collaboration highlights the significance of viticulture in the region and promotes wine tourism. It also supports local winemakers and encourages sustainable viticultural practices.

2.4.6 Italian Sustainable Practices

Good Practice N.1 – Agriturismo La Cerra

Name of the structure:	Agriturismo La Cerra
Country:	Italy
Website:	Agriturismo La Cerra

Brief description of the structure:	Agriturismo La Cerra is a farmhouse accommodation that offers a holistic rural tourism experience, combining sustainable living with traditional Italian hospitality. It is situated in a scenic location and provides an authentic experience with locally sourced food and eco-friendly practices.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Located in the Lazio region near Rome, the agriturismo is set amidst rolling hills and lush greenery, offering a tranquil retreat from the bustling city life. The area is known for its natural beauty and agricultural richness.
Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	La Cerra promotes agritourism by offering cooking classes, farm tours, and wine tasting events. It also markets its eco-friendly initiatives to attract environmentally conscious travelers.
Main sustainable actions\ initiatives adopted:	Achieved EU Ecolabel certification for environmental performance. Developed a comprehensive sustainability strategy focusing on energy conservation, waste reduction, and water management. Uses renewable energy sources and implements organic farming practices.
Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	The area boasts rich agricultural land, historical sites, and cultural heritage linked to traditional farming practices.

Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc.)	Collaborates with local farmers' markets, participates in regional food festivals, and organizes nature walks and educational workshops.
Further comments	La Cerra exemplifies how integrating sustainability into rural tourism can enhance the visitor experience while preserving the environment.

Good Practice N.2 - Bio Agriturismo Il Vigno

Name of the structure:	Bio Agriturismo Il Vigno
Country:	Italy
Website:	https://www.ilvigno.com/

Brief description of the structure:	Il Vigno is an organic agriturismo that emphasizes sustainability in every aspect of its operations, from organic farming to eco-friendly accommodations.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Situated in Tuscany, near the town of Caprese Michelangelo, the area is renowned for its picturesque landscapes, olive groves, and vineyards.
Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	Offers eco-friendly lodging, organic food experiences, and educational tours about sustainable agriculture practices.
Main sustainable actions\ initiatives adopted:	Certified organic by ICEA (Institute for Ethical and Environmental Certification). Conducts Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) studies to minimize its ecological impact. Provides sustainability training for staff and guests.
Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	Rich in natural resources like olive oil and wine, and steeped in cultural heritage related to Michelangelo's birthplace.
Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc.)	Partners with local artisans, participates in regional eco-tourism initiatives, and hosts community events to promote sustainability.
Further comments	Il Vigno demonstrates how rural tourism can contribute to environmental conservation and community development.

Good Practice N.3 - Eco-friendly Agriturismo Casa Wallace

Name of the structure:	Eco-friendly Agriturismo Casa Wallace

Country:	**Italy**
Website:	**https://casawallace.com/**

Brief description of the structure:	Casa Wallace is a sustainable agriturismo offering eco-friendly accommodation and a range of activities focused on organic farming and environmental education.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Located in Piedmont, the area is known for its vineyards, rolling hills, and historical villages.
Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	Promotes eco-tourism through organic wine production, vineyard tours, and sustainability workshops.
Main sustainable actions\ initiatives adopted:	Achieved EU Ecolabel certification for environmental performance. Developed a comprehensive sustainability strategy focusing on energy conservation, waste reduction, and water management. Uses renewable energy sources and implements organic farming practices.
Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	The region's natural beauty, renowned vineyards, and historical sites contribute to its rich cultural and natural heritage.
Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc.)	Works with local wine producers, participates in regional food and wine festivals, and supports local environmental education programs.
Further comments	Casa Wallace is a leading example of how eco-friendly practices can be successfully integrated into rural tourism.

Good Practice N.4 – Agriturismo Sant'Egle

Name of the structure:	Agriturismo Sant'Egle
Country:	Italy
Website:	https://www.agriturismobiologicotoscana.it

Brief description of the structure:	Sant'Egle is an award-winning eco-friendly agriturismo known for its luxurious yet sustainable accommodations and commitment to environmental stewardship.

Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Located in Tuscany, near the town of Sorano, the area is rich in natural hot springs, historical sites, and scenic landscapes.
Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	Focuses on wellness tourism with organic spa treatments, yoga retreats, and sustainable living workshops.
Main sustainable actions\ initiatives adopted:	Holds the EU Ecolabel certification. Uses geothermal and solar energy for heating and electricity. Engages in extensive recycling and composting programs.
Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	The area boasts rich agricultural land, historical sites, and cultural heritage linked to traditional farming practices.
Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc.)	Collaborates with local farmers' markets, participates in regional food festivals, and organizes nature walks and educational workshops.
Further comments	La Cerra exemplifies how integrating sustainability into rural tourism can enhance the visitor experience while preserving the environment.

Good Practice N.5 - Eco B&B L'Essenza

Name of the structure:	Eco B&B L'Essenza
Country:	Italy
Website:	https://www.essenzasardegna.com/it/

Brief description of the structure:	L'Essenza is an eco-friendly bed and breakfast located in Sardinia, offering a unique blend of sustainability and comfort.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Nestled in the heart of Sardinia, the area is known for its pristine beaches, rugged mountains, and rich cultural heritage.
Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	Promotes sustainable tourism by offering eco-friendly accommodations, local food experiences, and nature tours.
Main sustainable actions\ initiatives adopted:	Certified by Legambiente Turismo for its environmental management practices. Develops and implements sustainability strategy plans focusing on energy efficiency and waste reduction.

	Offers training programs for staff on sustainable practices.
Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	The region's natural beauty, including beaches and forests, and its unique cultural traditions make it a popular destination.
Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc.)	Works with local artisans, supports conservation projects, and participates in regional sustainability initiatives.
Further comments	L'Essenza showcases how small-scale accommodations can make a significant impact on promoting sustainability in rural tourism. These examples illustrate how rural tourism structures in Italy are adopting various sustainable practices, from obtaining certifications to implementing innovative eco-friendly solutions.

2.5 Romania

2.5.1 Overview of the structures

DEALUL VERDE PRUMBACU is an accommodation services SME offering unique underground rooms, each with a distinct theme. Located in the village of Porumbacu de Sus at the foot of Negoiu peak in the Făgăraș Mountains, the SME benefits from its proximity to various natural, historical, and leisure activities.

2.5.2 Marketing tourism strategy

The SME promotes local historical heritage through their specially themed rooms. They offer activities that encourage nature exploration and immersion in local traditions and cuisine, enhancing the tourist experience with authentic cultural elements.

2.5.3 Sustainable practices adopted

DEALUL VERDE PRUMBACU focuses on eco-friendly activities for guests, promoting the enjoyment of nature without the use of electronics. The guesthouses are built and maintained with eco-friendly principles, consistently seeking ways to minimize their environmental footprint.

2.5.4 Resources of the territories

The Făgăraș Mountains are a significant natural resource, featuring the highest mountain peak in Romania, Moldoveanu peak (2,544 meters). Another key natural attraction is the Bâlea Waterfall, the largest stepped waterfall in Romania, located at an altitude of over 1200 meters with a drop of 60 meters, situated between the Moldoveanu and Negoiu peaks.

2.5.5 Networks and collaboration

The SME currently does not engage in specific local collaborations such as participation in festivals or organized tourist walks.

2.6.6 Romanian Sustainable Practices

Good practice n°1 - DEALUL VERDE PRUMBACU

Name of the structure:	DEALUL VERDE PRUMBACU
Country:	Romania
Website:	https://pensiuneadealulverde.ro/

Brief description of the structure:	Accommodation services SME with underground rooms, each uniquely themed
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	The village of Porumbacu de Sus is situated at the foot of Negoiu peak in the Făgăraș Mountains, in close proximity to many natural, historical and leisure activities.
Main activities and strategies in promotional tourism:	The SME is promoting the local historical heritage with their specially themed rooms they have to offer. They offer activities that encourage nature exploring and local traditions and cuisine.
Main sustainable actions\ initiatives adopted:	Eco-friendly activities for the guests, promoting the idea of enjoying what nature has to offer without the use of any electronics. The entire assembly of guesthouses are eco-friendly and the SME is nature, eco aware about how they can always reduce the negative footprint it leaves.
Main resources of the territory (natural resources, cultural heritage, etc.)	The Făgăraș Mountains are a mountain massif that is part of the Southern Carpathians, and where the highest mountain peak in Romania, Moldoveanu peak, with an altitude of 2,544 meters. Until the inter-war period, Negoiu Peak, with an altitude of 2,535 meters, was considered the highest peak in the Carpathians, except for the peaks of the Tatra Mountains. The Bâlea Waterfall, also called "Howl of Bâlei", is located in the Făgăraș Mountains between the Moldoveanu and Negoiu peaks, at an altitude of over 1200 m. It is the largest stepped waterfall in Romania,

	with a drop of 60 m, and marks the lower stage of the Bâlea glacial cirque.
Main initiatives and local actors with whom the company collaborates (e.g. participation in local festivals, tourist and nature walks, etc.)	Not applicable
Further comments	

2.6 Slovenia

This section highlights several Slovenian tourism SMEs making significant strides in this area, including Four Points by Sheraton Ljubljana, Špica Hospitality, the Development Center Murska Sobota (RCMS), and the Rogla-Pohorje sustainable destination.

2.6.1 Overview of the structures

Four Points by Sheraton Ljubljana: This hotel is the first in Slovenia to receive the BREEAM certification for sustainable building design and operation, setting a high standard for eco-friendly practices in the hospitality industry.

Špica Hospitality: Known for its innovative energy management strategies, Špica Hospitality has become a model for sustainability in the hospitality sector.

Development Center Murska Sobota (RCMS): RCMS is dedicated to promoting green and boutique tourism through various sustainable initiatives and projects, serving as an ambassador of green tourism in the region.

Rogla-Pohorje: Recognized as a sustainable rural destination, Rogla-Pohorje offers health and wellness programs, active holidays, and cultural experiences, all while emphasizing sustainability through initiatives like the "Okusi Rogle" brand.

2.6.2 Marketing Tourism Strategy

Four Points by Sheraton Ljubljana: The hotel focuses on enhancing guest experiences while promoting its sustainability achievements, leveraging the prestige of the BREEAM certification in its marketing efforts.

Špica Hospitality: The company highlights its energy-efficient practices and the adoption of IoT-connected energy management systems, emphasizing the economic and environmental benefits in its promotional materials.

Development Center Murska Sobota (RCMS): RCMS markets its commitment to
sustainability through the Slovenia Green destination brand, attracting visitors interested in
eco-friendly tourism experiences.

Rogla-Pohorje: The destination promotes its diverse offerings, including wellness programs
and culinary experiences, while highlighting its sustainability efforts through public
awareness campaigns and stakeholder engagement.

2.6.3 Sustainable Practices Adopted

Four Points by Sheraton Ljubljana: The hotel has implemented a wide range of ecological
initiatives, including energy-efficient systems, water-saving devices, waste reduction strategies,
and the use of locally sourced materials.

Špica Hospitality: The company has invested in energy-efficient technologies such as HVAC
systems and IoT-connected energy management systems to reduce operational costs and
minimize environmental impact.

Development Center Murska Sobota (RCMS): RCMS emphasizes green innovations,
sustainable architecture, and the use of environmentally friendly or recycled materials. It also
promotes off-season visitation and sustainable tourism infrastructure development.

Rogla-Pohorje: The destination has adopted a holistic approach to sustainability, including zero
waste events, educational workshops, and collaborative projects with investors that prioritize
environmental conservation.

2.6.4 Resources of the Territories

Four Points by Sheraton Ljubljana: The hotel leverages locally sourced materials to reduce its
carbon footprint and support the local economy.

Špica Hospitality: The focus on energy efficiency is complemented by an understanding of local
climate requirements, ensuring that sustainable practices are tailored to the regional
environment.

Development Center Murska Sobota (RCMS): RCMS promotes the natural and cultural
heritage of Murska Sobota, including the revitalization of Lake Soboško jezero and the recycled
Slovenian pavilion.

Rogla-Pohorje: The destination is situated between Rogla and the vineyard-covered hills of the
Dravinjska Valley, offering a rich blend of natural beauty and cultural experiences that are
integral to its sustainable tourism model.

2.6.5 Networks and Collaboration

Four Points by Sheraton Ljubljana: The hotel's sustainability efforts serve as a model for other
stakeholders in the hospitality industry, fostering a collaborative approach to eco-friendly
practices.

Špica Hospitality: By demonstrating the benefits of energy-efficient technologies, Špica Hospitality encourages other hotels to adopt similar practices, contributing to industry-wide sustainability.

Development Center Murska Sobota (RCMS): RCMS collaborates with local providers, tourism partners, and the community to enhance sustainability, creating job opportunities and promoting economic development.

Rogla-Pohorje: The destination's success is driven by strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and collaborative projects, such as the treetop walkway developed with Czech and German partners. These efforts ensure that sustainability is a shared goal among all stakeholders.

3. Good practices on digitalisation

The second part of the report on good practices has the goal to analyse the examples of tourism SMEs externally identified and their digital innovations.

Paragraphs are divided per country, and each country report has the same structure with the same paragraphs targeting the descriptions of the structure, the Main activities and strategies in the digitalisation of processes: and the digital solutions.

3.1 Greece

3.1.1 Description of the Practices

Kubic Athens, Greece: Located centrally in Athens, Kubic Athens stands out as a smart hotel housed in an industrial building with a distinctive steel and glass facade. The hotel integrates advanced technologies to streamline operations and enhance guest experiences. Emphasizing sustainability, Kubic Athens exemplifies how digitalization can optimize resource management while offering personalized guest services.

Olive Green Hotel, Crete, Greece: Situated in Heraklion, Crete, the Olive Green Hotel is renowned for its smart and environmentally conscious design. This hotel serves as a model for sustainable tourism practices, leveraging technology to minimize environmental impact. Through digitalization, the Olive Green Hotel not only manages its energy consumption efficiently but also engages guests in eco-friendly initiatives.

ONOMA Hotel, Thessaloniki, Greece: Positioned in downtown Thessaloniki, ONOMA Hotel caters to the modern traveler with its tech-friendly approach. The hotel focuses on personalized guest experiences facilitated by digital tools. By integrating smart technologies, ONOMA Hotel enhances operational agility and guest satisfaction, setting a benchmark for customer-centric digitalization in the hospitality sector.

Cretatour DMC, Greece: As a prominent Destination Management Company in Greece, Cretatour DMC plays a pivotal role in enhancing digital capabilities within the tourism sector. Through innovative digital strategies, Cretatour DMC optimizes destination management processes, offering tailored experiences and efficient logistics solutions. The company's digital tools facilitate seamless communication and collaboration, supporting sustainable tourism practices across Greece.

These practices illustrate how integrating digitalization into tourism SMEs can drive operational efficiency, improve sustainability efforts, and elevate guest experiences.

3.1.2 Activities and strategies in the digitalization of processes

These initiatives are aimed at enhancing operational efficiency, improving customer experiences, and adapting to modern market demands. Here's an overview of the main types of digitalization practices observed:

1. **Smart Hotel Management Systems**: Hotels like the Kubik in Athens exemplify advanced digitalization through comprehensive smart home management platforms (KNX). These systems automate various hotel operations, from room settings to energy management, enhancing efficiency and guest satisfaction.
2. **Integration of Digital Applications**: Many SMEs are integrating digital applications that blend technological sophistication with local traditions. For instance, hotels in Crete leverage digital tools to provide guests with seamless access to room functions and hotel services, combining modern convenience with cultural authenticity.
3. **Enhanced Guest Interaction via Mobile Technology**: A growing trend involves utilizing guests' smartphones to personalize their experiences. This approach enables direct communication and service customization based on individual preferences, fostering stronger guest relationships and satisfaction.
4. **Innovative Hospitality Concepts**: SMEs are adopting new hospitality concepts that leverage modern design and marketing trends. These concepts not only enhance guest engagement but also optimize operational processes through innovative digital strategies, ensuring a competitive edge in the market.
5. **Internal Digitalization and IT Infrastructure**: Recognizing the importance of internal digital capabilities, some SMEs have developed robust internal IT departments. These departments support management, PR efforts, and customer interactions, facilitating more efficient operations and responsive service delivery.
6. **Digital Marketing and Promotion**: Digital tools are increasingly central to marketing and promotional strategies. SMEs utilize various digital channels, such as social media and online platforms, to reach broader audiences and attract tech-savvy travelers who seek personalized and interactive experiences.

Overall, these practices reflect a broader shift towards leveraging digital technologies not only to streamline operations but also to enhance the overall tourism experience.

3.1.3 Digital solutions

In the context of digital transformation within tourism SMEs across Greece several prominent trends and types of digital tools emerge from the practices described:

1. **Mobile Applications for Guest Interaction and Control:**

A significant trend involves the development of mobile applications that enhance guest experience and operational efficiency. These apps allow guests to manage various aspects of their stay, such as room controls (lighting, temperature), check-in processes, and access to hotel services. For instance, guests can control room amenities directly from their smartphones or tablets, eliminating the need for physical keys and minimizing wait times at reception.

2. **Building Management Systems (BMS) for Energy Efficiency:**

Another key digital tool adopted by these SMEs is advanced Building Management Systems (BMS). These systems enable efficient monitoring and control of electromechanical

3. **Personalized Digital Services via Tablets and QR Codes:**

Tablets installed in guest rooms offer personalized services such as ordering room service, adjusting room settings (lighting, TV), and accessing local information via QR codes. This approach not only caters to guest preferences for convenience and personalization but also integrates educational content about local attractions and activities, enhancing the overall tourist experience.

4. **Integration of IT Systems for Comprehensive Management:**

There is a noticeable trend towards integrating comprehensive IT systems that manage various aspects of business operations, including bookings, accounting, human resources, and customer interactions. These systems streamline internal processes, improve operational efficiency, and facilitate direct customer engagement through proprietary applications. Such integration supports smoother management across different functions within the SMEs, enhancing their competitive edge in the market.

5. **Innovative Applications for Direct Customer Interaction:**

Innovations like mobile applications designed for direct customer interaction further exemplify the digital transition in tourism SMEs. These apps enable tourists to book excursions and access emergency services directly, bypassing traditional intermediaries like hotels and tour operators. Such initiatives not only simplify the booking process but also reduce costs and enhance customer satisfaction by offering seamless, user-friendly interfaces.

These trends indicate a robust adoption of digital tools aimed at enhancing guest satisfaction, operational efficiency, and sustainability within tourism SMEs across the mentioned countries. The integration of mobile applications, building management systems, personalized guest services, comprehensive IT systems, and innovative customer-facing applications reflects a proactive approach towards leveraging digital technology for sustainable growth and improved service delivery in the tourism sector.

3.1.4 Greek digital practices

Good Practice N.1 – Kubik Hotel

Name of the structure:	Kubik Hotel
Country:	Greece

Website:	https://brownhotels.com/

Brief description of the structure:	Housed in an industrial building featuring a steel and glass facade, Kubic Athens is a smart hotel centrally located in Athens.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Athens, Greece
Main activities and strategies in the digitalization of processes:	The main feature of the Kubik hotel, based in Athens, is that almost everything is digital. Based on the knx smart home management platform, the new full digital hotel is operating "automatically".
Promotional and digital tools adopted:	The guest is able to manage all the comforts of the room through the special application that he can download on his mobile phone or through the tablet that is be available in each room. For his stay at the this smart hotel, the guest does not even need a real key, since the check-in process can be done electronically, without waiting at the reception, and the guest receives an electronic key as well as instructions for accessing the hotel and his room. While staying in their high-tech and modern design room, guests will be able to adjust the heating, the intensity and color of the lighting, the alarm clock, the TV and even the opening of the curtain through their mobile phone.
Further comments	-

Good Practice N.2 - Olive Green Hotel

Name of the structure:	Olive Green Hotel
Country:	Greece
Website:	www.olivegreenhotel.com

Brief description of the structure:	In the heart of the city of Heraklion, Crete, the Olive Green Hotel is a technologically 'smart', 'conscious' towards sustainable development and environmentally friendly hotel, a model for citizens and travelers of the world.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Heraklion, Crete, Greece

Main activities and strategies in the digitalization of processes:	With modern infrastructure, the hotel combines high technology with the brilliance of Cretan tradition. Digital applications give customers convenience and immediacy in room functions and hotel services.
Promotional and digital tools adopted:	The guest can use his personal tablet to adjust lighting, TV, air conditioning, order room service, while he can also be navigated with the QR codes of the thematic board above the bed and organize his trip through the exploration and adventure articles that make it easy to get to know the island's sights, trails, canyons and events. Furthermore, an advanced BMS (Building Management System) monitors and controls electromechanical equipment to adjust every aspect of building operations to minimize energy consumption. In the rooms guests enjoy hi tech features synchronized with the room tablet, - control of A/C, lights, TV - thanks to the implementation of the KNX communication protocol.
Further comments	-

Promotional and digital tools adopted:	The guest is be able to manage all the comforts of the room through the special application that he can download on his mobile phone or through the tablet that is be available in each room. For his stay at the this smart hotel, the guest does not even need a real key, since the check-in process can be done electronically, without waiting at the reception, and the guest receives an electronic key as well as instructions for accessing the hotel and his room. While staying in their high-tech and modern design room, guests will be able to adjust the heating, the intensity and color of the lighting, the alarm clock, the TV and even the opening of the curtain through their mobile phone.
Further comments	-

Good Practice N.3 – Onoma Hotel

Name of the structure:	ONOMA Hotel
Country:	Greece
Website:	www.onomahotel.com

Brief description of the structure:	ONOMA Hotel, situated in a hub of downtown Thessaloniki, is a tech friendly hotel that converses with the modern traveller and their individual wishes.

Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Thessaloniki, Greece
Main activities and strategies in the digitalization of processes:	A new and pioneering hospitality concept that utilizes modern design, new marketing trends and tools, but always focusing on the guest. Thanks to technology and the guest's smart phone, the hotel connects with them and every personal wish is turned into a service.
Promotional and digital tools adopted:	The guest can check in with his mobile phone, by downloading the special application, from where he can communicate his personal interests to the hotel staff so that he can have a DIY stay, cut and sewn to suit him. Each room also features state-of-the-art equipment, making it an ideal environment guests who choose to work from a location other than their permanent residence.
Further comments	-

Good Practice N.4 - Cretatour DMC

Name of the structure:	Cretatour DMC
Country:	Greece
Website:	www.cretatour.com

Brief description of the structure:	"Cretatour DMC", one of the most important Destination Management Companies active on the Greek market.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Crete, Greece
Main activities and strategies in the digitalization of processes:	he high level of competition and the need to diversify the offer in order to attract new clientele which desires to proactively organise their visit instead of passively following prearranged programmes has developed within the Company a very professional internal IT department. This supports the management, contacts, PR relations, while recently digital good practices have been extended to direct interaction with the tourist.
Promotional and digital tools adopted:	Cretatour has been developing through the last decade own IT systems which allow for the all-round management of the Company. Bookings, accounting, human resources, representatives' schedules, even internal communication. With regard to the external direct relationship with the customer, the new mobile application patented by Cretatour allows the customer through six simple steps to choose and by excursions

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	without any intermediation with hotels, tour operators or representatives, fastening procedures and lowering costs. It is worth noting that this innovative application has been cofinanced by the COSME project "Resetting" and has also been officially presented abroad. Two new applications for unmediated contact with tourists, about the international emergency number 112 and overcrowding respectively are being planned by the Company.
Further comments	-

3.2 Bulgaria

3.2.1 Description of the practices

In recent years, Bulgaria has demonstrated significant strides in digitalizing its tourism sector. Three key practices exemplify the innovative approaches undertaken to enhance visitor experiences and streamline operational processes in the industry. These initiatives are geographically distributed across Plovdiv, Sofia, and Gabrovo, each contributing uniquely to the sector's digital transformation.

AI and Chatbot Technology
Umni Solutions Ltd. - Plovdiv Located in Plovdiv, Umni Solutions Ltd. is at the forefront of integrating AI into the tourism sector. The company developed "Plovdiv City Concierge," the first AI city chatbot in Bulgaria aimed at enhancing the tourist experience. This innovative solution provides visitors with real-time information and assistance, making it easier for them to navigate and enjoy the city's offerings. The chatbot represents a significant leap towards the digitalization of tourist services, providing an intelligent, accessible, and user-friendly interface for tourists.

Robotics in Hospitality
TMM Automation - Sofia In the capital city of Sofia, TMM Automation has introduced a groundbreaking technological advancement with the Hotel Service Robot. Launched in 2019, this robot marks the first of its kind in Bulgaria's hospitality sector. It exemplifies the integration of high-end intelligent business technology solutions designed to streamline hotel operations and enhance guest services. The Hotel Service Robot automates various tasks, from room service delivery to guest information assistance, showcasing how robotics can significantly improve efficiency and service quality in the hospitality industry.

Virtual and Interactive Museums
The Interactive Museum of Industry - Gabrovo Gabrovo hosts the Interactive Museum of Industry, established in 2011 as a part of a broader project to rejuvenate the town's tourism

industry. This museum is notable for being Bulgaria's first virtual museum, seamlessly integrating 10 museums and historical sites in the region. It leverages interactive technologies to provide visitors with an immersive and educational experience. By digitalizing exhibits and incorporating virtual tours, the museum offers an innovative way to engage with the region's industrial heritage, making it accessible to a broader audience.

3.2.2 Activities and strategies in the digitalization of processes

In Bulgaria, tourism SMEs have adopted a range of innovative digitalization strategies to enhance the visitor experience, streamline operations, and promote cultural heritage. These practices reflect a commitment to leveraging advanced technologies to meet the evolving demands of the tourism industry.

AI-powered Insights and Multilingual Support: The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionized the way tourism businesses in Bulgaria operate. AI-powered tools provide valuable insights into customer behavior, preferences, and trends, enabling businesses to tailor their offerings more effectively. Additionally, multilingual support facilitated by AI ensures that language barriers are minimized, making it easier for international visitors to access information and services. This approach not only improves customer satisfaction but also broadens the market reach of Bulgarian tourism SMEs.

Robotic Assistance with Roomy: The introduction of Roomy, a robotic assistant, showcases the innovative spirit of the Bulgarian tourism sector. Designed to enhance guest convenience and reduce staff workload, Roomy has become a symbol of the potential for robotics to transform the industry. This technology helps streamline various operations, from check-in processes to room service, significantly improving efficiency and guest experience. The successful implementation of Roomy highlights how robotics can address labor shortages and operational challenges in the tourism sector.

Interactive Museum Experience in Gabrovo: The Interactive Museum in Gabrovo exemplifies the use of high-tech solutions to promote cultural and historical tourism. This museum utilizes virtual hosts, advanced visual, sound, and light effects, and modern 3D projections to create an immersive experience for visitors. By representing the industrial heritage of Gabrovo across three historical epochs—industrialization, socialism, and modern times—the museum attracts tourists through its engaging and educational exhibits. The use of high technology not only enhances the visitor experience but also ensures that the museum remains a popular attraction, especially during evening hours when the technological displays are most effective.

3.2.3 Digital solutions

The practices have embraced a variety of innovative promotional and digital tools to enhance their offerings and attract a broader audience. These tools are designed to improve guest

experience, streamline services, and provide engaging, informative content. The practices observed include:

1. **AI City Chatbot**:

A cutting-edge AI chatbot is implemented to assist tourists by providing real-time information about the city. This tool offers immediate responses to inquiries, suggests popular destinations, and aids in itinerary planning, making the tourist experience seamless and enjoyable.

2. **Robot Butler Services**:

Advanced robotic technology is used to elevate the guest experience in hotels. The robot butler performs multiple functions such as:

Room Service Delivery: Efficiently delivering food, drinks, and amenities directly to guest rooms.

Escort to Rooms: Guiding guests to their assigned rooms, adding a touch of futuristic hospitality.

Information and Assistance: Addressing frequently asked questions and providing directions to local attractions.

Social Media Integration: Encouraging guests to interact with the robot butler by taking photos and using the hashtag #roomyrobot, promoting the hotel's innovative services on social media platforms.

3. **3D Virtual Tours and Interactive Exhibits**:

Museums and cultural sites offer 3D virtual tours, allowing potential visitors to explore exhibits remotely. This technology provides:

Interactive Exhibits: Detailed, interactive information about the history and significance of each site, enhancing the educational value for visitors.

Multilingual Support: Making the content accessible in multiple languages to cater to a diverse audience, thus broadening the reach and inclusivity of the attractions.

These digital tools not only streamline operations and improve efficiency but also create a modern and engaging environment for tourists. By leveraging AI, robotics, and interactive digital content, Bulgarian tourism SMEs are setting a high standard for innovation in the tourism sector, ensuring a memorable and enriching experience for visitors.

3.2.4 Bulgarian Digital practices

Good Practice N.1 - "Umni Solutions" Ltd.

Name of the structure:	"Umni Solutions" Ltd.
Country:	Bulgaria
Website:	https://umni.bg/bg/about-umni/

Brief description of the structure:	A chatbot agency with a focus on hospitality. The company created the first AI city chatbot aimed at tourism for Plovdiv – European Capital of Culture (2019) named "Plovdiv City Concierge".
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	The headquarters of the company is in Plovdiv, Bulgaria - the industrial center of the Balkans. The project was nominated among the top 5 innovations in tourism in the Innovation Category at the Annual Awards of the Ministry of Tourism of Bulgaria. Umni is one of the 2023 winners of the European Travel Awards and was named the Best Hotel & Travel Communication AI Service 2023 – Bulgaria. In March 2024 it won a UNWTO global startup competition for "Innovation and digitalisation of island destinations".
Main activities and strategies in the digitalization of processes:	AI-powered insights Multilingual support Performance monitoring and optimization
Promotional and digital tools adopted:	AI city chatbot
Further comments:	N/A

Good Practice N.2 - TMM Automation - The Hotel Service Robot

Name of the structure:	TMM Automation - The Hotel Service Robot
Country:	Bulgaria
Website:	https://www.tmmautomation.com/

Brief description of the structure:	The company aims to create high-end intelligent business technology solutions. In 2019 it introduced the first hotel service robot in Bulgaria.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	TMM Automation is located in Sofia, Bulgaria. It developed the first hotel service robot for the hospitality industry in Bulgaria - **Roomy**. As an innovator, a BW hotel in Bulgaria enriched its

	staff by "hiring" a robot butler in 2019, marking a pioneering step in the Bulgarian hospitality.
Main activities and strategies in the digitalization of processes:	Roomy was designed to enhance guest convenience and reduce staff workload. Roomy's introduction garnered significant attention, demonstrating the potential of robotics to transform the Bulgarian tourism industry.
Promotional and digital tools adopted:	Room Service Delivery: delivering food, drinks, and amenities to guest rooms Escort to Rooms: guiding guests to their assigned rooms Information and Assistance: answering frequently asked questions about the hotel and providing directions to local attractions. Social media: guests, who has received his / her order, is invited to take a picture with the robot butler and the #roomyrobot (hashtag) is just starting to gain popularity as a synonym of innovation in the "guest treatment of the future" and the new "it" in hospitality services.
Further comments:	N/A

Good Practice N.3 - Interactive Museum of Industry – Gabrovo

Name of the structure:	Interactive Museum of Industry - Gabrovo
Country:	Bulgaria
Website:	*https://imi.gabrovo.bg/BG/

Brief description of the structure:	The Interactive Museum of Industry – Gabrovo was established in 2011 as part of a project to revitalize the tourism industry in the town of Gabrovo. It was the first virtual museum in Bulgaria, integrating 10 museums and historical sites in the region.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	The museum is located in town of Gabrovo, Bulgaria – the capital of humor and satire. The building of the Regional Historic Museum had been turned into an innovative and dynamic museum attraction, revealing the growth of Gabrovo as an industrial center.*
Main activities and strategies in the digitalization of processes:	The aim of the Interactive Museum is to represent the industrial heritage of Gabrovo, offering its visitors a thrilling travel through three historical epochs – industrialization, socialism and modern times. Thematic scenery and specific spirit of time are enriched

	by virtual hosts, lots of visual, sound and light effects. A modern 3D projection represents the most beautiful and emblematic sightseeing in the neighbourhood. High technology equipment is attracting tourists in the evening. *
Promotional and digital tools adopted:	3D Virtual Tours: 3D virtual tours of each site, allowing visitors to explore the exhibits and surroundings remotely. Interactive Exhibits: interactive exhibits that provide detailed information about the history and significance of each site. Multilingual Support: accessible in multiple languages, making it available to a wider audience.
Further comments:	N/A

3.3 Cyprus

3.3.1 Description of the practices

The digital transformation practices observed in Cyprus can be categorized into three main areas: Hospitality and Accommodation, Sports and Recreation, and Comprehensive Hotel Services. Below is a detailed overview of the practices grouped by category.

Hospitality and Accommodation
1. The Sun Hall Hotel, Larnaca
Description: The Sun Hall Hotel in Larnaca is a prominent example of a hospitality establishment that caters to both leisure and business travelers. The hotel offers a unique blend of coliving and coworking spaces, making it ideal for digital nomads and location-independent workers. It provides an environment where guests can balance professional responsibilities with immersive cultural experiences. Additionally, the hotel is equipped with elevated function rooms designed for productive meetings and conferences.

Sports and Recreation
2. Windsurf City, Makenzy Beach
Description: Windsurf City at Makenzy Beach focuses on providing a secure and technologically advanced experience for water sports enthusiasts. The center has implemented real-time monitoring systems for windsurfing and stand-up paddleboarding (SUP) equipment to ensure the safety of participants. These systems track the location of the boards and alert administrators if they breach designated security boundaries, allowing for prompt and necessary actions to maintain safety standards.

Comprehensive Hotel Services
3. Lordos Hotels

Description: Lordos Hotels group has embraced digital technology to enhance guest experiences and streamline operations. The group offers an easy-to-use pre-check-in technology through a mobile application. This service allows guests to manage their stay efficiently by completing check-in processes on the go. The mobile app also provides guests with instant access to information about the hotel's amenities and facilities, ensuring they stay informed and updated throughout their stay.

3.3.2 Strategy in the digitalization of processes

The main activities and strategies in the digitization of processes across various tourism structures demonstrate a clear commitment to leveraging technology for competitive advantage and customer satisfaction. Here is an overview based on the practices identified:

Support for Digital Nomads
Several tourism entities in Cyprus, such as the Sun City Hall and Windsurf City at Makenzy Beach, have recognized the growing trend of digital nomadism. They have implemented supportive measures to attract and retain digital nomads, which include:
Infrastructure Support: Providing high-speed internet, comfortable workspaces, and amenities conducive to remote working.
Community Building: Organizing events and activities that foster networking and collaboration among digital nomads, creating a vibrant community atmosphere.
Customized Services: Offering tailored packages and services that meet the unique needs of digital nomads, such as long-term stay discounts and flexible check-in/check-out times.
Introduction of Personalized In-House Services
Both the Sun City Hall and Windsurf City at Makenzy Beach have introduced personalized in-house services aimed at enhancing the guest experience. These services typically include:
Personalized Guest Experiences: Utilizing digital tools to gather guest preferences and feedback to provide customized services and recommendations.
Smart Room Technologies: Implementing smart room controls that allow guests to adjust lighting, temperature, and entertainment options via mobile apps or in-room tablets.
Virtual Concierge Services: Providing virtual concierge services through chatbots or mobile apps that can assist guests with information, booking services, and troubleshooting.

Pre Check-In Technology
Lordos Hotels Group has adopted pre check-in technology to streamline the guest arrival process. This includes:
Online Check-In: Allowing guests to complete check-in procedures online before their arrival, reducing wait times at the reception.
Mobile Key Access: Enabling guests to use their smartphones as room keys, eliminating the need for physical key cards.
Automated Check-In Kiosks: Installing kiosks in the lobby for self-service check-in, offering an alternative to traditional front desk interactions.

3.3.3 Digital Solutions

The integration of advanced technologies and digital strategies has not only improved the efficiency of these businesses but also significantly enhanced the customer experience. Here is a general overview of the promotional and digital tools adopted by tourism SMEs in Cyprus:

Intense Digital Marketing and Sophisticated Booking Systems: Many tourism SMEs in Cyprus have embraced intense digital marketing campaigns to reach a wider audience and attract more visitors. These campaigns leverage various online platforms, including social media, search engines, and travel websites, to promote their services. Additionally, sophisticated booking systems have been implemented to streamline the reservation process, making it more convenient for customers to book their stays or activities online. These systems often feature user-friendly interfaces, secure payment options, and real-time availability updates.

In-House Apps for User Feedback and Support: To enhance the guest experience and gather valuable feedback, some establishments, such as certain hotels, have developed in-house applications. These apps allow guests to easily provide feedback on their stay, report issues, and make special requests. Moreover, these apps are designed to support digital nomads by offering features tailored to their needs, such as workspace bookings, information on local co-working spaces, and networking opportunities with other digital nomads.

Safety and Operational Efficiency in Water Sports: Specific tourism sectors, such as windsurfing, have focused on integrating digital tools to ensure the safety and satisfaction of their customers. For instance, Windsurf City Cyprus at Makenzy Beach employs digital tools to monitor weather conditions, track equipment usage, and provide real-time safety updates to windsurfers. These tools not only enhance the overall safety of the sport but also improve operational efficiency and customer trust.

Specialized Company Apps for Enhanced Service Delivery: Large hospitality groups, like Lordos Hotels, have developed specialized company apps to offer a seamless and personalized experience to their guests. These apps typically provide a range of services, including room service requests, local attraction information, dining reservations, and personalized recommendations based on guest preferences. By centralizing these services in an easy-to-use app, these hotels can deliver a higher level of convenience and personalization, enhancing the overall guest experience.

3.3.4 Cyprus digital practices

Good Practice N.1 – Sun Hall

Name of the structure:	Sun Hall
Country:	Cyprus
Website:	https://www.sunhallhotel.com.cy/

Brief description of the structure:	The Sun Hall Hotel in Larnaca offers a beautiful beachside setting and a supportive environment for location-independent workers and digital nomads. It offers exceptional coliving-coworking spaces, while giving anyone the opportunity to immerse themselves in the local culture without having to compromise any professional responsibilities. Through elevated function rooms that offer business remarkable meeting and conference experiences, the hotel provides all the right facilities for crafting a productive working space.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	City of Larnaca, Beach front
Main activities and strategies in the digitization of processes:	Support of digital nomads Introduction of personalised in house services
Promotional and digital tools adopted:	Besides intense digital marketing and sophisticated booking systems the hotel employs in house apps for collecting user feedback and supporting digital nomad stay
Further comments	-

Good Practice N.2 - Windsurf City Cyprus Makenzy Beach

Name of the structure:	Windsurf City Cyprus Makenzy Beach
Country:	Cyprus
Website:	

Brief description of the structure:	Real time monitoring of windsurfing and SUP boards to secure they stay within the security boundaries while surfing in the sea. If the security boundaries are breached a notification would be sent to the windsurfing administrator to take the necessary actions.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	City of Larnaca, Mackenzy Beach
Main activities and strategies in the digitization of processes:	Support of digital nomads Introduction of personalised in house services

Promotional and digital tools adopted:	Safety of windsurfers
Further comments	-

Good Practice N.3 - Lordos Hotels

Name of the structure:	Lordos Hotels
Country:	Cyprus
Website:	https://lordos.com.cy/pre-check-in/

Brief description of the structure:	The Group offers easy to use **pre check in technology.** Now, more than ever before, it's important to unwind, relax and take time for yourself. Via pre check-in technology you can now manage your stay on the go by taking advantage of a quick and effortless pre-check-in service through our brand-new mobile application. You can also explore our hotel's amenities and facilities, stay up to date and know everything instantly.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	City of Larnaca, 2 hotels Protaras
Main activities and strategies in the digitization of processes:	support of pre check in
Promotional and digital tools adopted:	specialised company apps
Further comments	

2.4 Italy

2.4.1 Description of the practices

Based on the collected practices, the tourism structures can be broadly categorized into the following types:

1. **Agritourism**:

Agriturismo La Selvella: This structure represents a quintessential agritourism experience, located in the Tuscan countryside. It offers accommodations, organic farming, and a variety of outdoor activities, providing guests with an authentic rural experience.

Tenuta Sant'Antonio: Another example of agritourism, this family-run winery in the Veneto region offers wine tastings, tours, and accommodations. The focus here is on the viticulture experience and the charm of rural Veneto.

Fattoria La Vialla: Located in Tuscany, this biodynamic farm combines agritourism with educational tours and organic product offerings. It emphasizes sustainable farming practices and provides an immersive farm stay experience.

2. **Albergo Diffuso**:

Albergo Diffuso Montescaglioso: This type of structure is a unique hospitality model that uses renovated historical buildings spread throughout a town to provide accommodations. In this case, the town of Montescaglioso offers an immersive cultural stay, integrating guests into the local community and heritage.

3. **Luxury Resorts and Spas**:

Borgo La Chiaracia: This luxury resort and spa in Umbria combines modern amenities with traditional Italian hospitality. It focuses on wellness services, providing a high-end experience that includes spa treatments and relaxation in a picturesque setting.

2.4.2 Activities and strategies in the digitalization of processes

The main activities and strategies observed in various tourism SMEs across Italy reflect a comprehensive approach towards embracing digital tools and training. Here's an overview of the key practices:

1. **Investment in Digital Training for Staff**:

Across various structures, there has been a strong emphasis on upskilling staff through digital training programs. This includes training in digital marketing, data management, and online booking systems. For instance, La Selvella and Albergo Diffuso Montescaglioso have prioritized digital literacy among their staff to improve overall digital competence and operational efficiency.
Specific training initiatives have been tailored to different aspects of digitalization. Tenuta Sant'Antonio, for example, has focused on enabling staff to manage social media campaigns and online sales, which are crucial for modern customer engagement and revenue generation.

2. **Collaboration with Digital Experts and Tech Firms**:

Many of the practices involve forming partnerships with local digital experts and tech firms. This collaboration helps tourism SMEs integrate advanced digital solutions tailored to their specific needs. La Selvella and Borgo La Chiaracia Resort & SPA are notable examples where collaboration with digital experts has led to enhanced online presence and streamlined operations.
Such partnerships also facilitate the adoption of cutting-edge technologies and innovative digital tools, ensuring that the tourism SMEs remain competitive and relevant in the digital age.

3. **Implementation of Digital Tools for Tourism Management and Customer Engagement**:

The adoption of digital tools has been a critical strategy. Structures like Albergo Diffuso Montescaglioso and Tenuta Sant'Antonio have implemented digital inventory systems, customer relationship management (CRM) systems, and online booking platforms to streamline their operations and improve customer service.
These digital tools not only help in managing day-to-day operations more efficiently but also enhance the customer experience by providing seamless and personalized services.

4. **Knowledge Exchange and Innovation**:

Participating in knowledge exchange programs with other sectors has been a strategy for fostering innovation. This approach, as seen in Albergo Diffuso Montescaglioso, promotes cross-industry learning and the adoption of best practices from various fields.

Collaboration with academic institutions for research and innovation, such as the partnership between La Vialla and local universities, is another strategy that helps integrate sustainable practices and cutting-edge digital solutions.

5. **Focus on E-commerce and Digital Marketing**:

The integration of e-commerce platforms and robust digital marketing strategies is a common practice. La Vialla and Tenuta Sant'Antonio have placed significant emphasis on training staff in e-commerce and digital marketing to boost online sales and market their offerings effectively.
These strategies ensure that the SMEs can reach a broader audience, engage customers through digital channels, and drive sales through online platforms.

3.4.3 Digital solutions

These practices are aimed at enhancing operational efficiency, market reach, customer engagement, and overall guest satisfaction. Below is a general overview of the promotional and digital tools adopted by the SMEs in Italy:

1. **Enhanced Cultural Experiences through Digitalization**

Tourism entities in Italy, such as those in Montescaglioso, have leveraged digital tools to enrich the cultural experience for tourists. By integrating digital advancements into their operations, these entities have made significant strides in making their destinations more attractive and engaging for visitors. This approach not only improves the operational aspects but also adds value to the cultural experience offered to tourists.

2. **Market Expansion and Customer Engagement**

The digital initiatives adopted by enterprises like Wivery Tenuta Sant'Antonio have been pivotal in expanding their market reach. By employing various digital tools and strategies, they have improved customer engagement, which has led to increased sales and garnered international recognition. These tools may include social media marketing, email campaigns, and online booking systems, all aimed at reaching a broader audience and enhancing customer interaction.

3. **Operational Efficiency and Guest Satisfaction**

Borgo la Chiaracia stands out for its commitment to digital transformation, which has significantly improved its operational efficiency. The adoption of digital tools has also elevated guest satisfaction levels, positioning the establishment as a leader in luxury rural tourism. Tools such as property management systems, guest feedback platforms, and automated check-in/check-out processes are likely contributors to this success.

4. **Sustainable Agritourism and Global Reach**

Fattoria La Vialla has effectively used digital initiatives to increase its market presence and bolster its reputation as a sustainable agritourism destination. These efforts have attracted a global audience, emphasizing the importance of sustainability in their digital marketing and operational strategies. The use of digital storytelling, sustainability-focused content, and e-commerce platforms for selling local products are examples of how they have achieved this.

3.4.4 Italian digital practices

Good Practice N.1 - Agriturismo La Selvella

Name of the structure:	Agriturismo La Selvella
Country:	Italy
Website:	Agriturismo La Selvella

Brief description of the structure:	Agriturismo La Selvella is a traditional agritourism located in the Tuscan countryside, offering an authentic rural experience with accommodations, organic farming, and a range of outdoor activities.

Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	La Selvella is situated in Radicofani, a historic village in Tuscany. The area is known for its stunning landscapes, medieval architecture, and proximity to the Val d'Orcia, a UNESCO World Heritage site.
Main activities and strategies in the digitalization of processes:	La Selvella has invested in digital training for its staff, focusing on upskilling in digital marketing, data management, and online booking systems. They have collaborated with local digital experts to boost their online presence and streamline operations.
Promotional and digital tools adopted:	The agritourism utilizes social media platforms, a user-friendly website with an integrated booking system, and digital newsletters to engage with potential and returning guests. They also use data analytics to track visitor preferences and optimize their offerings.
Further comments:	-

Good Practice N.2 - Albergo Diffuso Montescaglioso

Name of the structure:	Albergo Diffuso Montescaglioso
Country:	Italy
Website:	Albergo Diffuso Montescaglioso

Brief description of the structure:	Albergo Diffuso Montescaglioso offers a unique hospitality experience by utilizing renovated historical buildings throughout the town of Montescaglioso, providing guests with an immersive cultural stay.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Montescaglioso is a picturesque town in Basilicata, rich in history and culture, surrounded by the natural beauty of the Matera hills. It is close to the UNESCO-listed Sassi di Matera.
Main activities and strategies in the digitalization of processes:	The structure has implemented digital training programs for staff, focusing on the use of digital tools for tourism management and customer engagement. They also participate in knowledge exchange programs with other sectors to foster innovation.
Promotional and digital tools adopted:	They have developed a mobile app to guide tourists through historical sites, integrated an online booking system, and use social media to promote cultural events and packages. The app includes augmented reality features to enhance the visitor experience.
Further comments:	These digital advancements have not only improved operational efficiency but also enriched the cultural experience for tourists, making Montescaglioso a more attractive destination.

Good Practice N.3 - Tenuta Sant'Antonio

Name of the structure:	Tenuta Sant'Antonio
Country:	Italy
Website:	Tenuta Sant'Antonio

Brief description of the structure:	Tenuta Sant'Antonio is a family-run winery and agritourism in the Veneto region, offering wine tastings, tours, and accommodations amidst their vineyards.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Located in Valpolicella, an area renowned for its wine production and scenic beauty, Tenuta Sant'Antonio benefits from being in one of Italy's premier wine regions.
Main activities and strategies in the digitalization of processes:	The winery has invested in digital marketing training for staff, enabling them to manage social media campaigns and online sales effectively. They have also implemented digital inventory and customer relationship management systems.
Promotional and digital tools adopted:	They use e-commerce platforms to sell wine globally, virtual tour software for online tastings, and a robust social media strategy to engage with wine enthusiasts. Their website features interactive elements to educate visitors about wine production.
Further comments:	These digital initiatives have expanded their market reach and improved customer engagement, resulting in increased sales and international recognition.

Good Practice N.4 - Borgo La Chiaracia Resort & SPA

Name of the structure:	Borgo La Chiaracia Resort & SPA
Country:	Italy
Website:	Borgo La Chiaracia Resort & SPA

Brief description of the structure:	Borgo La Chiaracia is a luxury resort and spa located in Umbria, combining modern amenities with traditional Italian hospitality and wellness services.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	The resort is set in Castel Giorgio, a tranquil village in the Umbrian countryside, known for its rolling hills, historic sites, and proximity to Lake Bolsena.
Main activities and strategies in the digitalization of processes:	The resort has enhanced its digital infrastructure by providing extensive training for staff on digital tools and platforms. They have also formed partnerships with tech firms to integrate advanced digital solutions into their operations.
Promotional and digital tools adopted:	Borgo La Chiaracia employs a sophisticated website with online booking, digital concierge services, and a mobile app for guest

	interaction. They also use social media and SEO strategies to drive traffic to their site.
Further comments:	Their commitment to digital transformation has improved operational efficiency and guest satisfaction, making them a leader in luxury rural tourism.

Good Practice N.5 - Fattoria La Vialla

Name of the structure:	Fattoria La Vialla
Country:	Italy
Website:	Fattoria La Vialla

Brief description of the structure:	Fattoria La Vialla is a biodynamic farm and agritourism in Tuscany, offering farm stays, organic products, and educational tours.
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	Located near Arezzo, in the heart of Tuscany, Fattoria La Vialla is surrounded by vineyards, olive groves, and picturesque countryside, making it a perfect destination for nature lovers.
Main activities and strategies in the digitization of processes:	The farm has integrated digital training programs for their team, focusing on e-commerce, digital marketing, and sustainable practices. They also collaborate with local universities for research and innovation.
Promotional and digital tools adopted:	They utilize a comprehensive online store, social media platforms for community engagement, and an email marketing strategy to keep customers informed about new products and events. Their website features detailed information about their farming practices and sustainability efforts.
Further comments:	Fattoria La Vialla's digital initiatives have increased their market presence and enhanced their reputation as a sustainable agritourism destination, attracting a global audience.

3.5 Romania

3.5.1 Description of the Practices

DEALUL VERDE PORUMBACU is situated in the picturesque village of Porumbacu de Sus, at the foot of Negoiu peak in the Făgăraș Mountains. The location is renowned for its proximity to numerous natural, historical, and leisure attractions, making it a prime spot for tourists seeking both adventure and relaxation.

3.5.2 Activities and Strategies in the Digitalization of Processes

The SME has successfully carved out a strong presence in the digital realm. DEALUL VERDE PORUMBACU is listed on all major booking platforms, ensuring high visibility and accessibility for potential guests. Their stellar reviews across these platforms highlight their commitment to quality and customer satisfaction. Additionally, the accommodation is easily locatable on GPS apps and various websites, which facilitates hassle-free travel arrangements for visitors. Their active Facebook page serves as a vital touchpoint for engaging with their audience, sharing updates, and promoting special offers.

3.5.3 Digital Solutions

To further enhance their reach and visibility, DEALUL VERDE PORUMBACU leverages a variety of tourism-relevant digital tools. These include prominent platforms like TripAdvisor and Booking.com, which are crucial for attracting and managing bookings. Social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram are used effectively for promotional purposes, allowing them to connect with a broader audience. The SME also ensures its presence on GPS platforms like Google Maps, Apple Maps, and Waze, which aids in providing accurate navigation and enhancing the overall guest experience.

In conclusion, DEALUL VERDE PORUMBACU stands out as a model for integrating digital strategies within the tourism sector, demonstrating how technology can be harnessed to boost visibility, enhance customer engagement, and streamline operations.

3.5.4 Romanian Digital practice

Good practice n°1 - DEALUL VERDE PORUMBACU

Name of the structure:	DEALUL VERDE PORUMBACU
Country:	Romania
Website:	**https://pensiuneadealulverde.ro/**

Brief description of the structure:	Accommodation services SME with underground rooms, each uniquely themed
Brief description of the area where the structure is present:	The village of Porumbacu de Sus is situated at the foot of Negoiu peak in the Făgăraș Mountains, in close proximity to many natural, historical and leisure activities.
Main activities and strategies in the digitalization of processes:	The SME has a strong presence in the digital world, present on all the booking platforms (whilst having almost perfect reviews), GPS apps and websites for an easier access to the location, Facebook page
Promotional and digital tools adopted:	Tools used are mostly surrounded around tourism relevant apps and websites such as, TripAdvisor, Booking.com,

	Facebook, Instagram, local info offices, GPS platforms as Google Maps, Apple Maps, Waze
Further comments:	-

3.6 Slovenia

3.6.1 Description of the practices

In Slovenia, several businesses have embraced digital innovation to enhance their operations and improve customer experiences. Notable examples include Cubo Hotel Ljubljana, Terme Snovik, and Thermana Laško. These establishments have leveraged digital technologies to revolutionize their services and provide unique experiences to their guests.

Cubo Hotel Ljubljana

Cubo Hotel Ljubljana, part of the CUBO Group, has integrated a digital innovation called the GUIDO app to enhance guest experiences. The app offers a seamless and contactless experience, including room key access via a QR code, a digital concierge service, and customized tour guides.

Terme Snovik

Terme Snovik, a sustainable accommodation awarded the EKO Marjetica, has undergone a comprehensive digital transformation to optimize workflows, reduce costs, and maintain market share. The resort focuses on improving digital skills, promoting energy-efficient processes, and enhancing competitiveness.

Thermana Laško

Thermana Laško, a countryside thermal resort, introduced new digital content including a virtual reality (VR) experience room. This innovation aims to attract younger visitors and offers various interactive games that highlight local history and provide immersive experiences.

3.6.2 Activities and strategies in the digitalization of processes

Cubo Hotel Ljubljana

The GUIDO app at Cubo Hotel Ljubljana facilitates various digitalization activities. It allows guests to unlock their rooms using a QR code and request services, order room service, and inquire about amenities digitally. This enhances convenience and maintains traditional reception services for those who prefer face-to-face interaction.

Terme Snovik

Terme Snovik's digital transformation included the introduction of a modern CRM system with marketing automation integrated with the reservation system. This integration allows for the consolidation of all data in one place. The digital transformation project, which ran from January to September 2022, focused on adapting to digital trends, improving employee digital skills, and promoting energy and material-efficient processes.

Thermana Laško

Thermana Laško's digitalization strategy involved creating a VR experience room in the Thermana Park Hotel. This space offers various virtual reality games and educational content about local history. The initiative aims to provide new, engaging experiences for guests, particularly younger audiences.

3.6.3 Digital solutions

Cubo Hotel Ljubljana

The GUIDO app serves as a comprehensive digital solution for Cubo Hotel Ljubljana. It integrates room key access, a digital concierge, and personalized tour guides. Additionally, the app supports eco-friendly tourism by reducing the need for printed materials such as brochures and maps.

Terme Snovik

Terme Snovik has implemented a remote monitoring system for energy devices, enabling efficient energy management. The digital CRM and reservation system integration help streamline operations, enhance cyber security, and improve overall efficiency.

Thermana Laško

The VR experience room at Thermana Laško is a key digital solution, offering a range of interactive and educational games. This innovation not only attracts a younger demographic but also enriches the guest experience by providing unique, immersive activities.

By leveraging these digital tools and strategies, Slovenian tourism businesses like Cubo Hotel Ljubljana, Terme Snovik, and Thermana Laško are enhancing customer experiences, increasing operational efficiency, and promoting sustainability. These practices highlight the transformative power of digital innovation in the hospitality industry.

4. Conclusions

Throughout the report, it becomes evident that tourism SMEs in these countries are actively embracing sustainable and digital transformations. The practices identified reflect a commitment to environmental stewardship, efficient resource use, community engagement, and technological innovation. These efforts are crucial for the long-term resilience and competitiveness of the tourism sector.

Sustainability Practices
In Greece, a total of seven sustainability practices were identified, leading the cohort in demonstrating a robust approach to sustainable tourism. These practices encompass a variety of strategies, such as:
Eco-friendly Accommodations: Many Greek SMEs have adopted eco-friendly accommodations, utilizing renewable energy sources, implementing waste reduction measures, and promoting eco-conscious guest behaviors.

Local Resource Utilization: SMEs leverage local resources to enhance the tourist experience while preserving cultural and natural heritage. This includes sourcing local materials for construction, promoting local cuisine, and organizing eco-tours that emphasize natural and cultural conservation.

Community Engagement: Greek tourism SMEs are fostering strong community ties, ensuring that tourism development benefits local communities. This includes engaging local artisans, supporting local businesses, and participating in community-driven conservation projects.
Italy follows closely with exemplary practices, showcasing innovative approaches such as:
Sustainable Transportation: Italian SMEs are promoting sustainable transportation options, including bicycle rentals, electric vehicle usage, and partnerships with local public transport services.

Green Certifications: Many Italian tourism enterprises are obtaining green certifications, ensuring that their operations adhere to high environmental standards. This not only boosts their market appeal but also encourages wider adoption of sustainable practices in the industry.

Water and Energy Conservation: Efforts to conserve water and energy are prominent, with initiatives such as rainwater harvesting, energy-efficient lighting, and smart energy management systems.

Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Slovenia also present noteworthy examples, with a focus on resource efficiency, waste management, and sustainable marketing strategies. Romania underscores the importance of preserving natural landscapes and integrating sustainability into tourism development plans.

Digitalization Practices
Key digitalization strategies include:

Smart Tourism Solutions: Greek SMEs are implementing smart tourism solutions, such as digital guides, mobile apps for seamless travel experiences, and virtual reality tours that offer immersive insights into local attractions.

Online Marketing and Booking Platforms: Italian tourism enterprises are capitalizing on online marketing and booking platforms to reach a broader audience, enhance customer engagement, and streamline booking processes.

Data Analytics and Personalization: The use of data analytics to understand customer preferences and tailor services accordingly is a growing trend. This approach not only improves customer satisfaction but also optimizes resource allocation and operational efficiency.

Cyprus, Bulgaria, and Slovenia also contribute valuable insights into digitalization, with practices focusing on digital customer service, virtual experiences, and the use of social media for marketing and engagement. Romania's example emphasizes the integration of digital tools in managing tourist flows and enhancing the visitor experience.

A recurring theme across both sustainability and digitalization practices is the importance of networks and collaboration. SMEs are increasingly recognizing the value of partnerships with local communities, governments, and other businesses. These collaborations are crucial for knowledge sharing, resource pooling, and amplifying the impact of individual initiatives. Networks such as eco-tourism associations, digital innovation hubs, and sustainable business networks play a pivotal role in supporting SMEs on their transformation journeys.