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EUROCLUSTER RURAL TOURISM

SMP-COSME-2021-Clusters

**Support to micro enterprises of the rural
tourism sector**

Pscq (Belgium), 16-17 September 2025



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PROJECT PARTNERS



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ASSOCIATED PARTNERS





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EU RURAL TOURISM PROJECT



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- Funded by SMP COSME Programme, carried out from **01/09/2022** to **28/02/2025**
- **EU contribution:** 1.263.235,52 € (of which **950.000 €** dedicated to enterprises)
- **Objectives:**
 - **Create a European Cluster of Rural Tourism**, to support public and private operators.
 - **Support business growth in the sector through:** training, improving management, opening new markets, using innovative tools, enlarging tourism seasons, improving the quality of services, creating local networks.
 - **Develop respectful tourism towards the environment and local communities**, by offering attractive and innovative products, to support sustainable activities and creation of jobs.



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PROJECT RESULTS



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- Constitution of the first European Cluster on sustainable rural tourism: **Eurocluster Rural Tourism**
- Training to service providers and tourism enterprises: **workshops** and **digital materials** for service providers and entrepreneurs on Eurocluster themes
- Definition of a methodology to better support rural tourism micro and SME
- **Open repository** of SME projects, best practices and knowledge tools to help rural tourism enterprises improve their business and sustainability
→ <https://www.euroclusterruraltourism.eu/en>
- **Direct funding to 188 micro and small enterprises (5000 €/SME)** to support business in sustainable products/services



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DIRECT SUPPORT TO ENTERPRISES



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935.000 € distributed to **188 small, micro and nano enterprises (up to 5000 €/each)** in 15 Countries from EU funds, plus actions for technical support:

- **Meetings** and workshops with enterprises to show opportunities for improvement in digital, environmental and social aspects.
- **Customized assistance** online and on site to each SME, audit with needs' analysis, redaction of an implementation plan, support for the realization of the plan and the new/improved service/product.
- **Support** for administrative and bureaucratic burdens imposed by the call with public funds (regulations, communication rules, reporting, etc.).
- **Final audit** and report to check and evaluate results of each SME's project.



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THE CALLS FOR SMEs



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- **Max contribution: 5000 € / enterprise** (“lump sum”)
- **Selection** of projects focused on digital/environmental/social actions through public calls
- **Requirements:**
 - **At least 1 year of activity in the market**
 - **Maximum 10 employees** (micro-enterprises)
 - Situated in internal areas (mountainous/rural areas, not urban)
 - **Type of business (NACE codes):** Accommodation (I55) and Travel agency, tour operator and other reservation service and related activities (N79)
- **Consulting services provided by selected and trained service providers** to guarantee the quality of assistance to SMEs



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THE REQUESTED SCOPES OF INTERVENTIONS BY SMES



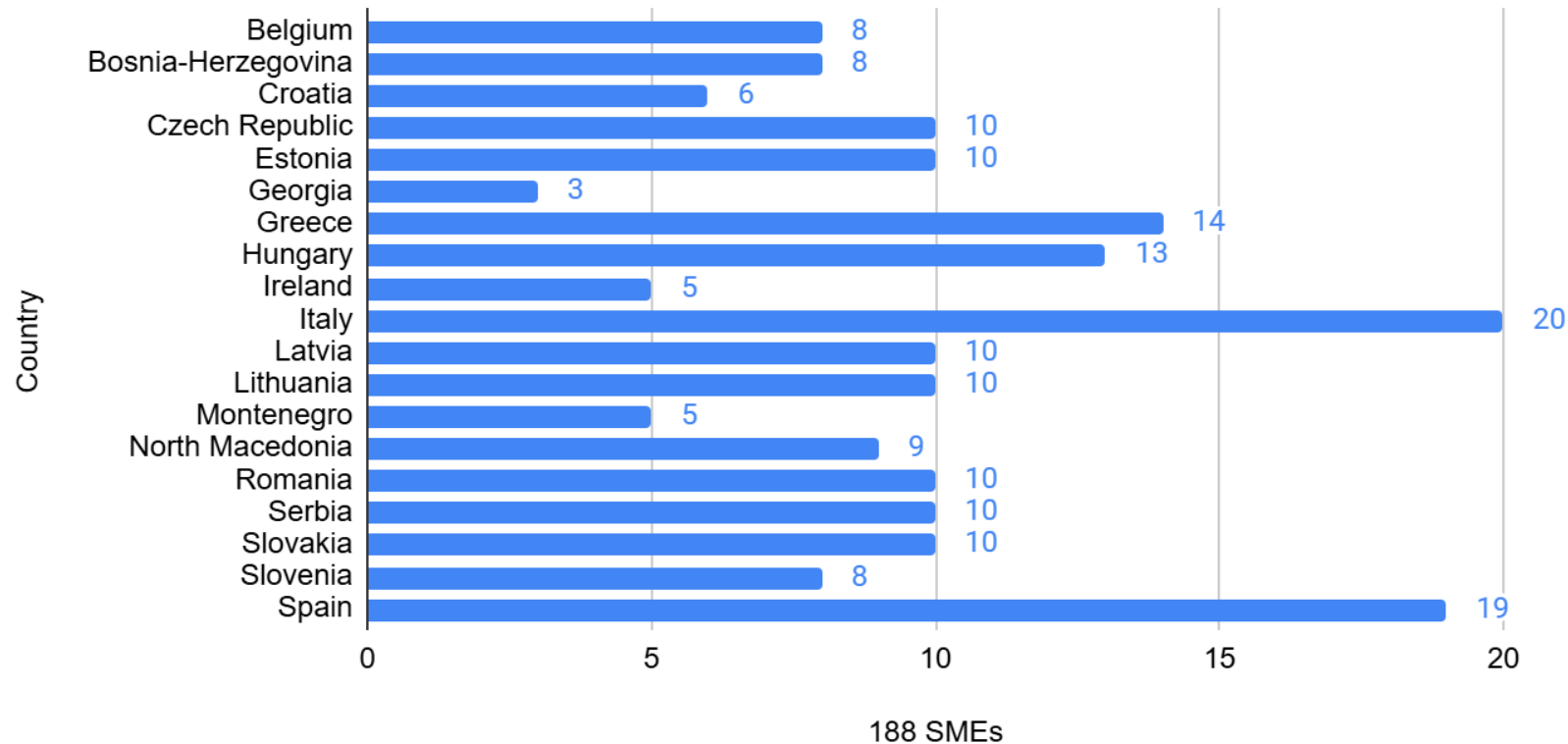
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DIGITAL
1.Digitalization of the processes in SMEs
2.Digital marketing and promotion
3.Marketing intelligence, data analysis, marketing strategy based on data
GREEN and SUSTAINABLE
4.Sustainable management practices for SMEs
5.CO2 management and reduction to address climate change
6.Sustainable mobility
7.Gastronomy and food based on local supply chains
SOFT / SOCIAL
8.Social-cultural skills (attend visitors from different cultural background)
9.Experience generation for visitors (includes development of corresponding products)
10.Inclusive Tourism / Visitors with special needs
11.Integration with the local community
12.Interpretation techniques for cultural, historic, natural etc. resources

THE RESULTS

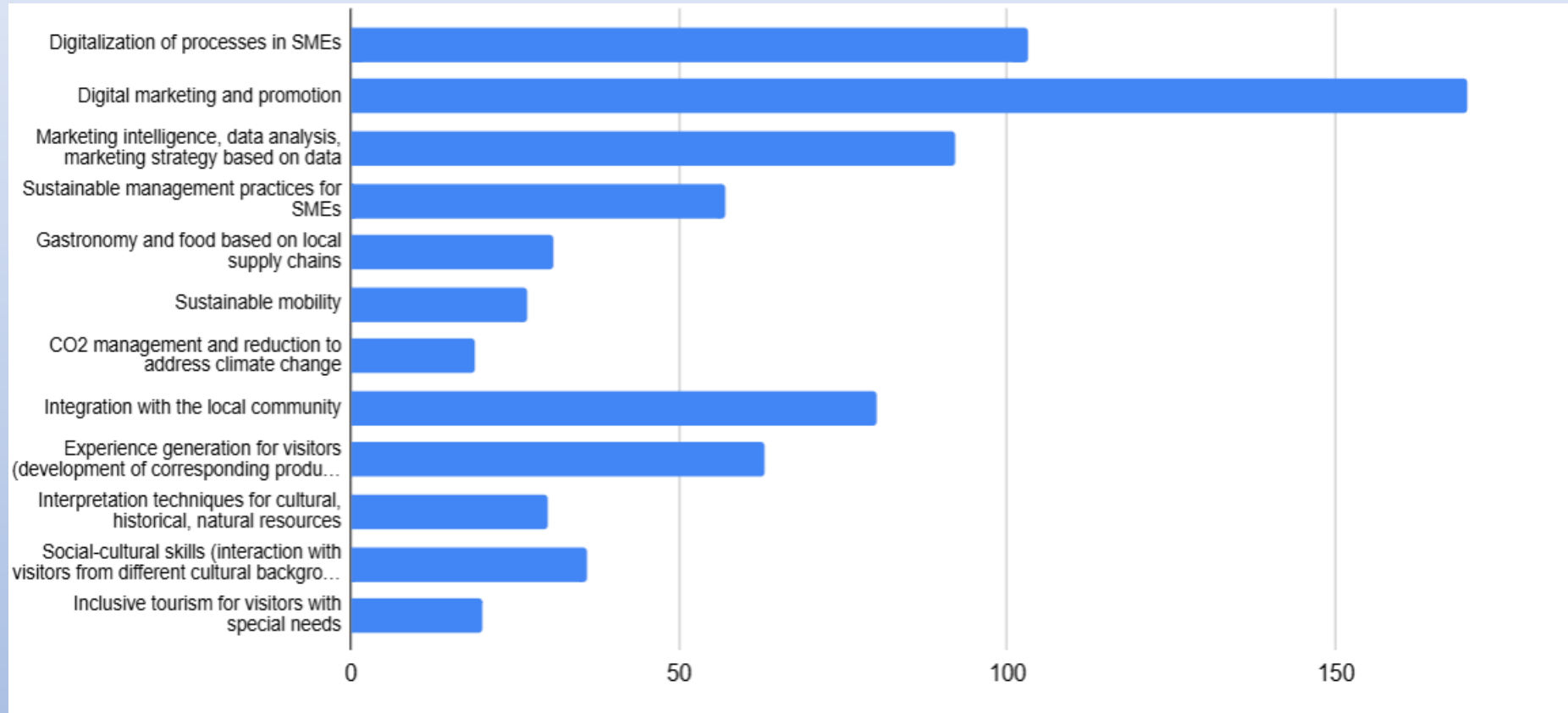
49 local experts were trained as Assistance Service Providers to provide specialist support to SMEs from 19 countries

SMEs by Country



THE RESULTS

SMEs implemented 728 support actions
Digitalization (365), Sustainability (134), and Soft/Social skills (229).





Preserving Romanian Heritage Through Culinary Arts

Authentic cultural experiences in Transylvania

Romania

Granted by ADI HARGITA

Culinary Innovation

Created new service packages where guests prepared their own bread, butter, and seasoning salt

Enriching Experiences

Enabled participants to take home both culinary products and cultural knowledge

Inclusive Access

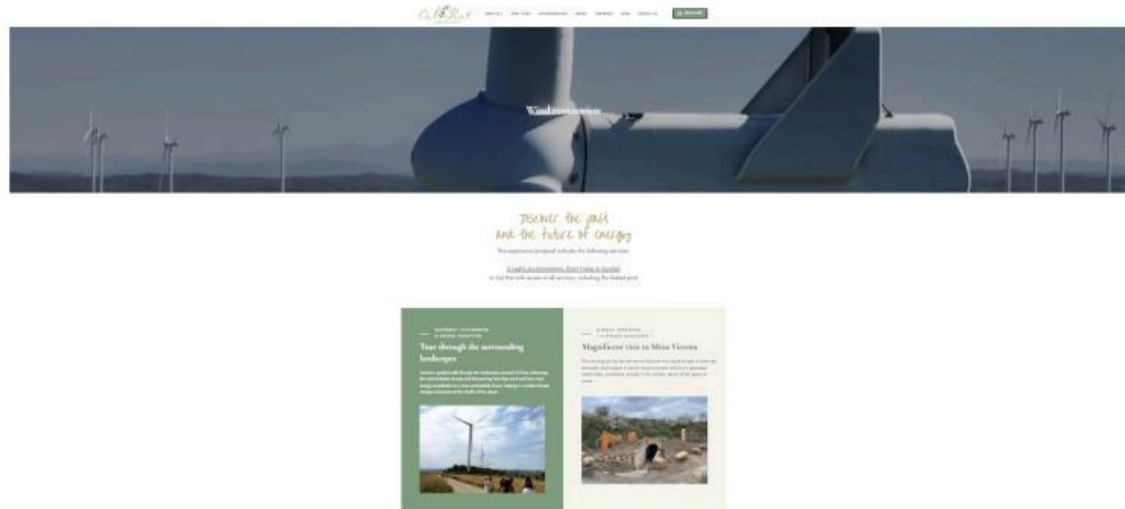
Ensured accessibility for guests with reduced mobility in all new experiences

Tradition Reimagined Through Technology

Produced photo, video, and VR materials to showcase heritage through modern technology

Strategic Promotion

Promoted the new offerings via a redesigned website and social media to attract more guests



Renewable Energy Tourism Pioneer
Bridging past and future through sustainable
travel experiences

Spain

Granted by RURALTOUR

Sustainable Innovation

Transformed wind turbines into a tourism opportunity for sustainability-minded travelers.

Educational Journeys

Developed itineraries combining visits to the turbines and the historic Vicenta coal mine.

Immersive Learning

Offered an educational, immersive experience on the evolution of energy production.

Market Expansion

Attracted new customer segments interested in conscious and eco-friendly travel.

Legacy Connection

Promoted sustainability by linking past and future energy stories through tourism.



Digital Innovation Meets UNESCO Heritage
Transforming visitor experiences through technology
Italy
Granted by Venetian Cluster

Digital Innovation

Created a multilingual Progressive Web App (PWA) accessible on smartphones during visitors' stay.

Community Integration

Enhanced visitor experience while promoting local businesses and community integration.

Competitive Advantage

Increased business competitiveness by showcasing unique offerings and the UNESCO territory.

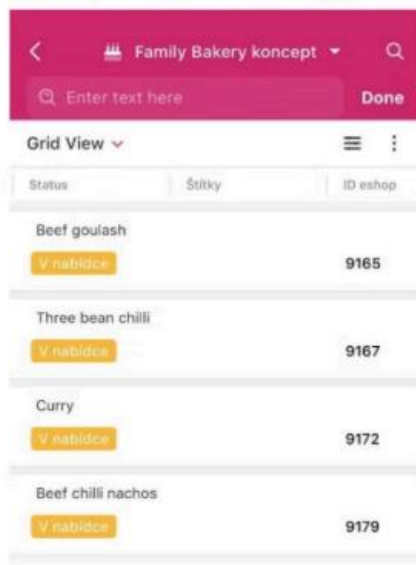
Gastronomic Focus

Highlighted local gastronomy and experiential tourism with comprehensive visitor information.

Inclusive Design

Prioritized accessibility with features for low vision and blind users, ensuring inclusive design.

Web ordering system - PrintScreen



Artisan Baking Meets Hospitality Excellence

Where traditional craftsmanship creates unforgettable stays.

Czech Republic

Granted by NCA

Integrated Experience

Accommodation seamlessly integrated with bakery & food business for unique guest experiences.

Hands-On Learning

Offers engaging baking, cake decorating, and cooking classes for all skill levels.

Digital Convenience

Developed an online meal pre-order system to boost convenience and streamline service.

Market Presence

Enhanced digital presence and marketing strategies to attract more visitors and build community.

Sustainable Values

Promotes sustainability, inclusivity, and cultural exchange through local sourcing and community engagement.

SUPPORT EXAMPLES



Sustainable Tourism Adventures in the Balkans
Connecting travelers with authentic Montenegrin experiences

Granted by EURACADEMY

Strategic Partnerships

Initiated cooperation with 5 rural creative businesses aligned with Smart Tourism principles

Cultural Experiences

Designed pilot day and half-day activities showcasing Montenegro's culture, traditions, and nature

Program Integration

Introduced new experiences for different target groups in 2025 tour programmes

Winery Showcase

Featured **Jablan Winery tour** on shorexursionsgroup.com (see description)

Enhanced Offerings

Offered additional activities as **add-ons/optional experiences** (e.g., via EVANEOS tour planner)



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THANK YOU!

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