

Euro-Emotur Manual for SMEs and destinations



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1. Introduction

The Euro-Emotur project

The **Euro-Emotur project** represents an opportunity to change the game in the European tourism industry through the digital transition. The project, funded by the European Commission under the COSME programme, connects small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with digital technologies through people (tourists' emotions) and knowledge (labs).

Its main goal is to **boost the uptake of digitalisation and innovation by tourism SMEs through transnational cooperation and capacity building**, in order to lead to generating a digital innovation ecosystem and hub and improving their competitiveness in the market through digitalization. The project pays special attention to neuromarketing techniques to promote the digital reputation of SMEs and increase their performance and KPIs both in the short and long term.

This project aims to guide to advances in:

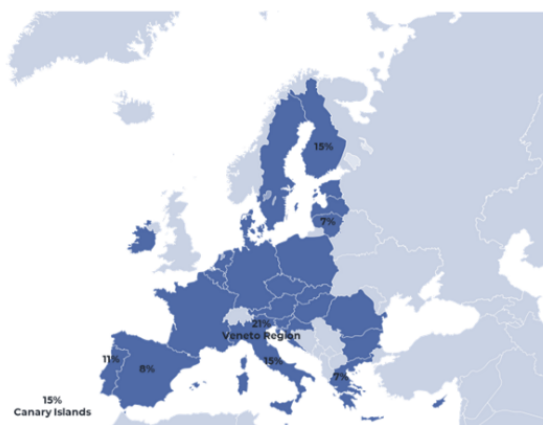
- Developing a new mindset for SMEs to face the digital ecosystem, as well as upskill and reskill.
- Customising their visitor experience through new technology possibilities and the mentoring from tourism labs (BSO).
- Improving competencies to succeed in direct marketing their services using neuromarketing techniques such as virtual reality, face coding, eye tracking, and EEG.
- Supporting new products and services and business models.
- Fostering innovative solutions through public-private partnerships connecting SMEs (including peer to peer learning), technology suppliers, tourism labs, and tourism regions.

To achieve these objectives, Euro-Emotur has been engaging, in its activities, 100 tourism SMEs and over 80 service providers across 20 countries.

100 Awarded SMEs

1. Agnes Cordero LLC	21. Hotel Lovers Hotel	41. Sileas LLC	61. Art Two Dots	81. Aquila - Marlow
2. Alessandro Brandi V&P Snc	22. Windy Agency	42. Sileas LLC	62. La Petite Indes	82. Accor Hotels - Villa Doria
3. Antiparis South France SA	23. Kinko Hotel de Ville	43. Uchi Group	63. The Pink Agency	83. San Marino Group
4. City Center Hotel	24. Boutique Agency - M&L	44. Boutique Agency - M&L	64. The Pink Agency	84. San Marino
5. Grand Hotel	25. Kinko SA	45. Boutique Agency - M&L	65. The Pink Agency	85. The Pink Agency
6. Hotel de Ville	26. Grand Hotel	46. Boutique Agency - M&L	66. The Pink Agency	86. The Pink Agency
7. Hotel de Ville	27. Boutique Agency - M&L	47. The Pink Agency	67. The Pink Agency	87. The Pink Agency
8. Hotel de Ville	28. Boutique Agency - M&L	48. Boutique Agency - M&L	68. The Pink Agency	88. The Pink Agency
9. Hotel de Ville	29. Boutique Agency - M&L	49. Boutique Agency - M&L	69. The Pink Agency	89. The Pink Agency
10. Hotel de Ville	30. Boutique Agency - M&L	50. Boutique Agency - M&L	70. The Pink Agency	90. The Pink Agency
11. Hotel de Ville	31. Boutique Agency - M&L	51. Boutique Agency - M&L	71. The Pink Agency	91. The Pink Agency
12. Hotel de Ville	32. Boutique Agency - M&L	52. Boutique Agency - M&L	72. The Pink Agency	92. The Pink Agency
13. Hotel de Ville	33. Boutique Agency - M&L	53. Boutique Agency - M&L	73. The Pink Agency	93. The Pink Agency
14. Hotel de Ville	34. Boutique Agency - M&L	54. Boutique Agency - M&L	74. The Pink Agency	94. The Pink Agency
15. Hotel de Ville	35. Boutique Agency - M&L	55. Boutique Agency - M&L	75. The Pink Agency	95. The Pink Agency
16. Hotel de Ville	36. Boutique Agency - M&L	56. Boutique Agency - M&L	76. The Pink Agency	96. The Pink Agency
17. Hotel de Ville	37. Boutique Agency - M&L	57. Boutique Agency - M&L	77. The Pink Agency	97. The Pink Agency
18. Hotel de Ville	38. Boutique Agency - M&L	58. Boutique Agency - M&L	78. The Pink Agency	98. The Pink Agency
19. Hotel de Ville	39. Boutique Agency - M&L	59. Boutique Agency - M&L	79. The Pink Agency	99. The Pink Agency
20. Hotel de Ville	40. Boutique Agency - M&L	60. Boutique Agency - M&L	80. The Pink Agency	100. The Pink Agency

100 awarded SMEs



% of SMEs by country and regional cluster

2. Digitalization in tourism SMEs

Why should companies digitise?

There are three main reasons to why companies should exploit opportunities related to digitalization. First, **digitalization offers short-term benefits such as reducing costs, improving productivity, and enhancing employer attractiveness**. Regarding cost reduction, it is important to recognize that digitalization is not solely about automating business processes. Rather, it enables employees to focus on value-adding activities instead of tasks that technology can handle. Second, **digitalization is crucial for maintaining a competitive edge in the face of increasing global competition** from rivals leveraging digital technologies to strengthen their positions. Finally, **digitalization is essential for business long-term survival**. It ensures companies remain competitive and aligned with **evolving customer demands and market trends**.

From a policy standpoint, SMEs play a pivotal role in Europe's competitiveness. The digital transformation of the industrial sector has been identified as vital for fostering innovation, growth, and prosperity in Europe. In response, the European Commission (EC) introduced a new strategy to help Europe's industries lead the dual transition towards climate neutrality and digital leadership. This strategy aims to enhance Europe's competitiveness, economic sustainability, and strategic autonomy amid shifting geopolitical dynamics and intensifying global competition.

The EC also unveiled a set of initiatives designed to unlock the potential of European SMEs. One of the three core pillars of this package is focused on facilitating "sustainable and digital transitions" to sustain the EU's industrial competitiveness.

From a business perspective, digitalization is critical for two interconnected reasons: achieving short-term competitiveness and ensuring long-term survival.

In the short term, digitalization enables cost savings, boosts productivity, enhances market relevance, and strengthens a company's ability to attract skilled employees who value working in forward-thinking organizations that embrace new technologies.

In the long term, digitalization allows businesses to capitalize on globalization and stay ahead of global competitors. Companies must adapt to and leverage emerging technologies to remain viable in the global marketplace. By utilizing digital technologies and gradually building new strengths or innovative business models, many industries are expected to undergo transformations that render outdated models obsolete. Adapting and evolving will therefore be critical for a company's survival.

What should be digitalised?

The initial question for companies is determining their approach to digitalization. **Digitalization has a far-reaching impact on business operations, transforming production processes, internal and external workflows, and methods of delivering value to customers.**

It may influence many areas of a business, including purchasing, administration, production, logistics, and sales. However, it is crucial to emphasize that the benefits of digitalization do not stem from technology alone. The process should be guided by the organization's specific needs and challenges. Ultimately, digitalization involves leveraging technology to automate tasks where human involvement adds minimal value, freeing up human resources to focus on meaningful work that enhances the company's competitive edge.

In production, digital technologies have introduced new methodologies, exemplified by concepts like Industry 4.0, the Industrial Internet, and the Internet of Things (IoT). These advancements have enabled the development of advanced control systems capable of predicting and preventing production failures.

Beyond production, digital technologies have revolutionized other areas of business operations, such as financial, legal, and security practices. Innovations like electronic payment systems, digital identification, and smart contracts have streamlined processes. Additionally, broader office automation solutions, the shift toward paperless workflows, and advanced business intelligence tools powered by Big Data and Artificial Intelligence have been adopted to enhance efficiency and decision-making.

How to digitalise?

The next question concerns how companies should approach their development efforts to achieve higher levels of digitalization.

For most companies, **digitalization is fundamentally a learning process** — understanding technology and how it intersects with the organization's needs, challenges, and problems. There is no simple, linear path to follow. While the overall direction can be established early on, the complete impact of digitalization is unpredictable, making it challenging to plan every detail in advance. Therefore, companies are advised to adopt iterative approaches such as the build-measure-learn methodology.

The journey toward digitalization should also be a collaborative process involving all parts of the organization. Engaging diverse teams helps identify needs and challenges, explore potential solutions, and experiment with new approaches to find what works best.

Challenges in digitalization

Digitalization offers significant benefits but also poses challenges, especially for SMEs with more limited human and financial resources. Rapid technological disruptions require constant adaptation, as new solutions often represent radical innovations rather than simple upgrades. To adopt these technologies, SMEs may need to invest in new infrastructure, modify or create entirely new business models, and reorganize operations—disrupting the status quo. However, these changes also present opportunities for innovation and enhanced value delivery.

A key challenge is the overwhelming proliferation of digital technologies. Many SMEs lack awareness of available tools, as observed in the Euro-Emotur project. Addressing this requires proactive measures such as benchmarking, attending industry events, and fostering internal knowledge-sharing practices. Initiatives like capacity building, networking, and leveraging information from industry platforms and associations can help SMEs identify suitable technologies and collaborate effectively.

Another obstacle is customer demand. Many SMEs produce on demand, and customers may either prefer traditional solutions or be unaware of digital alternatives. While not all products need to be digital, the processes surrounding them—such as customer service, marketing, production, and distribution—can benefit from digitalization. This shift allows SMEs to embrace transformation even when demand for digital products is limited.

Finally, know-how challenges persist. Many SMEs lack the internal expertise to integrate new technologies, highlighting the importance of continuous learning for existing staff. Rather than relying solely on external consultants or new hires, SMEs should focus on developing their current workforce, whose familiarity with the business is an asset. Early digital transformation often requires basic competencies, which can yield significant benefits with minimal risk and cost.

3. Practical knowledge, tools, and resources

Enabling technologies shaping the tourism ecosystem

Euro-Emotur has been promoting digital awareness by introducing **emerging technologies and trends in tourism**. The project has been working with a wide area of solutions and technologies, **with a strong focus on neuro-marketing**, which can help tourism SMEs to succeed in marketing and product development. Neuro-marketing is a key area of Euro-Emotur. It has been forecasted, that neuromarketing with Artificial Intelligence (AI) might change the interaction between humans and machines and lead to the development of new brain-computer interfaces that facilitate direct communication between the human brain and an external device and the creation of new services and innovations in the tourism industry. In addition to neuromarketing, other emerging technologies of virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), extended reality (ER), Artificial Intelligence and robotics are also highly relevant for the project to help SMEs increase their competitiveness.

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Mobile technology/cloud computing

Cloud technologies, Wi-Fi and international mobile plans make mobile devices increasingly pervasive and important travel aids, including for accessing destination information in real time, online booking, mobile payment. Cloud technologies allow SMEs to manage their business from anywhere high-speed internet is available.



Data analytics

In the digital era, consumers and businesses constantly generate new data. The capacity of businesses to use data drives new business models and productivity. Data analytics can predict customer preferences and channel consumer purchasing behaviour. It is also used for revenue management and to employ dynamic pricing. Employees of SMEs must develop skills to be part of this data driven ecosystem and issues of privacy, data sharing are key concerns of governments.



Neuromarketing and Tracking Consumer Behaviour

Neuromarketing is a marketing field that utilizes neuroscience techniques to study consumer behaviour and decision-making processes. By combining insights from neuroscience, psychology, and marketing, it provides a deeper

understanding of how consumers respond to marketing messages and make purchasing decisions. Brain imaging technologies such as fMRI, EEG, and eye-tracking are used to measure neural responses and physiological reactions to various stimuli.

The insights gained from neuromarketing research can be used by marketers to design more effective advertising campaigns, product packaging, and pricing strategies that resonate with consumers on a deeper, subconscious level. In the tourism industry, neuromarketing can be used to understand how tourists perceive prices in holiday advertisements and to measure the effectiveness of visual ads in shaping their preferences. Biometric measurement methods can also be used to analyse consumers' buying decisions in tourism.

Meanwhile, many airlines and airports are incorporating biometric capabilities into their operations to improve the customer experience, despite concerns about privacy and data security. Biometrics is now considered a ubiquitous technology for security authentication, with major industries such as aviation and hospitality adopting it to offer guests a safe and secure travel experience.



Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI, chatbots, and voice technology enable customers to undertake internet searches, digital check-in, access digital concierge services, voice assistants and smart rooms. This technology offers personalised, customised, on-demand service that facilitate seamless travel.

AI refers to computers or machines executing tasks that would typically necessitate human intelligence. This could involve learning, making decisions, or recognizing and interpreting speech. AI has been present for decades, but it is only recently that computers and machines have become advanced and reliable enough to execute complex tasks without human input. This is closely related to the concept of automation, where processes are carried out with minimal or no human input. Many larger businesses collect and store large amounts of data. This can facilitate AI, with machines utilizing the data to perform tasks such as data analysis, problem-solving, speech translation, direct messaging, and enhancing personalization during the customer experience.

The application of AI within the tourism industry has become increasingly common due to its capacity to perform tasks that would traditionally require human cognitive function. This has enabled businesses to save time and money, while also potentially eliminating human error and allowing tasks to be completed quickly and at any time of the day. Hotels and resorts, in particular, depend heavily on delivering excellent customer service in order to build their reputation, and AI technology can assist in this effort in a multitude of ways. For instance, AI can be utilized to improve personalization, provide tailored recommendations, and guarantee fast response times, even in the

absence of staff. At present, travellers demand expeditious and efficient operations, rather than queuing up for customer service support.

AI chatbots are capable of not only streamlining this process, but also ensuring that quality and speed are maintained, thus relieving the hospitality and tourism industry of this burden. AI chatbots may soon serve as virtual travel agents, tailored to meet the individual needs of customers.

The implementation of such technologies is cost-effective and brings numerous advantages, including reducing the risk of human error and helping businesses to consolidate and streamline customer services across different channels, with 24/7 availability.

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Augmented reality/Virtual Reality (AR/VR). Augmented reality/Virtual Reality (AR/VR) systems show virtual objects in the real world. Uses in tourism can include replacing paper-based marketing and advertising materials, gamification and augmented visitor experiences in the destination, and travel assistants that guide users through complex public transport systems in real time.

Travellers are looking to purchase experiences rather than products, and VR offers an effective way for marketers to give them a taste of what they can expect. It can be used to capture tourism destinations in a unique and immersive way, and can be viewed on a VR headset, computer, mobile device, or even just a regular mobile phone.

AR is still a relatively new development within the tourism industry, but it's already being used to introduce more interactive elements into hotels, attractions, museums and more, improving the overall experience. Tourists can now use AR apps to enhance physical locations and tourist attractions, too.

Extended reality (XR) or Mixed Reality (MR) is another technology being used to enhance visitors' experiences in cultural heritage attractions. XR technologies allow people to explore immersive experiences without needing separate devices.



Blockchain. Smart contracts, based on blockchain, can be used across the supply chain. Future gains would see user-friendly apps tailored for wide diffusion to tourism businesses of all sizes to enhance end-to-end user transparency.



Robotics and Automation. It can be difficult to precisely define what constitutes a 'robot'. Generally speaking, a robot is a machine designed to

automatically carry out certain tasks accurately. This can involve physical tasks such as part assembly in a factory, or text or speech-related tasks. While robots may be imagined as human-like androids, they can take on many different forms. They can be fully autonomous or semi-autonomous, requiring some human assistance. Modern robots incorporate a range of technologies, from collision detection to speech recognition and artificial intelligence.

For those in the travel industry, robotic technology can allow for machine learning and the performance of more complex tasks that would usually require human cognitive function. This might include speech recognition, problem-solving, learning from human interactions, autonomous movement, and the demonstration of logic and reasoning.

Robotic technology is becoming increasingly popular in the travel industry, due to changing consumer preferences and the desire for self-service methods. As such, robots are appealing to hotels, travel agents, and other businesses. An example could be cleaning robots: these include disinfection, cost-effectiveness and sustainability benefits.

Want to know more?

For further details and examples on emerging technologies and how those can be embedded into companies' processes, **Euro-Emotur** has released a dedicated **deliverable**, publicly available on its website - '[D4.1 Mapping the emerging technologies, business models and tourism industry cases](#)'.

The EU-funded project, **Tourbit**, also offers in its '[Digital Toolbox](#)', different technology factsheets from data analytics and cloud computing to AI, AR/VR, IoT and blockchain. Moreover, Tourbit Tourism 4.0 Industry Roadmap (2024), which can be downloaded [here](#), is a comprehensive document that aims to harness cutting-edge technologies such as AR/VR, IoT, and Blockchain to revolutionize the travel and tourism industry.

The EU-funded project, **Resetting**, makes available a series of open-access [toolkits](#) to monitor and assess emerging technologies for the tourism industry, such as the Smart Tourism Toolkit for AR/VR-based Tourism Experiences or the Smart Tourism Toolkits for Geo-Temporal Crowd Visualization & Monitoring Solutions.

Tools to aid the growth and digital transformation of SMEs

Several resources are internationally available for SME growth and support for digital transformation. During the Euro-Emotur learning path, several online, user-friendly tools and repositories have emerged to contribute to business competitiveness and digitalization.

At European and international level, there are a number of interesting online tools, freely available for SMEs, where companies can look for relevant knowledge and assessment methods to increase competitiveness and uptake digital transition:

- **European Commission resources for SMEs**
https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes_en
EU resources for small businesses, from grant opportunities to technical tips to make an enterprise flourish.
- **Digital Europe**
<https://www.digitaleurope.org/>
EU initiative promoting digital transformation through publication and the provision of consultancy resources.
- **OECD Digital for SMEs Visualisation Tool**
<https://www.oecd.org/en/networks/oecd-digital-for-smes-global-initiative.html>
Initiative dedicated to empowering enterprises during the digital transformation. The visualization tool provides insights into how SMEs can leverage digital technologies effectively.
- **EU Support Tools for SMEs**
https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/running-business/eu-support-tools-sme/index_en.htm
Support tools for SME businesses, including assistance in finding funding, accessing information and guidance, establishing training partnerships, and receiving help and advice.
- **Euro-Emotur Digital Hub**
<https://euroemotur.eu/digital-hub/>
Euro-Emotur, funded by the EU COSME programme, has launched a freely accessible, digital based network to gather different tourism stakeholders as well as to be used as a useful repository for learning, sharing experiences and best practices, promoting the knowledge emerged from the project.
- **Tourbit Digital Readiness Index (DRI)**
<https://tourbit.eu/dri/>
The tool developed by Tourbit, an EU project funded by COSME, is dedicated to tourism SMEs interested in moving forward in digitalisation. It helps them to audit their digital readiness across

different company areas and functions and will provide them with recommendations on how to improve. The DRI is available in different languages: English, French, Dutch, Portuguese, and Finnish.

- ReStartSMEs Digital Readiness Assessment Tool
<https://restartsmes-assessment.fundingbox.com/>
ReStartSMEs is another EU-funded project focusing on tourism SME digitalization, which has developed a free Digital Maturity Assessment Test to find out how SMEs can move towards the Industry 5.0.
- Cross-re-tour AAT (Automated Assessment Tool)
<https://crossretour.eu/cross-re-tour-aat-tool/>
Cross-re-tour project, also funded by the EU under COSME, developed another online diagnostic tool for tourism SMEs to assess their state of operations and identify opportunities to enhance their competitiveness through digital, green, and circular economy innovations.

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Beyond these resources, there exist **concrete and practical tools and software that help SMEs integrate digital approaches and processes in their internal teams and procedures**. A list of useful tools that can be exploited by entrepreneurs and their companies is provided subsequently.

- Google My Business
<https://www.google.com/business/>
Tool to claim and manage your businesses on Google Maps and Search, ensuring accurate information and positive customer reviews.
- Copy.ai
<https://www.copy.ai/>
Website that generates creative marketing copy for social media posts, website content, ads, and more with the help of AI-powered tools.
- Asana
<https://asana.com/>
Project management and task tracking tool to create projects, assign tasks, set deadlines, and collaborate with team members.
- Buffer
<https://buffer.com/>
Buffer is a social media management tool that simplifies content scheduling, tracks engagement metrics, and helps SMEs maintain a consistent online presence. It supports platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.
- Hootsuite
<https://www.hootsuite.com/>

Social media management platform used to schedule and publish social media posts across multiple platforms, monitor brand mentions, analyze performance, and engage with followers—all from one dashboard.

- **Google Workspace**
<https://workspace.google.com/>
Google Workspace provides a suite of productivity tools, including Gmail, Google Drive, Google Docs, Sheets, and more. SMEs can collaborate on documents, manage calendars, and communicate seamlessly using these cloud-based tools.
- **Mailchimp**
<https://mailchimp.com/>
Mailchimp is an email marketing platform that allows SMEs to create and manage email campaigns. It offers templates, audience segmentation, analytics, and automation features.
- **Slack**
<https://slack.com/intl/en-gb/>
Slack is a communication and collaboration platform that streamlines team communication. SMEs can create channels for different topics, share files, integrate with other tools, and enhance overall communication efficiency.
- **Notion**
<https://www.notion.so/>
Notion is an all-in-one workspace that combines note-taking, task management, and collaboration features. SMEs can be used to create databases, wikis, project documentation, and more. It's highly customizable and adaptable to various business needs.
- **Trello**
<https://trello.com/>
Trello is a project management tool that uses boards, lists, and cards to organize tasks and projects. SMEs can create boards for different aspects of their business and collaborate with team members.
- **Canva**
https://www.canva.com/en_gb/
Canva is a versatile graphic design platform that allows users to create visually appealing marketing materials, social media posts, flyers, menus, and more. It offers a wide range of templates, fonts, and images, making it easy for businesses to design professional-looking content.

Training resources for SME digitalization

Several training and knowledge repositories on digital transformation and technologies are available for SMEs at European level.

It is worth recompiling a number of resources developed by EU-funded projects focusing on digitalisation for tourism SMEs, namely:

- Euro-Emotur has issued a series of [training pills](#) and [webinars](#) sharing the knowledge and experience of its consortium partners in the field.
- Tourbit offers [training programmes](#) for SMEs with different digitalization levels. Moreover, a series of [podcasts](#) have been released, as a source of inspiration and delving deep into the personal journeys of entrepreneurs who have successfully embraced a digitalization path for their businesses. Lastly, the project offers the [Tourism 4.0 Deep Dive Sessions/Webinars](#) to present different 4.0 technologies that can contribute to improving products and processes in tourism SMEs.
- ReStartSMEs provides a wide range of [training sessions](#) tackling a variety of topics related to digitalization and technologies, from process optimization by data driven to cybersecurity and big data.

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Funding opportunities for SME digital transformation

There exist diverse funding opportunities to widen the reach and competitiveness of an enterprise, increasing its profitability through new skillsets in the European tourism sector, including digital skills and digitalization processes.

To foster European businesses – and in particular SMEs – to digitally transform, the EC set up **different funding opportunities over 2021-2027, complementing national and regional initiatives, including:**

- **Digital Europe Programme**
<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/digital-programme>
The programme finances the building of a world-class EU digital capacity to bring digital technology to businesses, citizens and public administrations. It focuses on five key investment areas: supercomputing, AI, cybersecurity, advanced digital skills and deployment activities for the best use of these technologies. European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) will notably ensure a wide use of digital technologies across the economy and society.
- **Horizon Europe**
Horizon Europe is the largest transnational research and innovation programme, a successor to Horizon 2020. The programme is prioritised along 4 pillars, broken down in 15 clusters, across all the areas of research and innovation: from excellent science, global challenges and

industrial competitiveness to innovative Europe and widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area.

- **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**
https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/erdf_en
ERDF aims at strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU by reducing disparities between regions. The ERDF 2021-2027 supports 5 policy objectives to ensure a 1) More competitive & smarter Europe; 2) Greener & low-carbon Europe; 3) More connected Europe; 4) More social Europe; 5) Europe closer to citizens.
- **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)**
https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/european-agricultural-fund-rural-development-eafrd_en
EAFRD is part of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and provides funding to small companies through various schemes. EAFRD is especially relevant to tourism as it aims to address structural problems in rural areas, such as a lack of attractive employment opportunities, skill shortages, under-investment in connectivity, infrastructure, and essential services, as well as youth brain drain.
- **InvestEU**
https://investeu.europa.eu/index_en
It supports the provision of long-term funding for sustainable investments by leveraging private and public funds. The InvestEU Fund aims at mobilising more than €372 billion investments through an EU budgetary guarantee, to be implemented by the EIB Group (EIB, EIF) and other financial institutions such as International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and National Promotional Banks and Institutions (NPBIs). These implementing partners are responsible for deploying and leveraging the EU guarantee to support investments in businesses fulfilling specific policy priorities, notably corresponding to the green and digital transitions.
- **Connecting Europe Facility**
https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/connecting-europe-facility/about-connecting-europe-facility_en
It aims at targeted infrastructure investments across Europe. The facility provides funding to Member States' projects fostering high performing, sustainable and interconnected trans-European networks in three key sectors: transport, energy and digital. In this way, CEF benefits people and businesses across all the EU.
- **Recovery and Resilience Facility**
https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en

With a budget of €723.8 billion (in loans and grants, for 2021-2027), the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) is at the centre of the NextGenerationEU temporary instrument to rebound stronger out of the crisis. The Commission raises funds on the markets, on behalf of the Member States, to help them repair the economic and social damage brought about by the recent shocks, and to build a more resilient long-term prosperity.

The RRF is another important source of funding for the digitalisation of businesses. **Each national Recovery and Resilience plan dedicates at least 20% of foreseen expenditures to foster the digital transition.** With the EU RRF financing, each Member State implements specific actions as outlined in their plan. The national authorities indicate whether, when and how support to beneficiaries is deployed through their respective websites.

For instance, the Spanish Government has established the [Digital Kit Programme](#), endowed with 3,000 million euros, with the aim of allowing SMEs and the self-employed to adopt and implement a series of digital tools and solutions.

Other EU funding programmes of interest:

- The **Single Market Programme** aims to improve SMEs' access to finance and is managed by the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA);
- The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) supports small companies and rural communities to make more out of digital technologies;
- The Microfinance Facility helps the SME sector by providing loans to individuals for setting up or developing a small business;
- The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) provides support to SMEs to help them improve their competitiveness, for example via trainings;
- The European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) supports SMEs in fisheries and aquaculture;
- The LIFE programme helps companies bring their green products, technologies, services and processes to the market.

Did you know about cascade funding opportunities?

Cascade funding, also known as Financial Support for Third Parties (FSTP), is a mechanism of the European Commission to **distribute public funding to help SMEs**, startups and/or other relevant organisations in pushing for innovation, research, and competitiveness activities. In particular, **cascade funding can support the uptake or development of digital innovation**. Euro-Emotur is an example of a FSTP project, delivering third-party funding to tourism SMEs to support digitalization.

This innovative funding approach seeks to streamline administrative processes, fostering a simplified and SME-friendly application structure. It empowers select EU-funded projects to initiate open calls for additional funding, drawing inspiration from the successful model employed in the Erasmus student programme.

How does it work?

> Call for Proposals: The European Commission issues a call for project proposals, that includes the management of Financial Support to Third Parties in a specific field or area of interest.

> EU Project Implementation: After the evaluation process, a set of projects are selected for funding. As the selected projects move into the execution phase, the consortiums responsible for these projects are tasked with launching open calls for proposals in order to disburse FSTP financing.

These calls invite third parties to participate, offering them access to a portion of the allocated budget. These third parties, responding to the conditions laid out in the call, are responsible for developing and implementing their own projects.

> Third parties project execution: The third parties, who have secured funding through the open calls, proceed to implement their respective projects.

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How to Engage in Cascade Funding

Stay informed and keep an eye on available Cascade Funding Calls on the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#)

! Example of an open call:

The SMP-COSME Cross-re-tour project is financing tourism SMEs and their partners to submit innovative projects that promote the green and the digital transition in the tourism sector.

Deadline: 22nd January 2025.

Apply [here](#).

4. Best practices from Euro-Emotur

The project has been collecting successful practices related to digitalisation in tourism SMEs. A good practice could be, for instance, any digital processes or tools, new technologies, applications, etc to boost SMEs' sales, improve clients' experience, fasten internal organisational procedures.

SMEs, destinations, and service providers of the project – as well as other stakeholders – have been invited to share their successful practices and knowledge with the project via a dedicated [e-Form](#).

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We are collecting the best practices on effective digital tools and processes for tourism SMEs.

Do you have insights? Share your knowledge with us below!

Thinking digital tourism through neuromarketing and emotions










A selection of collected practices are presented below and are also promoted on the Euro-Emotur [Digital Hub](#) in English, French, and Spanish languages, as a way to share experiences and foster replication for the benefits of other tourism SMEs.

SmartGuide – AI Destination Management



Country

Czechia

Description

The SmartGuide SME has developed the 'SmartGuide platform' that connects two audiences: Content Authors (the company's partners/clients) and Travelers (end users). Content Authors include, among others, tourist destinations, municipalities, and tour operators. End users are independent travellers who want to learn more about a specific tourist place.

SmartGuide has developed a cost-effective and user-friendly technology to develop and promote tourist destinations' guides to visitors, which brings travellers to the platform for free. The company also provides support in content creation and extra functions such as analytics and ad hoc data to optimize the digital experience.

Digital techniques/tools and methodology

SmartGuide uses big data to help tourist destinations, municipalities and other clients to optimize their in-destination experience and to provide personalized recommendations to travellers, thus digitizing tour guides as avatars in Augmented Reality. SmartGuide is also integrating an AI-powered chatbot to develop a fully virtual guide that is readily available in every phone. Unlike other travel Apps, SmartGuide is a platform and emerging guide marketplace with a unique B2B2C model which allows scalability that other similar Apps lack. Furthermore, SmartGuide uses AI for preparing the content easily in 30 languages and it has been training AI to create and pilot personalized users' profiles, showing content based on user preferences.

Results and benefits

Tourist destinations and municipalities usually spend 6-12 months and €100k-€1M developing their own guide Apps that later might be difficult to manage and maintain in the long-term period. The ready-made SmartGuide platform enables tourist attractions, destinations, and tour operators to publish digital travel guides in few days, with minimum or even no budget and with much better quality and adoption (tourists prefer one App for hundreds of destinations than a single App for each destination they visit).

Besides guiding tourists independently also to less visited places, SmartGuide provides clients with unique big data analytics and entire smart destination management solutions.

Website

<https://www.smart-guide.org/>

Ringo d.o.o. – Turn any door into a smart door

Ringo

Country

Slovenia

Description

The Ringo device is a device that is installed on the inside of the door. It can turn any door into a smart door, which means one can control it remotely. One can open it remotely for your guests, cleaning service, deliveries... or share a digital key with the upcoming guests. Guests can enter on their own at their time and convenience.

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Digital techniques/tools and methodology

Ringo is a smart controller that can be placed on any door and connected to intercom system in the building. With Ringo you can open tourist building and apartment doors, remotely or share a digital key with guests. You monitor every entry and can even integrate Ringo with channel manager software for automated check-in of your guests.

Results and benefits

Less steps, less work, optimising automation of business processes and transparency of entries. Guests are more satisfied with a simple check-in process and on the other hand also hosts while not being stressed waiting for guests.

Website

<https://www.ringolock.com/>

Bnbdays – Turn any door into a smart door



Country

Spain

Description

The Ringo device is a device that is installed on the inside of the door. It can turn any door into a smart door, which means one can control it remotely. One can open it remotely for your guests, cleaning service, deliveries... or share a digital key with the upcoming guests. Guests can enter on their own at their time and convenience.

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Digital techniques/tools and methodology

Ringo is a smart controller that can be placed on any door and connected to intercom system in the building. With Ringo you can open tourist building and apartment doors, remotely or share a digital key with guests. You monitor every entry and can even integrate Ringo with channel manager software for automated check-in of your guests.

Results and benefits

Less steps, less work, optimising automation of business processes and transparency of entries. Guests are more satisfied with a simple check-in process and on the other hand also hosts while not being stressed waiting for guests.

Website

www.bnbdays.com

Villaggio Turistico Internazionale srl – Integrated Digitisation for an Optimised Guest Experience

	Country
	Italy

Description

The Villaggio Turistico Internazionale is a 5-star resort in Bibione, on the Italian Adriatic coast, offering modern flats, mobile homes and villas, as well as a campsite. The resort offers a private beach, a beautiful water park, restaurants, bars and entertainment, sports and wellness services are also available. The Villaggio Turistico Internazionale is the ideal place for a holiday with family or friends in Italy.

The property works with an integrated software system to manage booking and accommodation flows. The integration between these tools ensures smooth and efficient reservation management, significantly improving the guest experience from the first contact, through the reservation, during their holiday and even after check-out.

Digital techniques/tools and methodology

Integrated digitisation for an optimised guest experience:

- **Operational Efficiency:** Integration of the software reduces booking handling time and automates processes, allowing staff to focus on more value-added activities.
- **Reduced Errors:** synchronising data across systems minimises the risk of human error, improving booking accuracy and guest information management.
- **Improved Guest Experience:** An integrated system enables faster and more personalised communication with guests, enhancing their experience from the beginning to the end of their stay.
- **Data Analysis:** Centralisation of data provides a complete and detailed view of guest bookings and preferences, facilitating analysis and continuous improvement of the services offered.
- **Centralised Management:** The possibility of managing everything from a single control point makes it easier to supervise and coordinate between the different departments of the establishment.
- **Increased Occupancy and Revenue:** Optimised booking management and the possibility of implementing revenue management strategies help to maximise room occupancy and revenue.
- **Flexibility and Scalability:** The integrated system allows rapid adaptation to changes in demand and specific guest needs, ensuring agile and scalable management of operations.



Results and benefits

The company leverages a range of software, all integrated, which allows them to manage all procedures almost automatically and effectively: PMS, CRM, CSM, Booking Engine, Web Site.

The main results of the implementation of such processes have been related to an improvement of sales/customers' acquisition, improved online presence and brand visibility for competitiveness, improved operations efficiency, and increased quality of services delivered and customer satisfaction.

Website

www.vti.it

Insidecom – Neuromarketing for a b2c e-commerce portal for travel experiences



Country

Italy – Veneto Region

Description

Insidecom is a TO-DMC specialised in the digital communication and marketing of Venice and the Veneto Region. For over 13 years it has been designing and distributing high-quality experiences and other tourism services through its own web portal Venetoinside.com and an extensive network of other b2b and b2b2c digital channels locally and internationally. Since 2010 it has served approximately 2.8 million customers.

Insidecom is one of the SMEs participating in the Euro-Emotur project. One of the main aspects that distinguishes the company from competitors and that has always been its strength is its digital nature. Indeed, Insidecom is not a tour operator which has adapted to digital by inserting, for example, an e-commerce into offline sales, but it was born with the aim of selling exclusively online and therefore with a strong digital soul.

Insidecom has a very developed b2c e-commerce portal (venetoinside.com), that sells travel experiences directly to the final customers. In addition, the business also works b2b and b2b2c: its digital platform interfaces with the websites of several commercial partners (hotels, tourism service providers, etc.), so that customers who navigate the websites of these partners can buy travel experiences directly on these websites without being bounced to the Insidecom website.

Insidecom can be considered a best practice not only for its digital platforms but also for internal practices. It has a multi-year digital strategy; it conducts regular training on digitalisation with its dedicated team and it has a structured program of continual improvement on digital. Decisions are made by the marketing manager together with the CEO, and with the involvement of the digital team. In addition, the company interacts very often during the week with the digital providers and the professional in charge of SEO.

As part of the project, Insidecom website has been analysed with neuromarketing techniques. The results were good but there was something that could be improved. Therefore, the company implemented modifications to improve the website's usability and facilitate direct bookings even more, in order to constantly improve. Modifications concern, for example, simplification of the payment process and content reorganization on product pages for a better balance between text and images.



Digital techniques/tools and methodology

It is a very developed e-commerce platform, for b2b, b2c and b2b2c, able to interface with other portals. The platform has to be regularly updated, in order to be easy to navigate and find on search engines.

Therefore, the website has been analysed using eye-tracking techniques.

Results and benefits

Website modifications have just been implemented, and the expected results include an improvement in the website users' experience, in particular in the purchase process, and an increase in direct sales made through the website.

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Website

<https://www.venetoinside.com/it>

Camping San Benedetto – Eye-tracking for website enhancement



SAN BENEDETTO
CAMPING RELAIS ★★★★★

Country

Italy – Veneto Region

Description

Camping San Benedetto is a 4-star campsite located in Peschiera del Garda, on Lake Garda, in Italy. It hosts both national and international customers in various types of accommodation, from shady pitches to Mobilhomes of various sizes, even deluxe with private lake view jacuzzi. It offers various facilities, such as swimming pools (for adults and babies), restaurants, bars, entertainment for children and adults, a fenced-in dog area with a pet bath, a private beach, and rentals of bikes, scooters and canoes.

San Benedetto Camping Relais is one of the SMEs participating in the Euro-Emotur project. As part of the project, the SME's website has been analysed with neuromarketing techniques. Based on the insights gained, the company decided to implement several modifications to improve the website's usability and facilitate direct bookings. For example, the call to action "book now" was repositioned after the analysis showed it was not attracting users' attention in its original location. A price comparison tool was added to highlight the benefits of booking directly, and the homepage structure was revised to ensure that all key information was prominently highlighted. For mobile users, the bottom bar menu was updated to capture attention more effectively. These are just some of the improvements made as part of the overall website enhancement.

Digital techniques/tools and methodology

The website has been analysed using eye-tracking techniques.

Results and benefits

Website modifications have just been implemented, and the expected results in the medium term include an improvement in the website users' experience and an increase in direct bookings made through the website.

Website

<https://www.campingsanbenedetto.it/en>

Kia Ora Viaggi – Digital Maturity and Readiness Index to enhance customer relationship processes



Country

Italy – Veneto Region

Description

Kia Ora is an Italian online B2C outbound tour operator, specialised in creating tailor-made itineraries for a select number of destinations worldwide. They primarily focus on destinations in the Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean, USA, as well as several countries in Asia and Africa. They often visit the destinations they offer, ensuring they have first-hand knowledge of the places they recommend to their customers.

Kia Ora Viaggi is one of the SMEs participating in the Euro-Emotur project. Based on the results of the Digital Maturity and Readiness Index, the SME decided to invest the project voucher in a series of systems aimed at automating various internal processes related to customer relationship management and improving the integration between the website's back-office and front-office platforms.

Digital techniques/tools and methodology

The Digital Maturity and Readiness Index measures the level of digital development and the capability to innovate of a SME through a questionnaire, developed for the project. This index provides companies with insights into their strengths and weaknesses in relation to these two dimensions.

Results and benefits

The company is still working on the automation of its systems and the expected outcomes include increased efficiency, time savings, and a reduction in errors.

Website

<https://www.kiaoraviaggi.it>