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Press Release

To be released immediately

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Tourism SMEs in four EU countries called to benefit from a new financial and capacity building support scheme for winning back their markets

A newly launched call is offering SMEs in the tourism industry in four EU countries to improve their environmental performances in a bid to accelerate the transition of this sector to circular economy. Selected SMEs will receive tailored capacity building, matchmaking, mentoring, and financial support from the European project TouriSME.

Brussels, Belgium – The current health crisis has exposed the vulnerability of the tourism industry. Hundreds of millions of visitors were lost in 2020, profoundly affecting the activity of all businesses. This crisis has also accelerated social transformations, with consumers now seeking more responsible and benevolent tourism. Besides, sustainable tourism brings numerous environmental, social and economic benefits while providing competitive advantages derived from cost savings and a better quality of the offer.

Believing that **transforming tourism processes and making them more sustainable is needed now more than ever**, ACR+ and its partners of the [TouriSME](#) project are acting in this direction. In the framework of this EU co-funded project, under the COSME programme, they will provide a **financial support** associated to a **dedicated coaching and capacity building activities** to selected SMEs of the tourism sector in Europe. The aim for the participating SMEs is to exchange their knowledge and good practices and discover the underlying principles of circular economy and how they can make tourism more circular.

As a first step, a [call](#) has been launched by the TouriSME project partners on 22 June 2021. **Open until 15 September 2021**, it targets hotels and similar accommodations providers such as holiday and other short-stay accommodations, as well as travel agencies, tour operator reservation services and related activities located in Spain, Italy, France and Cyprus.

It will consist in **trainings for knowledge transfer, matchmaking events for international cooperation and knowledge exchanges, and tailored mentoring and financial support to access environmental certifications**. These capacity building activities will enable SMEs to put in place



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sustainable practices in their business by consuming less energy and resources, producing less waste and offering new ways of traveling in line with the markets, among others.

Depending on the objectives set for their business, the participating SMEs could be **funded up to €7,000 (or €4,000 in case of Cyprus)**. An Evaluation Committee composed of 8 evaluators will select a minimum of **62 SMEs by mid-October 2021**. The selected SMEs will participate in the programme's activities during 12 months from November 2021.

More details on the call, including the application process, are available on www.tourisme-project.eu/call-for-smes

For more information on the Call or support during the application process, please contact Ernest Kovacs at ek@acrplus.org

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*The **TouriSME** project – Improving sustainability of tourism SMEs through knowledge transfer, international cooperation and multi-stakeholder engagement – aims to improve the sustainability of SMEs active in the field of tourism, working closely with 62 different SMEs, located in Spain, Italy, Cyprus, and France. More information: <https://tourisme-project.eu/> - info@tourisme-project.eu*

*The **Association of Cities and Regions for sustainable Resource management (ACR+)** is an international network of cities and regions sharing the aim of promoting sustainable resource management and accelerating the transition towards a circular economy on their territories and beyond. The network, gathering around 90 members, is open to other key players in the field of material resource management such as NGOs, academic institutions, consultancies or private organisations. Members' needs and priorities define the network's activities, which include facilitating the exchange of experiences between members, sharing technical and policy information and livening up the network. To strengthen the knowledge and capacities of the network and push for innovation in the field of material resource management, ACR+ is also involved in several projects at European level and in the Mediterranean region, in cooperation with its members.*

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